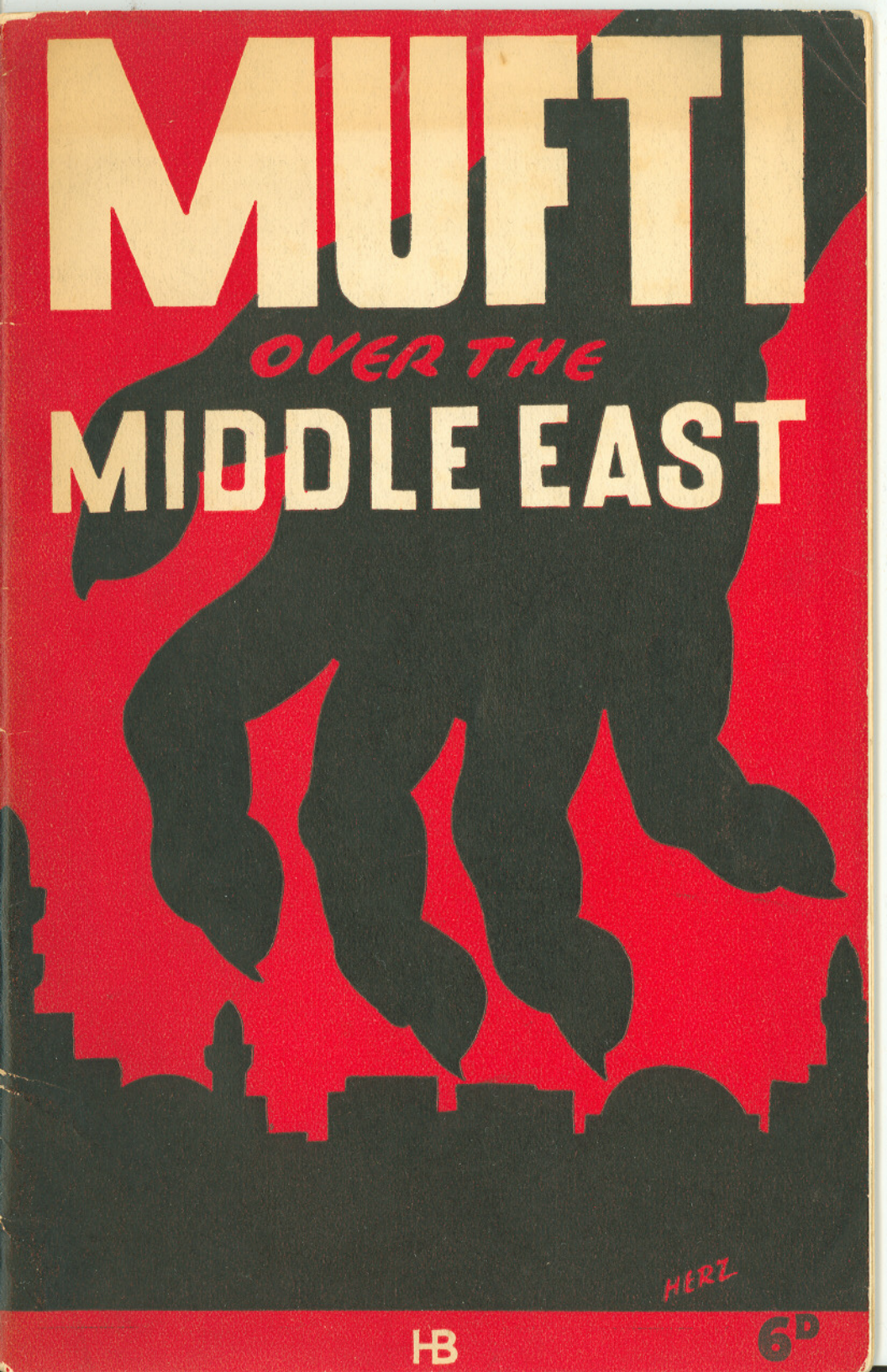


# MUFTI

*OVER THE*

# MIDDLE EAST



*HERZ*

HB

6<sup>D</sup>





*The Mufti was received by Hitler at the Reich Chancellery  
in Berlin on December 8th 1941*

# MUFTI OVER THE MIDDLE EAST

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## MURDER IN JERUSALEM

It is April 4th, 1920. The sky over Jerusalem is clear and blue. Below, the housetops, church spires, synagogues and mosque domes gleam in the brilliant rays of a powerful eastern sun. But in the cobbled alleys and narrow lanes between the crowded buildings of the old city, there is shadow, thick black shadow, whose darkness is deepened by contrast with the sharp brightness above.

Along a lane in the centre of the city, a pious bearded Jew hurries by. He glances neither to the right nor to the left. He is bound for the synagogue. Half way up the lane, a break in the buildings allows a thin shaft of light to pierce the blackness and paint a golden stripe across the cobbled paving. As he reaches the spot, a figure with a dull coloured *kefieh* and dressed in Arab garb darts out of a doorway. Silently but swiftly, he raises his arm in a deft sweep upwards, and brings it down hard between the shoulder blades of the Jew.

The hand holds a dagger. Its point finds the Jew's heart. He falls, rolls on to his side and is still. The golden beam picks out his mouth, giving a richness to the red blood that trickles out, to mingle with the dust and dirt and ooze along the thin channels between the cobblestones. The Jerusalem massacre has begun.

In another street, at almost the same time, a Jewish woman on her way to market had her throat slashed from ear to ear. A child returning from school was too terror-struck by the fiendish grin on the Arab's face to feel the long, tapering knife being run through his soft body. Terror and astonishment were the expressions still on his lifeless face when he was lowered, uncoffined, into his final resting place.

Within an hour, men, women and children had fallen at the hands of the assassin. And some victims were not left untouched even in death. There was the Jew who was found on the sidewalk with his belly ripped open and his boots dug deep in his entrails...

Jerusalem, city of peace, had become a city of carnage. Centre of three great religions embracing one half of the human race, on this day in April 1920 it had become a city of infamy and cruelty. For the first murder was but the beginning of a mob attack by a set of hooligans who ran among the Jewish population, slaughtering, butchering, burning and pillaging. The massacre was no spontaneous outburst of hatred. It was a carefully planned attack with a definite political purpose, inspired by a gang of ruthless political racketeers. The victims were Jews. But it was not only against the policy of restoring the Jewish people to their National Home that the blow was struck. It was even more a blow against Britain, Britain who had conquered Palestine in 1917 and was about to inaugurate her



period of mandatory rule.

Ringleader of this gang of anti-British racketeers was a young man, still in his twenties, whose benevolent countenance, large blue smiling eyes, and expression of amiable innocence masked a black and treacherous heart—and a limitless ambition. His name was Amin el Husseini. The world knows him today as the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem. His ambition? The Dictatorship of the Middle East. Amin el Husseini had struck.

With the Jerusalem riots of 1920 this distinguished career of uninterrupted political gangsterism began. Attacks on individual Jews in Jaffa and on the Jewish suburbs and settlements in 1921 followed. The disturbances of 1929 were conspicuous for the horrifying massacres in Hebron and Safed. Government House in Jerusalem was attacked in the same year. After a brief lull, another wave of individual acts of terror were organized over the succeeding years. In 1933 there was an open clash with the British police in Jaffa. The rising was quickly suppressed by the resolute action of a British officer. Behind all these acts stood one man, who always knew how to use his ecclesiastical position to cloak his dark designs and cover his responsibility for this wholesale bloodshed in the Holy Land.

It seemed that his real chance had come in 1936. Hitler was in power in Germany. Mussolini was preparing to celebrate his "victory" in Abyssinia. Both were anxious to give Britain as much trouble as possible in the East. The Quislings' time had come—three brief years before this war started. In Palestine they found the man. He was eager to offer his services. They were just as eager to accept them. Here was a chance to foment rebellion in the Empire and sever Britain's Imperial life-lines. Haj Amin got the job as the first Arab Axis' Quisling.

In 1937, he escaped from Palestine, setting up rebel G.H.Q. in the Lebanon. In the Syrian Campaign against Britain earlier this year he played a key part. When the game was up, he fled to Iraq. There he helped plan the Rashid Ali revolt. With its collapse, he fled to Iran, joining his Axis friends in stiffening the ex-Shah's opposition to Britain. And now he is in Berlin, intriguer's paradise, where, from an office in the Wilhelmstrasse he has already begun to plot, conspire and scheme to give Britain a headache—and a heart-ache—in the Middle East.

Who is this man who seems to combine the religious unscrupulousness and appeal of America's radio priest, Father Coughlin, the demagogic power of that British mountebank the late Mr. Bottomley, the cruel cunning and ruthlessness of an old-time Chicago gangster, and the romantic attraction of a desert sheikh? Who is he? What is his background? What are the real facts behind his latest plots?

