

Nablus and Jaffa National Committees respectively. The Arab Party, anxious not to repeat its loss of initiative (of November 1935), declared its support for a general strike as from 21 April.

The moderates of the National Defence Party under the leadership of Ragheb Bey Nashshibi and the commercial element who stood to lose most heavily, while recognising the necessity for some strong national manifestation were inclined to limit the strike for a definite period.<sup>10</sup>

On 21 April Wauchope interviewed the party leaders and asked them to use their influence to check all forms of disorder and to name their delegates to London to meet the Colonial Secretary on 4 May in London.

#### Anti-British Feelings

The Arab leaders told Wauchope that they were quite willing to help him in restoring order but their task would be facilitated if immigration was stopped at once<sup>11</sup> as a temporary measure pending further negotiations. Jamal Husseini complained that 'The attitude of the Police had given the impression to the Arabs that their real enemies were the British'.<sup>12</sup> In view of the situation, the leader of the Arab Party added that the deputation would not proceed to London until peace was re-established in the country.

Anti-British feeling was the outstanding feature of the National Committee's call for a general strike. In its manifesto, the Haifa National Committee attributed the root of evil to the oppressive policy of the British Government.<sup>13</sup>

Anxious to associate themselves with the sweeping popular sentiments the leaders of the five Arab parties issued a manifesto on 22 April where they declared the postponement of the departure of the deputation to London and requested 'the honourable nation to continue its present strike exhibiting patience, quietness and determination until further notice. Flour mills, bakeries, clinics, dispensaries, means of transport and cafes are temporarily and until further notice excluded from this strike'.<sup>14</sup>

Two days later, the National Committee of Jerusalem met and formed special organs to supervise the general strike. Committees for relief,<sup>15</sup> fund-raising, promotion of national industries and products, transport, legal and medical services were formed to help the people maintain the general strike and sustain hardship thereof. On the same

day Arab owners and drivers of public and private motor cars and trucks in Palestine joined the Arab shopkeepers, students, workers and the Jaffa Port labourers in their general strike.

On 25 April a meeting of all Arab parties took place and a supreme committee later known as the Arab Higher Committee was established. Hajj Amin reluctantly accepted the presidency of the Committee. He attributed his hesitation to his fear that the other political leaders would not cooperate with him. It was more than likely that the real reason for his reluctance was connected with his unwillingness to come into direct clash with the British. The other members of the Committee were 'Awni 'Abdul Hadi (Secretary), Ahmed Hilmi Pasha (Treasurer), Ragheb Nashashibi, Jamal Husseini, 'Abdul Latif Salah, Dr Hussein Khalidi, Ya'quob al-Ghusein, Ya'quob Farraj and Alfred Rock. In an atmosphere of enthusiasm the Higher Committee announced that the leaders were now committed 'to continue the General Strike until the British Government changes its present policy in a fundamental manner, the beginning of which is the stoppage of Jewish immigration'.<sup>16</sup> They also reiterated their adherence to the three national demands of the 'national charter', stoppage of immigration, prohibition of land sales and a national government responsible to a representative council.

The Higher Committee delegated the task of co-ordinating the activities of the various National Committees to 'Awni 'Abdul Hadi who maintained daily contact by telephone. He immediately embarked on a course of involving the Arab Kings and soliciting their assistance. A memorandum to the H.C. dwelt on Jewish plans to make Arab Palestine the land of Israel — a national state for all the Jews of the world and maintained that the continuation of the British policy would lead to the immediate annihilation of the Arabs of Palestine.<sup>17</sup> Arab bitterness against the Jews was accentuated by a speech delivered by Weizmann in Tel Aviv on 23 April, in which he said that the Arab-Zionist struggle was one between the forces of the desert and destruction on one side and the forces of civilisation and building on the other.<sup>18</sup>

Before the end of April Arab work and trade were virtually at a standstill and violent clashes between Arab demonstrators and the police had already led to sabotage and terrorist acts in Jerusalem.

#### The Aim of the Palestinian Struggle

On the eve of the general convention of the National Committees, a meeting of the Arab Women in Jerusalem urged the Higher Committee