

Of greater significance was Brunton's reference to several incidents that occurred on the first day's rioting which caused the Arabs to suspect the impartiality of the troops and the Authorities. The instances cited by Brunton included 'the placing of Jewish guides on the armoured cars'; 'a Jewish civilian being seen and heard ordering British soldiers to fire on the crowd'; and 'the searching of Arabs by Jews in front of British soldiers'.<sup>49</sup> These incidents precipitated what Brunton described as a monster demonstration on 2 May, where Palestinian Arabs demanded the replacement of British troops by Indians and demanded arms to defend themselves against the armed Jews.

Troubles continued on 3 May and killing on both sides occurred, considerable damage being done to Jewish shops. Women played 'a considerable part in urging on the Arabs to attack Jews',<sup>50</sup> while the notables were trying to calm the population and had a very 'good effect'.<sup>51</sup>

The events that took place in Jaffa during the first three days of May galvanised the villagers in other Palestinian districts into a truculent mood. Samuel reported to Churchill that several Jewish colonies were attacked in various districts:

It has been necessary to send detachments of troops, armoured cars, aeroplanes, and police to a number of different places, and to request the naval authorities to send warships to Jaffa and Haifa as a precautionary measure.<sup>52</sup>

The more serious clashes however occurred in the district of Jaffa. On hearing that Arabs were being killed by Jews in Jaffa; the neighbouring peasants and beduins were immediately drawn into the foray.

On the 5th May some 3,000 Arabs (according to reports) had assembled to the north of the Jewish colony of Petah Tkvah (Mulebbis) about 10 miles north of Jaffa. Another force of Arabs several hundred strong was preparing to attack from the south.<sup>53</sup>

Government forces repulsed the attackers and pursued them with a loss of sixty killed and many wounded. The Haycraft Commission estimated the number of killed during the Jaffa outbreak at 95, of whom 48 were Arab and 47 Jewish, and 219 wounded of whom 75 were Arab and 146 Jewish.<sup>54</sup> These statistics exclude some of the casualties of the 5 May

attack.

Brunton informed his superiors that the Zionists were trying to substantiate a theory to the effect that the outbreak of 1 May 'was premeditated by the Arabs and that it was arranged by a few notables, encouraged by French intrigue'. In his opinion:

Nothing could be farther from the truth. I have carefully gone into the case, and there is not a vestige of proof of French or other intrigue. On the contrary, the attitude of the French consul appears to have been all that could have been desired. There is no evidence of premeditation on the part of the Arabs.<sup>55</sup>

In view of his opinion that the Jaffa disturbances were not a simple outbreak of mob violence but rather an expression of a 'deep seated and widely spread popular resentment at the present British policy', Brunton found it inescapable to recommend concessions to the Arabs on Jewish immigration, or failing that increasing the garrison in order to enforce British support for Zionism in Palestine.

The Haycraft Commission were impressed by the level of crude political interest and consciousness in the Palestinian towns and villages like Tulkarem:

In a small Moslem-centre of this sort the people are more politically minded than a small English country town, and the discussion of politics is their chief, if not their only, intellectual occupation.<sup>56</sup>

#### **The Role of the Notables**

In a report to Churchill, Samuel attributed the outbreaks to political and economic considerations aggravated by the increase of Zionist immigration. The Arabs, Samuel added, demanded representative institutions and regarded the Administration as unduly autocratic.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the delay in the ratification of the Mandate 'has been an important factor in preventing the quiet settlement of the country'.<sup>58</sup>

Samuel conveyed his feeling of gratitude for the leaders of the 'Arab Nationalist Movement', i.e. leaders of the Haifa Congress and of the Muslim-Christian Associations, who

used their best efforts to calm agitation. . . If the political leaders had set themselves to foster, instead of to check, the present agitation, the whole country could have been thrown into a state of turmoil, and order would have been reestablished only with the greatest