## KORAN AND DAGGER

Haj Amin el Husseini—to give him his full name and title—is a member of one of the patrician families of Palestine who until recently exercised little influence outside Jerusalem. The main branch of the family was not of Palestinian origin. They were the al Aswads, (i.e. the Blacks), Yemenites, who rose on the Moslem social scale after one of them had married the Sheikh Abu Ghosh, who owned much land round Jerusalem. Later, one of the male members of the Aswad family married the daughter of a Moslem notable named el Husseini, who claimed descent from Hussein, son of the Caliph Ali and Fatima, only daughter of the Prophet Mahomed. Though contrary to Moslem custom, the eligible Aswad assumed his wife's name because of its prestige and influence. In order, however, not to effect a complete break, he assumed the double-barrelled Aswad-Husseini. But the grandfather of Haj Amin, Mustapha, decided that Aswad was a liability and dropped it altogether.

Mustapha, owing to his friendship with the Turks, became in the late 1890's Mufti of Jerusalem, which was then under Ottoman rule. His appropriation of the distinguished name, Husseini, angered many leading Arab families, who persuaded the Turkish Governor of Jerusalem to forbid the Mufti the use of that name. But the family saved themselves from disgrace by getting one of their relatives, Shukry Bey el Husseini, who was then in the Turkish capital, to "fix" the government. And Husseini they remained.

It was an event only in the Husseini household in Jerusalem in the year 1893 when blue-eyed Amin entered this world. By all accounts he was an average youth who showed little inclination for study. Nor did his family consider it worth providing him with anything more than a modest education. He went first to a local Moslem school and then to the Government school in Jerusalem. But at the age of nineteen they thought it was time he had some serious coaching and he was sent to Cairo. There he was admitted to the school of Sheikh Rashid Rida, the basis of whose tuition was Islamic philosophy. This should have been the preparation for a vigorous course of study, to lead if possible to the famous seat of learning, the Al Azhar University. But Amin soon tired of study. He wanted quick results. Leaving Cairo in 1913, he collected enough money to make the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. This trip entitled him on his return to the prefix "Haj", which he decided would be more useful to him in public life than years of study. He was right.

Shortly after his return to Jerusalem the 1914-18 war broke out. When Turkey entered as a belligerent, he served as a Turkish



officer, in some obscure capacity, in Smyrna. With the British occupation of Palestine, he returned and became a clerk in the office of Gabriel Pasha Haddad, Arab adviser to the Military Governor of Jerusalem. From there he was transferred first to the Department of Public Security, later to the Customs and Excise Office at Qalqilieh, and then to Damascus in a similar minor civil service capacity. But he was soon discharged for reasons not creditable to one who was later to receive a religious appointment. He returned once more, jobless, to Jerusalem.

He soon became a teacher in the Rashidiyah school, a Moslem teachers' seminary, and began to seek the limelight of public life. From the very first he showed, like Adolf Hitler, an irrepressible hatred of Britain and the Jews. Both in newspaper articles and in speeches he had considerable success in rousing his audiences to anti-British and anti-Jewish agitation. Violence, as one would expect with a primitive and credulous people, was often enough the sequel to his sermons.

It is generally believed that the fuse of the 1920 riots was set off by Haj Amin's inflammatory articles in the newspaper *Suria al Jenobia* (Southern Syria). The massacres described above followed. Haj Amin, whose responsibility was soon established, fled to Trans-jordan. In his absence, he was tried, found guilty of sponsoring these mass murders, and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

And this might have been the last we should have heard of him. But in 1921 Sir Herbert (now Viscount) Samuel was appointed High Commissioner for Palestine. Sir Herbert was a Jew. And Sir Herbert was British. He had to maintain order and he conceived his task as the duty to deal with scrupulous impartiality—the kind of impartiality which Anatole France once described as the prohibition of both rich and poor from begging in the streets! He decided to make a great gesture, to show, as he believed, that although he was a Jew and an Englishman, he harboured no ill-feeling towards Haj Amin, the common enemy. He probably thought it was a clever move to give the house-breaker the job of caretaker. His first act as High Commissioner was to pardon him and permit his return to Palestine. He was no doubt sincere in the belief that Haj Amin would be so moved by this magnanimity that he would behave henceforth, and all would be peaceful and happy in the Land of Promise. This was perhaps the first notable act of appeasement after the Armistice. It was, of course, as successful as Munich. And Arab, Jew and Briton alike have suffered ever since.

Shortly afterwards, Kamel el Husseini, Mufti of Jerusalem, died, and the problem of his successor produced a bitter controversy among the leading Moslem families. Haj Amin was a candidate, but was strongly opposed by the Arabs of Palestine. However, the British

authorities followed up their pardon by securing for Haj Amin the position of Mufti. He could not, so they thought, after such kindness, continue with his gangster activities. Besides, the idea of a gunman-Mufti sounded too ludicrous. He would be certain, now, as a minor religious leader, to abandon his rifle for the Koran. They did not know their Haj Amin. But Haj Amin knew the British. He bided his time.

A few months later, the authorities in Palestine decided to appoint a President of the Supreme Moslem Council, in which was vested the religious leadership of the Palestinian Arabs. The *Ulema*, or religious notables of the Arab community, were invited to submit nominations for membership of the Council, the President to be appointed from among the first three elected. Haj Amin el Husseini had his clique who put his name forward. But in the elections, he came fourth, and so was outside the scope of eligibility. This did not deter him. He got his agents to work, and by dint of considerable gerrymandering, in which baksheesh played no small part, the person who came third was persuaded to retire from the field on the ground of illness. Haj Amin el Husseini was therefore pushed up to third place, and so came within the zone of selection. The High Commissioner then appointed him over the heads of the first two as President.

No one of course claims that this electoral system was democratic. But it is significant that even in this autocratic system of ecclesiastical appointment, Haj Amin was not the popular choice.

This was the third step in the policy of appeasing the Mufti. It was, in fact, the first major act which launched Haj Amin on his long career of political racketeering. For he was now formally rehabilitated, he was a Haj, a Mufti, and President of the Supreme Moslem Council. With a little cunning and a good deal of ruthlessness, he could perhaps become the most powerful Arab in the country. Amin lacked neither of these qualities.

The Supreme Moslem Council had complete control of the Moslem *Waqf* funds, religious funds which amounted to something like £67,000 a year. Much of this revenue was derived from large holdings of land, leased to tenant farmers on lines similar to those of the absentee effendi landlords. In addition, the Council received a subsidy from the Government amounting to £17,000 a year. £84,000 a year is a considerable annual income for a dictator—for he soon showed his colleagues on the Council that that was how he proposed to interpret his presidential functions. The income was intended for religious and educational purposes, and for social services to ameliorate the condition of depressed Arabs. But Haj Amin had other ideas. In all the years he occupied the Presidency—and he held this post until he fled to Lebanon in 1937—the amount



of money spent on education and social welfare could be counted in piastres. The real money went in the purchase of arms, and in the recruitment and maintenance of an army of paid propagandists, agitators, thugs and gunmen, to carry out the will of Haj Amin. They were to prove their worth in 1936. And the income, too, was to grow in later years from various sources, including banks in Berlin and Rome.

The Supreme Moslem Council also had within its power the appointment of preachers to the Palestinian mosques. Haj Amin had his own ideas about the qualifications needed by such religious preachers. They had, of course, to be "yes-men". They had to be politically "safe". But to qualify, they had mainly to possess a rabid hatred of Jew and Briton. They had to be willing, if the occasion warranted, to "adapt" the Koran to the needs of the hour. And many played their part in subsequent risings by urging their inarticulate flock to "go out and murder the Jewish infidel in the name of the holy Koran"; or by declaring week in and week out that "who kills a Jew is assured of a place in the next world". Yes. Haj Amin chose his preachers well. And in the course of a decade, many mosques in the country were within his control. These officials would receive at regular intervals the political "line" from their *fuehrer* who by now had installed himself and his G.H.Q. in the magnificent Mosque of Omar in the old city of Jerusalem. The Mufti was thus assured of a regular stream of propaganda all over the country through his numerous mouthpieces.

