

arrival of Churchill in Jerusalem the deputation – headed by Musa Kazem – left Palestine 12 March and returned two weeks later. Churchill, reluctantly, received the deputation but refused to discuss political questions on that occasion but said he would be pleased to see them in Jerusalem on 28 March. During their stay in Egypt the Palestinian leaders were invited by Syrian-Lebanese political figures to banquets and gatherings where speeches in favour of Arab unity were delivered:

On the evening of the 19th the Syrian Union Party held a meeting where the possibility of joining forces with the Arab Palestinians was discussed in the interests of the complete independence of Syria.³⁶

While in Cairo Muza Kazem saw Dr Ismail Bey Sidki, of the Watani Party, who advised him to form a national party in Palestine to work for complete independence. Muza Kazem's reported reply revealed the basic strategy of the Muslim-Christian Association's leadership at that stage:

Musa Kazem said that the intentions of the Palestine Delegation included complete independence, but they desire, if this were not possible, that the real power should be with the English and not with the Jews; they desired also their own parliament.³⁷

When Churchill visited Palestine, he found that the Palestinians were eager to convey to him their strong feelings against Zionism wherever he went. Although no official intimation of the hour of the arrival of the special train bringing the Colonial Secretary and the High Commissioner to Gaza had been received,

Large and expectant crowds of people assembled and many persons came in from outlying villages.

During the visit cries of 'Long Live the High Commissioner and Mr. Churchill', 'Down with Balfour', and 'we won't have the Jews' were heard.³⁸

When the Governor of Haifa prohibited demonstrations on 25 March and issued warnings regarding the risks and penalties attendant upon joining in a demonstration forbidden by the Government, the demonstrators defied his orders and a collision occurred with the police,

one Christian boy and a Muslim were killed, one Christian injured by a bullet wound, and ten Jews injured by knives or stones and five policemen were slightly injured.

Three days later the Governor of Jaffa refused to grant permission for a peaceful demonstration. As a consequence all Muslim shops were closed in protest. On the same day in Jerusalem, a large but orderly demonstration was held to protest against the Balfour Declaration.

On 28 March, the deputation of the Executive Committee of the Haifa Congress met Churchill at Government House, Jerusalem. A comprehensive memorandum, which Churchill described as a 'very able paper', on Palestinian Arab grievances and demands was presented to the Colonial Secretary. The memorandum accused the British Government of creating the national home idea and of putting life into it and carrying it into execution even before the ratification of the Mandate by the League of Nations. It dealt with the Palestine problem from legal, historical, moral, economic and political points of view and concluded by putting forth five Palestinian Arab demands calling for the abolition of the JNH, stoppage of immigration and land sales, the establishment of a national Palestinian government, responsible to a parliament, and the non-separation of Palestine from her sister states.³⁹

In his reply Churchill informed the Palestinian leaders that it was not in his power to repudiate the Balfour Declaration and to veto Jewish immigration to Palestine, which the JNH policy inevitably involved. The Balfour Declaration was a *fait accompli* brought about by the War that the Arabs in Palestine could do nothing about but accept.⁴⁰

He assured his visitors that the Government fully intended to stand by the second part of the Balfour Declaration which in fact imposed a dual obligation on the Government, 'if one promise stands so does the other'.⁴¹

In the light of Churchill's offhand treatment of the Palestinian leaders, it was not surprising that the Monthly Political Report for April should have started by stating that 'The visit of the Secretary of State gave satisfaction to the Jews and brought disappointment to the Arabs'.⁴²

Captain Brunton of the General Staff Intelligence in Palestine reported that Churchill's visit had added to the anxiety of the Palestinians because the Colonial Secretary 'upheld the Zionist cause and treated the Arab demands like those of a negligible opposition to be put off by a few political phrases and treated like bad children'.⁴³

The heavy-handedness of the troops and the killings that took place during the Haifa demonstrations on 28 March increased hostility to the