

Wauchope accepted Ormsby-Gore's suggestion that should the Arabs stop acts of disorders unconditionally the British Government would of their own volition suspend all immigration while the Royal Commission were conducting their Enquiry. On the other hand Wauchope dropped his opposition to the cantonisation of Palestine,<sup>36</sup> which was supported and promoted by Weizmann.<sup>37</sup> While cantonisation was being discussed at length at the Colonial Office, Ormsby-Gore assured Jamāl Husseini and his associates on 14 July that Britain meant to remain in Palestine and to govern it justly in the interest of all the inhabitants.<sup>38</sup>

#### The Role of the Arab Rulers

At the same time the British Government decided to use the influence of the neighbouring Arab rulers to talk the Palestinian Arabs out of their rebellions, general strike and armed resistance.<sup>39</sup> Communications with Saudi Arabia and the Foreign Minister of Iraq, Nuri el-Said, took place for that purpose. About the middle of July, 'Abdullah of Jordan was encouraged by the Government to attempt to mediate with the Arab High Committee in the cause of peace'.<sup>40</sup>

On 7 August, 'Abdullah invited the Higher Arab Committee to Amman whose members hastened to inform him that they were powerless to stop the strike unless Government decided to suspend Jewish immigration. Two weeks later Nuri Pasha arrived in Palestine as the Government's guest and offered his services as an unofficial mediator between the Government and the Higher Committee. As the Iraqi Foreign Minister could make no promises on the Government's behalf the negotiations broke down. In a manifesto published on 30 August, the Higher Committee declare that while they were willing to trust to the mediation of the Government of Iraq and their Majesties and Highness the Arab Kings and Prince the Nation, nevertheless, 'will continue its general strike with the same steadfastness and conviction it has shown'.<sup>41</sup>

The failure of Nuri's mission was not the only setback to British hopes for an early termination of the general strike and the rebellion. During August Wauchope reported to Ormsby-Gore that communications were still constantly being seriously damaged and trade hampered in every direction.

Simultaneous with the arrival of Nuri the Syrian revolutionary leader, Fawzi (ed-Din) al-Kawukji, entered Palestine at the head of an armed band and declared himself the Commander-in-Chief of the Arab Revolution in Southern Syria (Palestine).<sup>42</sup> Soon after Kawukji's assumption of control, Peirse reported:

Rebel tactics improved and the bands showed signs of effective leadership and organization. They were well supplied with arms and ammunition and the extension of their sphere of operations to districts outside the habitually active areas showed that their numbers had increased considerably.<sup>43</sup>

Other Syrian rebel leaders like Said el-'As (who was killed in October 1936) and Sheikh Muhammad al-Ashmar arrived during the first week of September probably as a result of the Mufti's efforts.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the growing strength of the rebels and the perseverance of town-dwellers in their general strike, the Palestine political leaders were anxious to hammer out a compromise with the Government. During the second part of August, 'Awni wrote to Wauchope 'saying in effect, that the Arab leaders might be prepared to call off the strike and disorders if they could be assured that the restoration of order would be followed by the complete stoppage of immigration',<sup>45</sup> which was largely in line with the solution Wauchope and Ormsby Gore had advocated a few weeks earlier, which was supported by many British officials, in view of 'the growth of the Arab national spirit'.<sup>46</sup> Time and again Wauchope warned that the alternative, advocated by the military, was the adoption of most drastic means to end disorder which will become more violent than now, a large increase of present garrison and an end to all hope of securing a settlement, that will also leave as embittered, sullen, and in their hearts, rebellious Arab population ready to rebel in any future year'.<sup>47</sup>

Convinced though he was that Wauchope's recommendations constituted the best course of action, Ormsby-Gore found himself unable to act in accordance with his convictions. On 19 June 1936, the House of Commons discussed the situation in Palestine. In the speeches of the members the immense strategic value of Palestine in war and peace was emphatically stressed, The speakers tended to equate the security of British interests with the success of Zionism in Palestine. The Zionist campaign against the proposed temporary suspension of Jewish immigration, was highly effective in forcing the Government to change its attitude. In an interview with Ormsby-Gore, Weizmann and Ben Gurion intimated that if Britain appeased the Arabs the Zionists might change alliances and assist in dislodging Britain from the area 'but they had steadily rejected any overtures of this kind'.<sup>48</sup>

#### Britain's Course of Action

In a meeting of the Cabinet devoted to the discussion of the latest