And, finally, to leave no gaps in the totalitarian system, the Supreme Moslem Council controlled the appointment of judges to the Moslem Shariah courts. Only men whom Haj Amin could trust were appointed. Haj Amin was all set. And he could do no wrong. Every important Moslem appointment was in his control. And his decisions could never be challenged in the Shariah courts, for the verdict would always go in the Mufti's favour. He was pressed many times to publish accounts of his expenditure of the *Waqf* funds and the Government subsidy. But Haj Amin always smiled and said nothing. Only a court order could compel him to publish accounts. And no court would make such an order. Haj Amin could do exactly as he pleased. And he did. The Supreme Moslem Council, appointed in 1921, was merely a provisional body. It was to serve only for a term of five years, at the end of which fresh elections were to take place on democratic lines. But Haj Amin had no intention of abdicating. And despite the demand of many Arab elders and notables, no elections took place, neither after five years, nor ten years, nor fifteen years. In September, 1936, the Supreme Moslem Council, in its personnel and constitution, was exactly the same as that appointed in 1921, with the Mufti as the

all-powerful President. Dictatorship of Palestine as a preparation for the Caliphate, and then—ruler of the Middle East: such was his ambition even in those early days. Already in his hands was the religious control of the Palestine Moslems. And to this backward, impoverished, illiterate and superstitious mass, religious control meant every other kind of control—particularly when there was a Gestapo to keep would-be waverers in check and to silence Arab opponents.

With such power easy gains were registered in a comparatively short time, and the Mufti looked for a quick realisation of his dreams. The revival of the Caliphate was a possibility, though the right moment had to be awaited. But this or other prospects of his becoming a man of destiny in the Middle East could, he knew well, hardly be realised in "normal" times. There were the divergent interests and rivalries of Arab rulers. And, as far as Palestine was concerned, there was the ever growing civilising factor of Jewish immigration and settlement, which would, he felt, "corrupt" the Arabs, and undermine his influence. The British he looked upon as a rather easy-going lot, and easy to deceive; but he did not feel that they had in them the makings of a trusted accomplice for thuggery. Their influence was, in the long run, bound to have a steadying effect on the affairs of the Middle East. But in an atmosphere of calm and peaceful growth the Mufti's dreams could not mature. Hitler and Mussolini were his natural allies.

Some of this was known in Palestine. But, curiously enough, in England little was understood of the Mufti's behind the scenes activities. He was always referred to with reverence. He seemed to be accepted as the Palestine Allah, the repository of all the virtues of truth, kindness and learning. Around him was built up a kind of halo of romance and saintliness. He even became the "Grand" Mufti, though no such title existed. Only after 1936 did the British public come to recognise him as the blackhearted bounder he really was. But long before that, in the neighbouring Arab countries, the mere mention of the Mufti of Jerusalem drew smiles from the lips of venerable Moslem notables and religious leaders. Pierre Van Paassen, the noted American Foreign Correspondent, referred to the Mufti as "His Eminence", when speaking to the Sheikh-President of the Al-Azhar University in Cairo, that great centre of Koranic learning which has produced many leaders of Mohammedanism in the East. "What", said the President, "His Eminence? In Islam, there are no 'eminences' and no 'grand' muftis. Before Allah all men are equal. And it ill behoves a religious teacher to assume such redundant titles".

It was suggested to the Sheikh-President that perhaps Haj Amin's



claims to have descended from the Prophet entitled him to some special title.

"Son of the Prophet is he?" replied the President. "A son of Satan, that is what I call him for making such a claim. There are ten thousand descendants of Fatima in Arabia, and their names are known, but they do not bear titles to distinguish them from ordinary Moslems. That would mean a sort of spiritual aristocracy. There is no room in Islam for such things".

"As for Haj Amin el Husseini being 'Grand Mufti', I have already said that there is no such title. A mufti is a teacher in Islam. And even to that title Haj Amin should have no claim, for he has not finished a single course of studies here at the University. He owes his appointment to political influence and family connections. He is a politician".

The real coin had the counterfeit well recognised.

## DRESS REHEARSAL

IMMEDIATELY he was appointed Mufti, Haj Amin got to work, planning, plotting, getting his gangs together, preaching, whipping up hatred against the Jews and the British, racketeering, terrorising the Arab workers and fellaheen to do his bidding. But he waited eight years before embarking on a dress rehearsal. In August 1929, the British forces in Palestine were for some reason much depleted. The Palestinian Jewish leaders were away in Europe at a Zionist convention. Attacks were planned in Hebron and Jerusalem. Years of propaganda in the mosques were crystallised in that month by the dissemination among the Arabs of those towns of faked pictures showing the Mosque of Omar in ruins, with the caption that the Jews had destroyed it and were now seeking to build on its site the Jewish Temple. These pictures were handed to Arabs as they were leaving their mosques on a Friday evening. Within a few minutes, for the "Jewish infidel" had again been the subject of the Mosque sermons, Jews passing by on their way to the synagogue were stabbed to death. And, shortly afterwards, frenzied Arab mobs, led by the Mufti's thugs, descended on the Jewish quarter and butchered men, women and children. Jews were slain at prayer, the synagogue was burned, looted, desecrated and sacked. On Saturday morning, the Jewish theological seminary was attacked, fired and the students murdered.

In Jerusalem, there were similar scenes. And there the Arab mobs marched on Government House. Indeed it was only with the help of a band of young Jews that the seat of government was saved, for it took several days before the first contingent of military reinforcements arrived from Malta.

The Mufti had struck again. It was not a large affair; only two cities the main scene of attack; only a few hundreds killed. But the Mufti was satisfied. He had shown the British, the Jews and his own Arabs that he was a force, that he was not afraid to challenge Britain's authority, that what he had done in two cities he could do over the whole country. Another few years, and he could embark on the great adventure, the real bid for power—if only the Government would leave him alone. The Government left him alone, and of the Shaw Commission of Enquiry which was dispatched to investigate the causes of the trouble, only Mr. Harry (now Lord) Snell felt it necessary to record in his minority report:

"I therefore take a more serious view than do my colleagues of the responsibility of those leaders for the character and conduct of the campaign of incitement which preceded the disturbances of August last. I believe that desire to secure the support of a united



Moslem people provided the Mufti with all the motive that he required and . . . I have not the least doubt that he was aware of the nature of that campaign and that he realised the danger of disturbance which is never absent when religious propaganda of an exciting character is spread among a Moslem people. I therefore attribute to the Mufti a greater share in the responsibility for the disturbance than is attributed to him in the report. I am of the opinion that the Mufti must bear the blame for his failure to make any effort to control the character of an agitation conducted in the name of a religion of which in Palestine he was the head."

And he added, with deep insight: "I am convinced that in no sense can the mass of the Arab people of Palestine be associated with the deplorable events of August last. The good relationship which in places obtains between the two races was most strikingly shown during the disturbances by some brave Arab workmen who, at grave risk to themselves and their families, sheltered their Jewish fellow-workers in their homes until the danger had passed and then conducted them, disguised in Arab clothing, in safety to their own people".

Of course that wicked man was not representative of the people he claimed to lead. But that did not prevent his bringing shame on their name and tarnish to their honour.

## A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

IN 1931 Haj Amin, having carried for more than a decade the badge of his pilgrimage to Mecca, decided that he must make himself better known to the Moslem world. He organised the Moslem General Congress in Jerusalem, and then used some of the *Waqf* money and Government subsidy to finance a personal trip to India, Persia, Afghanistan and other Moslem lands to gain political support.

By 1933 the Mufti felt that the time was once more ripe for action. He organised a planned rising against the Government in October of that year to take place all over the country. But it happened on one of the few memorable occasions when the Palestine Administration decided to display a little firmness. The rising fizzled out. Haj Amin continued to pace the gardens of the Mosque of Omar. He could afford to wait.

Hitler had achieved power in Germany. The Mufti, reading reports of Nazi treatment of Jews and Nazi views on Britain, began to see Germany as the paradise of Europe. He lost little time in sending personal emissaries to Berlin. Soon Arab students began travelling to German universities to make contact with the new order in Europe. Many attended training courses for Arab Quislings, arranged by the Nazi party and the German Foreign Office. By 1934 Haj Amin began to see his coffers swelling with grants from the Nazi exchequer. With the growth of Italo-German friendship, the Mufti sent representatives and "students" to Rome and other Italian centres and soon lire began to mingle with the marks in the Mufti's treasury. In addition, he was beginning to collect considerable sums from isolated Moslem communities which he had visited in 1931—sums which have been estimated to total more than two million pounds in all. With all these vast funds, and with German and Italian help, he could begin to think of launching a rebellion on a grand scale. He would call a general strike of the Palestinian Arabs, and mobilise, by incitement or terrorisation, all the male population for a countrywide attack on the Jews and the British forces. He would know how to "persuade" reluctant Arabs, and he would know how to keep the funds going by "accepting donations" from the rich Arab families.

Zero hour was in the afternoon of April 19th, 1936, when Arabs rushed about the streets of Jaffa, shouting that their fellow countrymen were being murdered by Jews in Tel Aviv. Before long, Jews who had been visiting Jaffa for the day had their throats cut before they could escape to safety, and in a short while 16 were lying dead on the sidewalks, and 75 were seriously wounded. Riots continued



until April 21st. On April 25th the Mufti created a new body called the Arab Higher Committee, with himself as the President. Its purpose was to "control and manage the strike of Arabs in Palestine". The rebellion may be said to have started from that day.

