

vegetable market in Haifa killing 23 people and wounding 79 most of whom were Arabs. A general strike was declared in all the major cities and Aifab centres and in Haifa the strike lasted more than one week.¹⁰⁷ Other bomb explosions in Jerusalem and Haifa exacerbated Arab-Jewish relations and triggered off a series of attacks on Jewish colonies. The organisation of night squads supplemented by Jewish supernumeraries under Captain O.C. Wingate to take the offensive against the rebels by night and to protect the IPC pipeline¹⁰⁸ represented the highest stage of British-Zionist convergence in the period under study.

On 7 July, MacMichael reported 'some extension and intensification of gang activities in northern and central areas. Number of rebels appears to be increasing and their organisation appears to be improving'.¹⁰⁹ Haining submitted that his troops were facing a people in rebellion for even where the bands were small it was difficult to control rural areas since the villagers took

every opportunity to indulge in sniping, minor sabotage and the laying of road mines. . . This form of resistance is difficult to deal with as it is extremely hard to find a target to hit. In addition, the sympathy of the inhabitants are with the gangs and not with the British Government.¹¹⁰

During the summer of 1938 the rebellion reached its climax. A Higher Council comprising the major rebel leaders was convened at the request of the Central Committee for *Jihad* to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination between the rebels. The Higher Council resolved to persevere in the struggle until Britain conceded Arab demands. At the height of their power the rebels constituted the supreme authority in most parts of rural Palestine with their own legal and administrative set-ups.¹¹¹ Reflecting their peasant origin and sympathies, the rebels issued a moratorium on all debts as of 1 September 1938, and warned that debt collectors and land-brokers should desist from visiting the villagers. Another warning was issued to contractors engaged in constructing police posts and roads.

The growing power of the rebels led to an exodus of thousands of rich Palestinians, land-brokers and pro-Government notables. During the summer of 1938 Arab city-dwellers had to adopt the villagers' head-dress, the *kuffiyya*, in order to protect the infiltrating village rebels from being detected by the Police and the troops.

The Rebels Occupy the Cities

By the end of August and despite harsh punitive measures against those harbouring the rebels,¹¹² Civil Government had almost completely broken down in the major cities and towns owing to systematic attacks on Government offices by the rebels and to the suspected collusion of Arab Police. In Haining's opinion, the increasing number of attacks in the cities and the damage and dislocation caused to government property and communications was

symptomatic of what is now a very deep seated rebellious spirit throughout the whole Arab population, spurred on by the call of a Holy War. The rebel gangs have now acquired, by terrorist methods, such a hold over the mass of the population that it is not untrue to say that every Arab in the country is a potential enemy of the Government however moderate his own personal feelings may be.¹¹³

In view of these developments, Haining and MacDonald urged that a second division be sent out in October in place of the proposed Brigade. before the arrival of the requested reinforcements 'Civil administration and control of the country was, to all practical purposes non-existent'.¹¹⁴ Armed rebels took many cities by storm and in other cases they infiltrated and took control of major cities with the objective of wholesale insurrection to effect complete reversal of British policy with particular reference to Partition and Jewish immigration. The opening of the citrus season did not divert the attention of the rebels as they and their leaders had no interest in the citrus trade.

Alarmed by the deteriorating situation in Europe brought about by German irredentism, the new Colonial Secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, and the Cabinet resolved to take measures designed to contain the rebellion and induce the Arabs to come to terms with Britain. He proposed to issue a public statement, announcing the increase of military and police forces in Palestine and disclosing his intention of inviting representatives of the Arabs of Palestine and of the Jewish Agency to discuss with HMG the recommendations of the Palestine Partition Commission Report in October.¹¹⁵ He intended to make it clear that there could be no question of the Mufti or any other exiles from Palestine representing the Palestinian Arabs in the proposed discussions.¹¹⁶ MacMichael lost no time in advising the Colonial Secretary against such terms, for

When one has excepted Mufti and his staff there are no Arab