

has placed the country in great economic crisis which compelled a not inappreciable number of the inhabitants to sell their lands to foreigners who only buy lands for political purposes i.e. to create a foreign nationality on the remains of Arab Nationality.⁴⁴

The Wailing Wall dispute, however, continued to provide the focus of political interest and concern in Palestine. Cables of protests against Jewish acts of aggression on Holy Buraq were despatched to London during the first week of August. Muslim religious authorities charged that the Government's hesitation to effect application of the White Paper encouraged Jewish encroachment on the *Buraq*. Moreover, the Palestinian Muslims protested vehemently against political interest under cover of Buraq religious futile pretensions.⁴⁵

The immediate incident that led to the clashes of 23 August was a Jewish demonstration at the Wailing Wall during the preceding week. On 14 August 1929, a demonstration took place in Tel-Aviv in commemoration of the destruction of the Temple, and on the following day a crowd of Jewish young men led by a minority of Zionist extremists from Tel-Aviv 'anxious to create trouble',⁴⁶ staged a hitherto unprecedented procession through the streets of Jerusalem to the foot of the Wailing Wall. There they raised the Jewish flag and sang the Zionist anthem — *Hatikvah* — against the specific instructions of the Acting High Commissioner.⁴⁷

The incident provoked the Muslims⁴⁸ to stage a counter demonstration on the following day which was not only a Friday, but the Prophet's Birthday as well. After midday prayers at the *Haram* a demonstration estimated at some two thousand, including villagers who had come to celebrate the Prophet's Birthday, proceeded to the Wall where an inflammatory speech was made by Hasan Abu as-Sa'ud, one of the Sheikhs of the Al-Aqsa and a confidante of Hajj Amin. A table belonging to Jews which was standing on the pavement was broken and some pieces of paper containing Jewish prayers and petitions placed in crevices of the Wall were burnt.

As the High Commissioner was absent, it fell on the OAG to guide the excited Muslims and Jews into channels of prudence, but his task was rendered difficult by 'the absence of all responsible Jewish leaders from the country'.⁴⁹

A quarrel which arose between an Arab and a Jewish youth in Jerusalem on 17 August ended in bloodshed, when the Jewish youth was stabbed. A serious affray between Arabs and Jews followed during which eleven Jews and fifteen Arabs were wounded:

Upon the arrival of the police, who arrested the Arab guilty of the initial wounding, they were attacked by the Jewish crowd. The prisoner and one of the British police were injured, the injuries sustained by the policeman being of a severe character. The Jewish crowd also attacked Arab houses in the neighbourhood and wounded some of the inmates.⁵⁰

Several arrests of Arabs and Jews within Jerusalem and outside it took place within the next four days. When the stabbed Jewish youth died on 20 August, his funeral was turned into a political demonstration against the Government and the Arabs.

Anticipating trouble the Government ordered a section of armoured cars to come from Transjordan to stand by in Ramleh, on the Jerusalem Jaffa road. A meeting between three prominent Jews and three prominent Arabs took place on 22 August at Mr. Luke's house. The meeting was friendly, and it was agreed that it should be resumed again on 26 August.

While prominent Arabs were ready to confer with the Government officials and reason with their Jewish counterparts, the Arab villagers and the man in the street were excited and worked up by the resurgence of the Zionist menace in general and by the Wailing Wall dispute and the events of the third week of August 1929, in particular. The provocations of the Jewish demonstrators of 15 August tended to lend credibility to the villagers' fear of a Jewish attack on the *Buraq*.

On Friday 23 August great numbers of Muslim villagers came up to Jerusalem for the midday prayer armed with clubs and sticks. An order to disarm the incoming villagers, given by the British police officer in charge of one part of the city, was cancelled by his superior officer on the ground that the measure could not be carried through effectively without taking up the energies of more of his seventy British policemen than he could afford to spare.

The outbreak of 23 August, which began around noontime, was from the beginning an attack by Arabs, armed with sticks, revolvers and some with swords, on Jews. When the Arab crowds attacked the Jewish suburbs in the early afternoon, the police opened fire, and shortly afterwards aeroplanes flew over Jerusalem. By 4 pm armoured cars from Ramleh had arrived and seventy special constables had been enrolled. Half an hour later the Old City of Jerusalem was quiet but firing directed on to outlying Jewish suburbs continued and so did Arab attacks on Jewish villagers within a few miles of Jerusalem.⁵¹

When news of the outbreak of Jerusalem reached Nablus and Hebron