The events of the next few months in Palestine are common knowledge. Unlike previous risings, the Jews were now in a position to defend not only themselves but also government property, which they did with great heroism and courage.

Not a single Jewish settlement was evacuated, roads were kept open, the railway lines were kept clear and the Jews, who had trained themselves for defence, joined with the British in combatting the terror and defending the country. But there were regular daily and nightly engagements with the Mufti rebels, and it was six months before some semblance of order was restored. All this is known. But what is not so well known is what went on within the Arab camp, the inside story of the Mufti terror, the thuggery that resulted in the utter bankruptcy of the Arab economy and impoverishment of the Arab masses. In this tale, men who themselves took part in the rising, but who found out the truth about Haj Amin, will tell their own story in their own words. In this tale too will be heard the voices of Arab leaders whose opposition the Mufti had silenced for fifteen years.

The first task of the Mufti was to mobilise his "national" army. This was simple. A section of his thug nucleus would descend on a wealthy isolated Arab village. They would call out the Mukhtar, or headman, and make their demands. We want 50 men, 50 horses, rifles, clothing, food for three days. The alternative? We'll shoot up the village. They got their fifty men.

Once a Mukhtar was "foolish" enough to resist. He was buried quietly the same day. And the villagers paid up just the same. An Arab newspaper was sufficiently "unwise" to object to such activities. The editor was paid a visit by a body of gunmen the next day. The new editor was wiser. The paper changed its policy. A couple of gunmen called on a wealthy Arab landowner, demanded £5,000 "for the cause". He saw the bulge of a revolver muzzle in the fold of their dress. He paid up. They paid another visit a fortnight later, demanded another "donation". He refused. They departed. But he knew it was no use. Two days later, he was shot in an alley 200 yards from his home. He knew his assassins. His family and friends also knew who they were. But the murderers were never caught. They were never even looked for. Everyone knew they were the Mufti's hirelings. But everyone was in the grip of the Mufti terror. The police were powerless. In the Arab villages, the police were Arabs. It was as much as their lives were worth

to take action against the terrorists. And so the Mufti's army was raised, equipped and maintained. Gun-running across the Trans-jordan and Syrian frontiers kept the rebels supplied with the latest types of German and Italian weapons. When food was scarce, the rebels simply billeted themselves on a village, requisitioned food, cattle, grain, clothing. The villagers were happy when they departed without taking their menfolk. Too often, their men went also, taken to fill gaps after any serious losses in the field. A pathetic sidelight on the power of the terror is revealed by the stealthy visits paid at night by sick Arabs and their families to Jewish doctors in neighbouring settlements and villages. They were too scared to go in the open by day. They were right of course. For their next visit would have been to the undertaker.

The Christian Arabs, a minority among the Arab population, came in for a particularly bad time. In addition to having funds extorted from them at the pistol point, they were made, by the same method, to conform to certain Moslem conventions. They were forced to discard their traditional headgear, the tarbush, in favour of the Kefieh. The point seems trivial. But the tradition was so strong that these Christian Arabs felt that they were somehow being forced to change their religion. Similarly, Christian women were compelled to adopt the veil, a strict Moslem custom which is entirely against the habits of Christian Arabs.

The terror bands were also augmented by mercenaries from Syria. The Mufti's recruiting agents went around offering the following terms to all willing to fight in Haj Amin's "Holy War":

- (1) Once the recruits have crossed the Palestine frontier they are to submit to the discipline of the local "command".
- (2) Recruits to be guaranteed their food, clothing, "all other requirements" and £2 a month. Married men to receive a further £2 monthly allowance for their families.
- (3) A special place in Paradise would be reserved for any killed in this "Holy War".

The first condition was satisfied. The local "commands" saw to that. Only half the second condition was fulfilled—food, clothing and "other requirements". But the recruits never received any wages, neither they nor their families. Their "two pounds a month" and family allowance would be paid, they were told, when the "Holy War" was over. And only those who qualified for the third condition ever found out how far the recruiting agents' promises were fulfilled!

This unhappy chapter in the fortunes of the Palestinian Arabs lasted for nigh on three years, though there were two brief gaps in between, in October 1936, when the Royal Commission, headed by the late Lord Peel, were preparing to sail for Palestine, and in



October 1937, when the Mufti fled. In October 1936, Fauzi el Qauqi had escaped. Soldier of fortune, as the romantics would describe him, but in bald English just a plain thug, he had participated in many risings all over the Middle East. When the Palestinian rebellion began, Fauzi was soon on the scene, issuing pompous bulletins "from Rebel G.H.Q." He brought with him a number of assistants and kept up the flow of foreign mercenaries for a considerable time. He was by all accounts quite useful to Haj Amin in giving the local gangsters an adventurous stimulus. But things became very hot for him round about October, when a new British G.O.C.—General Sir John Dill, until recently Chief of the Imperial General Staff—began to take more vigorous measures to restore order. And on the night of October 25th, 1936, with a large party of armed mercenaries, and accompanied by many Palestinian Arabs, he crossed the Jordan south of Beisan into Transjordan, there to embarrass Emir Abdullah, until they moved on in their own good time across the desert and into Iraq.

But the armistice was short-lived, and after the Royal Commission had left for England, and before their report was published, the terror broke out again. This time it was directed even more ruthlessly against the Arabs who had been determined opponents of the Mufti, or given him only lukewarm support, or who had shown evidence of being tired and exhausted by the useless carnage, launched for the personal gain of the Mufti. In addition, just as in Germany, Hitler had received much support in the early days from the rich industrialists and landowners who thought he was playing their game, so in Palestine, Haj Amin had in the early years found considerable aid from the rich effendis and absentee landlords. These were the overlords whose prestige, power and wealth were dependent upon the existence of the feudal system. They were the ones who saw in Jewish development, in their modern system of agriculture and industry, and above all in the impact of modern civilisation and democratic method a direct menace to their feudal rule. They had to destroy the chance of co-operation between the Arab and Jewish people. The Mufti was their great opportunity. And they backed him in the belief that with the Jews and British turned out of the country, and the Mufti and themselves in the saddle, their lands would be secure, their tenant slaves maintained in servitude, their life could continue in its rich, fat, luxurious, tyrannical opulence. But now Haj Amin was making heavy inroads into their fortunes. He was disturbing their comfort, their security. His demands became too heavy, too insistent, and too frequent. And they began to show opposition and turn against him. Many were shot, as those who opposed the Mufti for noble reasons were shot. Many more escaped, finding the air in Egypt, Damascus or Paris more healthy. In four

months during 1937, more Arabs than Jews and British combined were shot by the Mufti's men.

But the opposition had some effect. For the Government on October 1st 1937 were finally forced to take action which should have been taken a year before. Members of the Arab Higher Committee were rounded up and deported to the Seychelles Islands. The Mufti, who had wind of this Government move, slipped out of a side door of the Mosque and, dressed in the garb of an Arab peasant woman, was smuggled on to a boat moored on the Palestine coast and was landed at the Lebanon.

Palestine breathed a sigh of relief. The Mufti's opponents began openly to voice their feelings. But it was premature. For in a few weeks, the terrorism was in full swing again. The Mufti, installed in his elaborate hideout in the Lebanese republic, was able to continue directing the Palestine rebellion, with ease, in comfort, and in freer contact with Hitler's and Mussolini's agents. How much he continued to receive from Berlin is not known. But into his villa near Beirut poured each month the regular sum of £5,000 from Rome. From his new headquarters he recruited bands which crossed the frontier into Palestine. He organised a vaster scheme of gun-running. He influenced the Syrian and Lebanese press. He hired agitators. He terrorised the Syrian and Lebanese governments by working with their opponents and threatening to turn his rebellious attentions to them.

But with Haj Amin out of the country, Arab leaders in Palestine who had been intimidated into silence during the early part of the terror, began to find their voices. Associates who were at first attracted by the "noble and religious appeal" of the Mufti's cause began to learn things. And they too found courage to echo their feelings. Soon the true character of the Mufti became revealed to his own people as first-hand evidence of his intrigues and gangster racketeering began to pile up. Haj Amin the man, the religious leader, the politician, and his fifteen years of activity were condemned out of hand by the Arabs of Palestine.



## "I ACCUSE"

FIRST to come out in open opposition to the Mufti was Fakhri Bey Nashashibi, a member of one of the most notable families in Palestine. Here is his fearless "I accuse" statement:-

"I accuse Haj Amin el Husseini, the former Mufti of Jerusalem, of diverting the noble Arab revolt to his own selfish ends. I also accuse him of using funds collected for the relief of Arab sufferers in Palestine to buy arms and ammunition to further his own ambition. Haj Amin's fifteen years' tenure of office in Jerusalem proved his destructive tendencies . . ."

