

process.

In 1932, a Palestinian Youth Congress was held in Jaffa to discuss ways and means of mobilising Arab youth in the service of the Arab national movement in Palestine. The Congress resolved to adopt the principles of the 'national charter', to establish branches in towns and villages, encourage national industries and organise a national Scout movement comprising a great number of able-bodied Arab youth.

Palestinian women were also spurred into action. In a long memorandum to the Permanent Mandate Commission, the Executive Committee of the First Arab Women's Congress of Palestine put forward the grievances of the Palestinians, particularly the predicament of the *fellahin* and the failure of the Mandate to protect them against eviction,⁴⁵ and called for the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration, the abolition of the Mandate and 'the establishment of a National Government responsible to an elected representative Council with a view to attaining complete independence within an Arab Federation'.⁴⁶

Special conferences on taxes were convened in the spring of 1932, which submitted memoranda of protest against the Government's tax policies. The (Arab) National Fund formed an Arab Redemption of Lands Corporation to save Arab lands that were likely to fall into Zionist ownership.⁴⁷

The Zionists' uncompromising attitudes and the failure of the Government to implement promises over the introduction of self-governing institutions, i.e. the Legislative Council, tended to strengthen the hand of the *Istiqlalists*.

In September 1932, they induced the Arab Executive to pass a resolution declaring that no Arab should serve on any Government Board or in any way cooperate with the Government. Nevertheless, Wauchope reported that 'the Mufti and a number of Nashashibi party who support me will probably arrange that this resolution shall not be acted on'.⁴⁸

Despite the agitation of the *Istiqlalists* against Britain Hajj Amin was remarkably cooperative with the Government:

The Mufti has definitely responded to the measure of confidence placed in him, and it is doubly satisfactory to Government that he and some of the more moderate men of the Nashashibi party are now working together with Government.⁴⁹

Two weeks later, Wauchope reported that 'Awni' Abdul Hadi, the prominent *Istiqlalist*, had resigned from the Road Board to the

embarrassment of other Palestinian members on Government Boards. Thereafter, Wauchope advised the Colonial Secretary, that unless the Government proceeded with the establishment of the Legislative Council, Arab 'extremists would obtain complete ascendancy and that Arab cooperation would become increasingly difficult and ultimately impossible'.⁵⁰

The *Istiqlalists'* fresh approach was eloquently expressed in their reply to a speech delivered by the High Commissioner before the Mandates Commission in Geneva. In it they reiterated their rejection of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate and exposed the basic aspects of the alliance between Zionism and British Imperialism. They alleged that one-third of the budget had to be allocated to defence and security expenses because of the Mandate's attempt to build an alien national home against the will of the Palestinians. As a result of this policy the Palestinians were overburdened with all kinds of taxes, and the *fellah* in particular was in a desperate position. Furthermore, the Mandatory Government had deliberately failed to live up to its duty towards the Arabs, 'the legitimate owners of the country', in the crucial fields of education, land legislation and immigration.⁵¹

The Prospect of Civil Disobedience

The initiative of the *Istiqlalists* and the increase of Jewish immigration compelled the Arab Executive to invite a number of political leaders including those of the *Istiqlal* and the Youth Congress to an Assembly on 24 February 1933, under the presidency of Musa Kazem. In the course of the discussions several attacks were launched by the militants against the 'lethargic leaders', and land commission agents were denounced as traitors. Suggestions were made to the effect that civil disobedience and the boycott of British goods constituted the only effective method of forcing the Government to listen to their grievances.⁵² Musa Kazem induced the Assembly, against the better judgement of the majority of those present, to elect a deputation to meet the High Commissioner on the same day. The deputation put to the High Commissioner the necessity of protecting the Arab population from dispossession and eviction⁵³, by prohibiting land sales and Jewish immigration, to no avail. Discouraged by Wauchope's reply, the Arab leaders finally decided to call a general assembly on 26 March in Jaffa to lay down the basis of non-cooperation with the Government.

The Jaffa meeting was attended by five to six hundred persons, townsmen and villagers of all classes and parties, including the Arab Executive, Hajj Amin and most of the mayors of the principal towns