

representative leaders except rebel leaders in the hills. The very name of 'moderates' has become a term of abuse.¹¹⁷

As the Palestine Government were against negotiations with the Mufti, MacMichael suggested bringing the more obliging neighbouring Arab rulers into the picture. He later suggested negotiations with the Arab Mayors of Palestinian cities and towns.¹¹⁸

As the European crisis worsened, MacDonald warned MacMichael that the proposed reinforcements might have to be diverted and the 'rapid organisation of a Jewish volunteer Defence Force may be necessary despite all objects'.¹¹⁹ In view of the fact that Egypt might become an important theatre of war, in addition to Iraq's particular importance, the British Government were eager to restore friendly relations with the Arabs.¹²⁰ At the same time in case of war friendship and support of the United States, where the Jews are considerable factor,¹²¹ would also be a matter of vital concern.

Nevertheless, British strategic interests demanded the achievement of reconciliation with the Arabs of Palestine and the neighbouring countries and the termination of the rebellion. MacDonald proposed to suspend immigration should war break out.

Haining and MacMichael were of the opinion that the postponement of partition and the complete cessation of immigration offered the only hope of eventual peace in Palestine. Haining warned that this did not imply an immediate settling down of the Arabs. The second phase of the rebellion, he submitted, was less dependent on outside help than in 1936, and there was no one to influence the rebels who are nationally minded people.¹²²

Certain Arab statesmen shared Britain's anxieties regarding the continuance of hostilities in Palestine at a time when a European war seemed imminent. In October, Tawfiq Sweidî, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, was a frequent visitor to the Colonial Office, and there were reports that a temporary cessation of Jewish immigration was being considered. A feeling that considerable concessions to the Arab viewpoint were imminent prevailed both among Arabs and Jews.

Chamberlain's policy of appeasement towards Hitler succeeded in preventing temporarily the outbreak of a war between the European powers. Before MacMichael returned to Palestine on 14 October, a policy had been set in London designed to bring an early end to the rebellion and to keep the Arabs quiet during the expected war with Germany.

Reconquering the Country

During October, the rebels infiltrated Jerusalem and by 17 October the Police had been driven out and the rebels had gained complete control of the Old City. On the following day it was announced that the military authorities had taken over control of the Jerusalem district from the civil power. Four days later military control was extended to the rest of the country, and the campaign to re-establish British rule, which amounted to a 'virtual military reoccupation'¹²³ of Palestine, commenced.

With two divisions, squadrons of airplanes, British Police, Trans-Jordan frontier forces, as well as six thousand Jewish auxiliary forces under his command, Haining set out to re-establish control over the cities by a co-ordinated drive against the rebels which involved the occupation, cordon and search of virtually all the larger villages of Galilee and Samaria. These operations enabled Haining to start a general disarmament campaign and encouraged the anti-Mufti forces to make their presence felt by providing information and identifying captured rebels.

The mounting pressure on the rebels exposed their inner organisational weaknesses and the serious consequences of the absence of a political leadership able to mobilise the masses as well as the absence of an effective military leadership able to face the challenge of overwhelming modern British might. Confusion arising out of abuse in the collection of contributions and taxes harmed the prestige and the authority of the rebels. Excessive indulgence in some unnecessary political assassinations encouraged the pro-Government Arab elements to openly defy the rebels.

On 9 November 1938 the Report of the Palestine Partition Commission was published,¹²⁴ accompanied by a covering statement of Policy from the Government. The Report ruled out the Peel partition scheme as impractical and accordingly the statement of policy announced that the Government had decided to abandon partition and to continue with the Mandate as it was and make an endeavour to arrive at a solution between Arabs and Jews by holding a conference of Arab and Jewish leaders to which representatives from the independent Arab States would be invited. The purpose of the proposed conference was not an Arab-Jewish entente, but rather the imposition of a British solution, in which both parties would acquiesce, calculated to take the wind out of the sails of the Arab rebellion in the hills.¹²⁵

The Palestinian Arabs welcomed the abandonment of Partition and derived comfort from the fact that representatives of the Arab States