This was issued in October, 1938. A month later, Fakhri Bey published a pamphlet in Arabic in which he declared:

"When Haj Amin was deprived of his office of President of the Supreme Moslem Council, and escaped and sought refuge in Beirut, he was joined by a group of his followers who had built up their careers with the money of the poor, the needy and the orphaned. There and then they began their campaign of terror and murder, there and then they launched their work of destruction, making shameful use of the well-meaning, and sweeping the country into an ocean of blood and evil.

" . . . Those who work for Haj Amin are but creatures whose task it was formerly to stand up in mosques and make slanderous accusations, and for whom the coffers of the *Waqf* were opened. Let their payment cease for a day and we shall soon see them forsake and overthrow their master. I could name them, one by one, and produce evidence as to how much remuneration each is getting. Suffice it to say that Haj Amin would not publish an account of the funds he received in 1936, because he dare not speak the truth about them.

" . . . When he realised that he could not establish himself securely enough without money, he did not hesitate to spend the funds of the *Waqf* on a group of adherents and supporters who would build up a large following for him.

"And when the funds of the *Waqf* did not suffice, he appealed to Moslems abroad, and they contributed generously, unaware of how the money would be spent. And when income even from this source began to dwindle, after the Moslems had begun to realise what had become of their gifts, then he offered the country at public auction on foreign markets. Soon a document was discovered to the effect that he was working on behalf of foreign countries. When the fact was made known he thundered and filled the earth with threats, with the object of dissociating himself from the document,

but the noise was short-lived, and in the end he contented himself with the discharge of employees of the Supreme Moslem Council whom he accused of the theft of his personal papers. . . .

"Nothing has moved me to make this declaration but the state of misery into which the country has drifted and the dastardly crimes that have been committed. *Loyal Arabs and their families are being victimised every day, and their property wantonly burned and destroyed for no other crime of their committing than that they are opponents of the Mufti. Why need he murder, torture and destroy if he is truly such a beloved leader as he claims to be?*"

Fakhri's declaration served to rally the intimidated Arabs. On November 30th, 25 local Arab leaders, representing 45 villages, met at the house of Fakhri Nashashibi and addressed a Press Conference. Here is the report:-

"Some scores of fellaheen, including bearded and turbaned Sheikhs, typical young countrymen, and a youth whom the murder by rebels of his father and uncle leaves head of his family, gathered secretly by night at Fakhri Bey's house to assure him of their support for his campaign against the Mufti forces. They represent villages in the Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Hebron, areas which are claimed to total 70,000 people. They constantly reiterated their fear of death if their names became known, and admitted that they would have to pretend to support the Mufti when, as often happened, armed men came to force them to sign up. Most of the men had suffered personally from terrorisation, having lost sons or relatives. They maintained that though they represented 70 per cent. of the people they are silent in face of armed threats."

On December 6th, *The Times* carried a despatch from their Cairo Correspondent, who reported that 50 prominent Palestine Arabs who had sought refuge in Egypt had issued a message of support to the opponents of the Mufti:

"Over 50 Palestinian Arabs, who met in the house of Sheikh Ali Shahine, decided to protest against the murders committed in Palestine by partisans of the Mufti of Jerusalem, to send a telegram to Fakhri Bey Nashashibi approving of his recent action in opposing the Mufti, and to send a telegram to the High Commissioner for Palestine declaring their disapproval of acts of terrorism and the policy of the Mufti."

The days following saw the mounting courage of Arab Moderates canalised into a vigorous condemnation of the Mufti and his terrorist methods. At a meeting in the Arab village of Yatta, on December 18th, attended by 3,000 Arabs, representing 60,000 Arab villagers, detestation of the terrorist movement was expressed in the most



emphatic terms. The Sheikh of Yatta, Khalil es Shariff, said the following:

"Palestine Arab newspapers, whose proprietors have been compelled through terrorism to leave the country, and which are today published under the supervision of the terrorists, convey to the inhabitants nothing but falsehood and hypocrisies . . .

"The Arab Press has built up barriers of deceit and error in order to conceal the truth. If the Press has the intention to work for the interests of the nation and the prosperity of the country, it must destroy these barriers, and convey to the people the naked truth. . . .

"A wave of terrorism has loosed destruction on the country, ruining the villages and their inhabitants through murder, looting and destruction, carried out by men who were given instructions to strike terror into the hearts of the Arabs in order to gain support for certain personal interests. . . .

"At the head of these criminals was placed a man who has nominated himself Commander-in-Chief of the Rebellion in Palestine, this man being Aref Abdul Razzik. . . .

"By his campaign he has killed on the orders of his colleagues, both of Beirut and Damascus, more than 200 Arabs, the anguish of whose widows and children still rings in our ears. . . .

"We place the responsibility for the crimes of murder and the destruction of property on Haj Amin el Hussein, now in Beirut, and his men who have surrounded him".

Who was Aref Abdul Razzik referred to by the Sheikh of Yatta? Who was Fares el Azzuni, Hamad el Zawati, Abu Durra, and the other henchmen of the Mufti who carried out his terrorist plans? Let their associates speak for themselves. Early in 1939, eight former "regional commanders" of the Palestine terrorist movement, who had fled to Syria, followed up the Nashashibi campaign of opposition to the Mufti by publishing a manifesto condemning the campaign of terror, and accusing the Mufti of receiving large sums of money from "foreign sources" and spending it in his personal cause. The manifesto continues with a number of illuminating biographical sketches of the people who directed the Palestine Arab terror. Here is their document, translated literally from the Arabic so as not to impair its picturesque and somewhat quaint language:

"In order that the Moslem and Arab worlds should know the truth about these matters, it would be sufficient to give the names and description of some of the commanders, who were relied upon by Haj Amin el Hussein and his faction in Palestine to carry out acts of destruction and sabotage in Arab property and to murder

the best of Arab patriots and the most truthful to the country who had the interest of the people at heart.

#### AREF ABDUL RAZZIK:

This person started his life by highway robbery and robbing the fellahin. In 1923, he had with him seven brigands of whom he was the leader. He was operating between Nablus and Tulkarem robbing everyone who walks on the Nablus-Tulkarem road and from the fellahin, who work hard for their living. When he was arrested in that year, he was convicted of that abominable crime and was sentenced to three years' imprisonment which he served. When he was released, he became a land broker and sold more than half the lands of Taibah village, Tulkarem Sub-District, to the Jews. At last he joined this rebellion, and murdered, in compliance with orders of some members of the Arab Higher Committee and their associates, not less than 300 Arabs of the best men of the country. He never attacked a British Military Camp or a Jewish settlement. He contented himself with the collection of money and when he had completed the collection of something like £20,000 he fled the country.

#### FARES EL AZZUNI:

A murderer and a highway robber. He absconded from prison where he was serving a sentence of 15 years for many crimes. Commander Aref Abdul Razzik used to rely on him in murdering innocent people, in terrorising peaceful inhabitants and in committing acts of looting and robbery. He went so far as to kill his uncle and abuse the honour of his mother when she went to beg him not to murder the son of her brother, whom he had murdered.

#### HAMAD AL-ZAWATI:

He was a shepherd and used to steal sheep from other shepherds. In 1936, he stole a sheep and was sentenced in consequence to six months' imprisonment. He served part of his sentence in prison and then absconded. This person murdered not less than 50 Arabs of the best people of the country. He was well known for stealing the worshippers' shoes from the Mosques.

#### ABU DURRA:

He was a member of the Al-Jawlani band. Previously, he used to hawk about mineral water on a barrow which he used to drive through the streets of Haifa, as everybody knows. Now he possesses two private cars: one for himself and the other for his respectable wife whom he married during the rebellion through terrorism. He is now leading in Damascus the life of Kings, in luxury and comfort.



In murder and robbery, he was of the same type as Aref Abdul Razzik, nay, both of them emulated each other in getting the palm in these pursuits and in winning the satisfaction of the Mufti.

#### THE MUFTI:

Those and many other similar persons are the Commanders in whom Haj Amin Eff. has exclusive trust. It is they who have desecrated the holy rebellion through exploiting it for Haj Amin's selfish aims.

Now it is time to say who Haj Amin is: A member of one of the noblest families in Jerusalem. Nobody denies him that, but his education was ordinary. After staying in Egypt for eight months, he was appointed as acting mufti in Jerusalem. He lost in the elections, but the High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel appointed him president of the Supreme Moslem Council, in exploitation of the rebellion of 1921-22.

His activities in the Supreme Moslem Council during eighteen years may be summed up in that he received as proceeds from the *Waqf* property something like *one million pounds*. For the Syrian rebellion, the disturbances of 1929, the reconstruction of the Aqsa Mosque, the Wailing Wall, the relief of the distressed in 1929, 1933 and 1936, and finally for the present rebellion in Palestine, he collected as contributions from Arab countries, America and India not less than *two million pounds*. This is in addition to the sums of money which he collected for the Aqsa Mosque, and the Moslem Congress and the inestimable sums of money received from foreign powers. These are millions of pounds but can Haj Amin at least point to a single mosque, a school or a hospital he erected during this period? Did he build a shelter or an asylum or a charity cistern from which poor tramps could drink?

There are about 20,000 persons in the country of orphans and sufferers. Will His Eminence, or his responsible adherents point to us one orphan or one distressed person who has received even one piastre from the relief funds? Can His Eminence or his henchmen say that one piastre has been paid in compensation for the property demolished or blown up by the troops or for the houses and orchards damaged? Can His Eminence publish a statement showing the manner in which these funds were spent? And, finally, can he publish a statement in respect of the latest contributions which have been collected by the Arab Delegation to the U.S.A.? Can he explain where and how these contributions were spent at the time when we, the Mujahidin, cannot find anything with which to maintain ourselves except through begging. Is His Eminence aware that the majority of the Mujahidin, now dispersed in Syria and the Lebanon, are homeless and go to sleep hungry while His Eminence's friends supporters and relatives live in luxury, receive large monthly salaries

from the relief funds of orphans and spend their nights in cabarets, live with dancers and each one of them has a number of stray girls".

Further documentary evidence from the terrorists themselves of the real nature of the inner Arab terror was found in rebel Arab documents seized by the British after an engagement. They are quoted in Kenneth Waring's article in the *London Times* of January 18th, 1939:

"Rebel Arab documents seized by the troops in some recent engagements . . . provide sensational proof that the sacred Haram-esh-Sharif has been the scene of murder, bomb-throwing, and rebel Courts-martial, and evidence that even the rebels themselves are disgusted and alarmed at the terrorism of Arabs by Arabs which has marked the latest stages of the campaign. . . .

"Still more tragic in many ways is the picture of the suffering the rebellion has caused through setting brother against brother, party against party, and through honeycombing the life of the people with spying and burdensome exactions. . . .

"The following letter, written on November 18th to 'the Warrior Abu Mansur', by Hassan Salama, styling himself 'Leader of Jaffa, Ramallah, and Lydda area', and signed and stamped with his seal, shows what one leader writes confidentially to another:

"Greetings: I have got important news which I would like to disclose to you. Complaints are being received from the villagers of the Jerusalem District as a result of pillaging, looting, killing, and torturing committed by some of the vile people who are wearing the clothing of holy warriors. Many people who have been unfortunate enough to live in this area are sending in their complaints. I admit that there are among the murdered people some who have been sentenced to death, but what are the faults of the innocent whose money is stolen, whose cattle are looted, whose women are violated, whose jewels are pillaged, and who suffer in many other ways of which you have undoubtedly heard? Our rebellion has become a rebellion against the villages and not one against the Government or the Jews".

These outbursts of opposition seriously disturbed the Mufti. Regarding Fakhri Bey Nashashibi as the most dangerous of his opponents, he ordered his henchman Abdul Razzik to issue a death warrant, calling on every Arab "in the name of God" to shoot Fakhri on sight. This death warrant was published in the Damascus paper, *Al Istiqlal al Arabi*. We reproduce it here, in its original Arabic and in translation. And remember. This call to murder is made by a man who had pretensions to religious leadership:



# الحكم بالاعدام على فخري النشاشيبي

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
وواعدوا لهم ما استظفتم من قوة  
(العدل اساس الملك)

ديوان الثورة العربية الكبرى  
سوريا الجنوبية — فلسطين  
الرقم ١٠٩-٣٨  
التاريخ ٨-١٠-٥٧  
٣٨-١١-٣٠

## الى الرأي العام

من خرج على الامة وهي جمع، فاقتلوه بالسيف كائنا من كان

(حديث شريف)

لما كان فخري النشاشيبي عضو حزب الدفاع قد والى الاعدام بمذكرته التي تهاون فيها بحقوق البلاد، وادعى ما ليس له حق الادعاء ولما خرج على اجماع الامة، واتفق مع السلطة الانكليزية والصهيونيين، لذلك فديوان الثورة العربية الكبرى يعتبره مرتكباً لحرم الحيانة العظيم ويقرر الحكم عليه بالاعدام ويبيع دمه وماله •  
وعلى كل عربي ان ينفذ هذا الحكم ان استطاع اليه سبيلاً  
وكذلك يملن ديوان الثورة العربية الكبرى ايضاً انه يبيع دم وماله كل مشايخ افخري النشاشيبي لخروجه على اجماع الامة •  
والقضية الوطنية لا تتسامح مع المتآمرين والداسين، والوطن فوق الجميع •  
وقد اعذر من انذر •

المتوكل على الله : عارف عبد الرزاق

الاستقلال — لسنا بحاجة الى التعاقب على كلمة ديوان الثورة • انها ابغ الكلمات وانصحبها واكثرها صراحة واقواها منطقاً وابلقها حجة وانبلها قولاً واشرفها فعلاً •  
فلنمش الثورة وليمت الحقنة •

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MERCIFUL,  
THE COMPASSIONATE . . .

TRIBUNAL OF THE GREAT ARAB REVOLUTION—  
SOUTHERN SYRIA—PALESTINE  
TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

WHEREAS FAKHRI NASHASHIBI, a member of the Defence Party, has joined himself with the enemy in his memorandum, which is a disparagement of the country's rights;

AND WHEREAS he has made pretences to which he is not entitled, and has put himself in a position, vis a vis the nation generally, of coming to terms with the British Government and the Zionists;

NOW THEREFORE the Tribunal of the Great Arab Revolution considers him to have committed the crime of High Treason, and passes sentence of death upon him. His blood and his property are now held forfeit. Every Arab is to carry out this sentence if he finds a way to do so. The Tribunal of the Great Arab Revolution hereby also declares that the blood and property of anyone who joins himself with Fakhri Nashashibi is likewise forfeit, for such persons thereby oppose national unity. The National Cause shows no mercy on intriguers and conspirators, for the Fatherland is above all. Trusting in God.

AREF ABDUL RAZZIK.



But Fakhri is still alive\*—and in Palestine. The Mufti is, at the time of writing, also alive—in Berlin. What happened?

Each day the Arabs of Palestine drew fresh courage to resist the Mufti's men. Each day saw new expressions of protest from sheikhs in different parts of the country. The Arabs were tired of murder, tired of hunger, tired of intimidation. The rebellion fizzled out to an indifferent end. By the beginning of 1939 the peace of exhaustion had crept over Palestine. Gradually, normal life began to return. The women went out into the fields. The orange harvest was gathered in. Shops opened. The bazaars began to buzz. The crack of rifles was no longer heard. The backfire of cars along the road alone punctured the still atmosphere of the countryside. And to the Jewish settlements, which had continued meanwhile to grow and develop, Arabs began to pay their friendly visits, no longer afraid of Mufti spies. In the towns, Arabs talked with Jews in cafes or at street corners, impervious to the earlier harangues in the mosques not to consort with the "Jewish infidel".

This is not to say that the hatred of the British fostered by the Mufti in the Arab heart vanished overnight. It has not. The memory of the bitter attacks during those grim years cannot be wiped out in a moment. At present all is quiet. But it would be unwise to underrate the effects of Haj Amin's anti-British propaganda and rebellion in the minds of the Arabs.

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\* These lines were written at the beginning of November. They are no longer true. For on Sunday, November 9th, while Fakhri was walking through the streets of Baghdad, an Arab rode past on a bicycle and shot him dead. The assassin was a Palestinian. His connection with the Mufti's organisation has been proved. The long hand of Haj Amin had found its victim. Fakhri was murdered while the Mufti was on his way from Rome to Berlin. There were rejoicings and celebrations in the Wilhelmstrasse when he arrived. He had shown his Axis masters that distance had not impaired his capacity to terrorise and murder.

## LEBANESE SIESTA

In his villa near Beirut the Mufti still plotted and planned. He was undaunted by the collapse of his Palestine rebellion. In the Lebanon he had made new contacts. His eyes were still on the horizon of the Middle East. And Hitler's agents told him that war was inevitable. Then would come his great chance. With Britain at war, the possibilities for a successful Middle East rebellion allied to the Axis were limitless.

The wheels began to turn.

Since he left Palestine, the Mufti had regarded his Lebanese hideout as a temporary abode. True, there were many useful contacts with enemy agents, which he fostered with scrupulous industry. But it could never be more than a subsidiary centre of intrigue. The Lebanon and Syria were under French Mandatory rule. The dissident native factions with whom he would wish to work—and with whom he did, in fact, collaborate—were more interested in being anti-French than anti-British. No. The Mufti's eyes were on Baghdad. That was the best Arab centre from his point of view in which to plan and plot his anti-British schemes. For Iraq had, after all, been a British mandated territory, and British influence was still strong. There was far more scope for anti-democratic activity, and far more important anti-British elements than any to be found in Syria. Moreover, it was nearer to Teheran. And in Teheran was centred Hitler's powerful trouble-shooting machine, complete with Nazi agents, propagandists, spies and fifth-columnists.

But for the moment he wished to stay as close to Palestine as possible. So in Lebanon he remained, collecting money for the "distressed Palestine Arabs", sending out hundreds of letters daily to Moslem notables in various lands asking for donations and political support, seeing local newspaper editors, and of course conferring with the consuls and agents of Hitler and Mussolini. Haj Amin must have regarded this work as coming under the heading of "keeping his hand in" during his political convalescence. It would be wrong, however, to underrate the dangers of his stay in that country. The groundwork put in by the Mufti was later to add to Britain's difficulties when, a year after the French collapse, a year of anxiety and complications in our relations with the Vichy authorities in Syria, Britain decided to march northwards from Palestine.

There is an interesting factor which might here be recorded, though it is incidental to the main tale. There were many causes for the collapse of the Mufti's Palestinian rebellion. I have mentioned those for which the Arab people made themselves responsible. An



important contributory factor was Jewish resistance. Not only were the Jews not intimidated into retreat and abandonment of their home and farms. They spurred themselves to an intensified development programme. In all those years of Mufti terror they created more than sixty new agricultural settlements. They fashioned a new technique in land settlement, establishing an embryo village, with portable huts and stockade, within twenty-four hours. On the second day they were already ploughing their fields. Many of these settlements were founded in remote outposts on the Palestine borders and the Jewish settlers played a valiant part in checking gun running and the smuggling of bandit mercenaries from Syria and Iraq.

Later when Britain and Vichy France were locked in battle in Syria, these Jewish settlers again proved their worth in helping to maintain a vigilant defence of the frontier. There are reports that members of these northern Palestinian outposts were in the advance guard that marched into Syria.

By the time this step was taken, Haj Amin was in Baghdad. The forces friendly to Britain had given way to elements who were seeking to ally themselves to Nazidom, confident of Britain's defeat in the Middle East. Among them were many who had rebelled against Britain twenty years before and whose enmity towards this country was still bitter. Head of the Cabinet was Rashid Ali el Khilani, later to achieve notoriety as the Quisling of Iraq. Haj Amin got to work. In the Lebanon, most of his intrigues went on behind the guarded doors and shuttered windows of his villa. He rarely showed himself, and paid few outside visits. His contacts always came to see him. If they were too important, or if a visit to the Mufti was considered too embarrassing, his agents would see them. But in Baghdad everything was different. He walked about freely, reciprocated visits, attended at different mosques each week to make himself known to the Iraqi public. Near to his villa he established a large office. Officially, this office was designed to deal with the affairs of Palestine exiles. In fact, it was a kind of miniature Wilhelmstrasse. True, it had a number of departments concerned with the problems of the exiles: a welfare department, to find them employment; a fund-raising department to carry on the work, begun in the Lebanon, of sending out thousands—no longer hundreds—of letters each week to all Arab and Moslem notables and institutions in the world, seeking financial help "for the distressed Arabs of Palestine"; a propaganda department; and a political department to keep in touch with Arab governments and politicians. But the real function of these departments was far more sinister than the alleviation of distress. That function was political. These departments were part of what was already becoming a powerful fifth column machine. The "fund raising" department

was the Treasury, which was also responsible for collecting the Axis "donations". The political department maintained close contact with Germany's Middle Eastern oasis at Teheran. And part of the propaganda department's function was to send regular despatches to Yunis Bakhari, the Arab "Haw-Haw", the Iraqi in Berlin responsible for Germany's Arab broadcasts. It is believed that these despatches were sent by the Mufti's propaganda department by radio. It is significant that although, before Haj Amin publicly identified himself with the Nazi cause, he denied on occasions that he received Axis money, he and his followers admitted their regular contact with Yunis Bakhari in Berlin.

The "Welfare" Department to find employment for Palestine Exiles was largely devoted to securing positions for them as teachers in the Government schools of Iraq. A percentage of their salaries went to swell the Mufti's coffers. And these "teachers" also served as a useful branch of Haj Amin's propaganda machine.

What line of goods was Haj Amin selling in the political bazaars of Baghdad? The broad picture he held out was the creation of a vast Arab kingdom to include Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palestine and Transjordan. Such a kingdom would rival Egypt in power and influence. And once created, it would be strong enough to establish in Egypt a party favourable to the inclusion of Egypt in such a kingdom. This vast pan-Arab bloc, linked to a victorious Nazi Germany, would play the role in the Middle East which Japan would be playing in the Far East and Nazi Germany in the West.

This plan had been worked over by the Mufti and Germany's agents in the Middle East. There had been some hard words exchanged between the agents of Berlin and Rome, Germany urging the united Arab kingdom scheme, and Italy objecting, preferring the states to remain single entities. As in Europe, so in the Middle East, Italy was ignored and the Mufti was ordered to proceed with the Arab bloc plan.

Subsidiary to the main article were the immediate political goods that had to be sold. These were that (a) the plan was desirable, and (b) that the plan was possible. The Mufti concentrated on article (b). Of course it was possible. Documents provided by the Axis agents showed that Berlin had decided on a simultaneous land, sea and air blitz of the Middle East in the spring or summer of 1941. Was it feasible to doubt its success after Hitler's brilliant series of victories in the West? Nor was the price which Hitler was demanding exorbitant. All that was wanted was (a) the stirring up of disturbances in the east, particularly in countries under virtual British rule, notably Palestine and Transjordan, and in lands like Iraq upon whose friendship Britain relied; (b) the destruction or



immobilisation of Britain's eastern lines of communication; (c) assistance to Germany's invasion forces "when they arrive".

The plans began to assume concrete shape. An example of the lengths to which the Mufti and his co-planners were prepared to go—and actually did—may be appreciated by the fact that at an important meeting in Haj Amin's Baghdad office, a shadow Cabinet was suggested, with the task of preparing the way for the creation of a Middle East pan-Arab bloc backed by Nazi Germany. The actual cabinet proposed was to consist of two representatives from Palestine, three from Syria, one from the Lebanon, three from Iraq, one from Saudi Arabia and one from Transjordan. In addition to the head of the Cabinet, or Prime Minister, these representatives were to head the following departments: Foreign Affairs, Defence, Treasury, Propaganda, Youth Affairs, Transport, Education, Labour, Home Affairs, and Tribal Affairs. There are good reasons for not publishing the complete list of names. But it will do no harm if two are revealed. The Defence Ministry, No. 2 in the Cabinet, was to be filled by Fauzi el Qauqji, "Generalissimo" of the terrorist bands. And the head of the Cabinet, the Prime Minister of this shadow government? None other than our friend Haj Amin el Husseini, ex-Mufti of Jerusalem.

## REVOLT IN BAGHDAD

THE time had come for Haj Amin to provide his shadow with substance. At the close of 1940, the Germans intensified their Arabic radio blitz. From the Berlin radio stations pronouncements were blared forth, calling upon the Arabs to rise and join their Nazi friends in casting out the British tyrants. The Nazi victors of the world would create a grand Arab dominion to be sovereign and all-powerful in the Middle East. The Mufti followed up this Berlin exhortation by some pretty industrious underground work on members of the Iraqi Government—and particularly on Premier Rashid Ali—urging them to give serious consideration to the German promise and to endeavour to draw from it the maximum advantage. German agents at the same time sought to win over elements of the Iraqi press so that the pro-German campaign could be run concurrently. The agents succeeded in securing a number of Iraqi papers, headed by *Al Istiqlal* and *Al-Aalam-al-Arabi*. Haj Amin also succeeded. He won over Rashid Ali. From then on his task was a cakewalk.

The first thing he got the Premier to do was to call a Cabinet meeting from which pro-British ministers were excluded. This meeting decided to send one of their members to Ankara, to meet von Papen and secure definite assurances, "in writing if possible", as to Germany's real intentions towards the Arabs in return for Arab help. The emissary decided on was Naji Shaukat Pasha. Ostensibly he was proceeding to Turkey on a trade mission. If taxed by the pro-British ministers, he was to say that he had met von Papen by accident.

Naji Shaukat went to Ankara. He met von Papen. He returned with a German pledge in his pocket, guaranteeing the frontiers of existing Arab States and promising independence to states not yet of sovereign status. The Mufti urged Rashid Ali to put the plan to the Cabinet for acceptance. The Premier did so. But at the meeting, the pro-British ministers threatened to resign and expose the whole plot unless the plan were withdrawn. Rashid Ali did not feel strong enough to insist, and the meeting ended without a definite decision. But Haj Amin was still at Rashid Ali's elbow. Within forty-eight hours, seven officers of the Iraq Division stationed in Baghdad called on the Regent at 11 o'clock at night with the following demands: (1) to intern all pro-British politicians; (2) to accept Rashid Ali's programme and sign an agreement with the Nazis.

The Regent played for time, and asked them to wait until the morning. The officers agreed, and left. The Regent immediately



summoned Nuri es Said Pasha, the foremost pro-British minister, and both decided to leave Baghdad immediately, press for the resignation of Rashid Ali's Cabinet, and set up a Government friendly to Britain. At 2 a.m. a big car nosed its way silently out of the palace gates, and set off in the direction of Diouania, where an Iraqi Division, noted for its loyalty to the Hashamite dynasty, was stationed. In the car sat the Regent: by his side was the boy King Hinukah. At 2.30 a.m. another car carried Nuri es Said Pasha to Amman in Transjordan.

On the following day, the Regent sent a letter to Rashid Ali demanding his resignation—failing which he would be officially dismissed—and an advice to M.P.'s to pass a vote of censure on the Government. The Commander of the Baghdad Division of the Army was instructed to arrest the seven rebel officers. Taha el Hashimi was to form a new Cabinet and to inform all Iraqi notables that he (the Regent) would not return until his instructions were carried out. At the same time, the Commander of the Diouanian Division contacted his friend the Commander of the Basra Division, and both decided to help the Regent and, if necessary, march on Baghdad, even if it meant civil war.

The Mufti saw Rashid Ali, urged him to be firm and maintain his stand. The Nazis were behind him. It would not be long now. But when the Premier faced Parliament next day, he was only on his feet a few moments before there were whistles and catcalls, cries of "Down with the Cabinet" and "Long live the Regent". Rashid Ali realised he had lost the confidence of the House. He threw in his hand. He resigned. In a few days Taha el Hashimi was head of a new Cabinet. The Regent and King returned from Diouania and Nuri from Amman. Order was restored in the capital. But to preserve Iraq's good name abroad, it was resolved to maintain a veneer of continuity of policy with previous Cabinets and Taha issued a declaration that his Government's policy maintained that of previous ministerial policies, that Iraq wanted to keep out of the war and to observe to the full the Anglo-Iraq Treaty.

Haj Amin had lost another round.

But not for long. The defeat spurred him to intensify his propagandist efforts—and nothing was done to stop him. What he could not achieve while Rashid Ali was in office, he tried to achieve now that he was in the political wilderness. And so, with his Nazi friends, he began to plan the great revolt which was to sweep Rashid Ali into power in Iraq and pave the way for a German Middle East invasion, and eventually a Middle Eastern dictatorship with Haj Amin in the saddle.

The next few months were spent in stoking the fires of rebellion, and in April, 1941, the Mufti struck again. Taha was deposed, the Regent fled once again, and supreme at the head of affairs was Rashid Ali—no longer mere Premier, now Dictator of Iraq.

The succeeding events are too recent to need recalling. The British acted this time with great firmness and speed, and after several weeks' fighting drove out Rashid Ali and his friends. The Regent returned, and a new Cabinet was formed under Jamil Madfai. Rashid Ali had been let down by the Mufti. And the Mufti had been let down by his German friends, whose preoccupations in Greece and Crete had seriously upset their timetable.

Rashid Ali el Khilani and Haj Amin el Husseini found themselves once more on the road. This time journey's end was Teheran.



## PERSIAN LULLABY

IN Teheran the Mufti found himself as much at home as he was in the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem. For in the capital of Persia were all his old friends, the arch-agents of the Axis, who had backed him during his Palestine revolts. In a few days he was back at the old job, scheming, intriguing, planning. Once again, the round of the mosques; once again, the "distressed Arabs of Palestine" fund box; once again the letters to the Moslem notables of Arab lands. The only thing he had to change was the address on his notepaper. There was still benevolence in his large blue eyes. The look of amiable innocence still covered his face. The white band of the Haj around his tarbush still added dignity to his appearance. His beard, once silken and red, was now grey. And this somehow gave a new holiness to his countenance. But his heart was still black and treacherous.

He got to work with the enemy of Democracy.

Who knows whether this last fling of the Mufti might not have been crowned with the great success he had always envisaged—Caliph of all Islam, Dictator of the Arab world, the Hitler of the Middle East—had not Britain struck and struck swiftly. It was an unhappy day in the life of this evil dreamer when the British army from the South-East and the Soviet army from the North started their joint occupation of Iran. For behind the ex-Shah's opposition to Britain, behind his delaying tactics postponing action against the Germans in Iran following the British-Soviet requests, behind his decision to resist, after the allies had decided on occupation, stood the sinister Mufti, surrounded by the Nazi agents. But this time the game was really up. For the country was ringed—south and east by British troops, north by Soviet troops, west by British occupied lands. Haj Amin seemed trapped. He dived for the nearest funk hole, and found refuge first in the Bulgarian and then in the Japanese Legation at Teheran.

"Will he escape once again?" was the question on everyone's lips. He had already slipped through British fingers three times. This moved Beachcomber, the *Daily Express* humorous columnist, to write the other day: "Unofficial spokesmen, out of touch with authoritative sources, are saying that the elusive Mufti cheated. We hid our eyes, and counted up to a hundred, but the Mufti shouted 'Cuckoo!' before we had reached forty-seven, and ran away". Beachcomber, some thought, was unkind. The Mufti could not possibly give Britain the slip a fourth time. Yet he did. For weeks there was silence over his whereabouts. And then came the surprising announcement that he had turned up at

an airport in Southern Italy. Hitherto he has always fled eastwards—Lebanon, Iraq, Iran. And when the British and Soviet armies neared Teheran, his eyes may still have turned east, to Afghanistan, as the next stage on his journey of escape. But astride his path lay the Allied armies. Or he may perhaps have felt Europe now to be the Axis playground, offering prospects of more profitable sport closer to his Axis masters. Whatever the reason, the Mufti went west—so far, only geographically. Immediately on landing in South Italy, he moved up to be close to Il Duce in Rome. He was officially reported to be the guest of Mussolini who as "Protector of Islam" offered the fugitive asylum. The Italian official announcement, welcoming Haj Amin to his spiritual home, the city of Fascism, recorded "Italy, who knows the Grand Mufti's sentiments of friendship and admiration for Fascism and the Duce, is glad to know he is safe". Mussolini placed at his disposal a palatial house just outside Rome, which was to be Haj Amin's political Headquarters. He was to gather around him a staff of "political workers". The *Tribuna* reported that Haj Amin "will have important talks with Moslem dignitaries living in Europe and with 'eminent personalities' of Rome. He will also visit Moslems in the Italian Empire".

But Haj Amin must have decided it was time he met the Boss himself. He stayed only a few weeks in the Italian sunshine. And on the night of November 9th he arrived in Berlin, where, in the words of a Wilhelmstrasse spokesman, he would be accorded the "full honours due to his exalted rank". He is expected, according to this reliable official, to remain in Berlin "for a long time" and he is described in the Nazi press as "a great champion of Arab liberation and the most distinguished antagonist of England and of Jewry".

Berlin and Rome may well rejoice in toasts to their latest visitor. Haj Amin served them well in the past. He will continue to serve them.

But it is to be hoped that all this will satisfy once and for all those in this country who have always sought to explain away the Mufti's misdeeds, protesting that he was a friend of Britain. We cannot afford to go on being fooled. If Haj Amin has foxed us by giving us the slip once again, he must not be allowed to fox us into appeasing his friends. The *Manchester Guardian*, mindful of the records of the Palestine Administration and the Colonial Office in Palestine policy warned in a leader on October 28th, the day Haj Amin's escape to Italy was announced, that from Italy and Germany "he will stir up trouble for us, using the wireless to demonstrate that since we never catch the Mufti we had better continue to appease the Mufti's friends, as we have done so long with such shining success". The warning—and the chiding—are only too unfortunately justified.



Yes, we can certainly expect another spell of trouble from Haj Amin. But we should at least now decide to learn something from our past mistakes. We can do much by recognising the Mufti as the black-hearted villain he really is. We can keep in mind the fact that though his feet pace the *piazas* of Rome or the polished halls of the Wilhelmstrasse, his dark shadow hovers over the Middle East. And there are still elements there ready to do his bidding, as the murder of Fakhri Nashashibi shows only too well. Haj Amin is a dangerous man. With him at large, no matter where, the Middle East cannot be free from the threat of revolt, bloodshed and disorder.