

French authorities in the territory mandated to France'.³ In fact, this was not the case.

The 'Green Hand Gang'

The 'Green Hand Gang' was organised in October 1929 under the leadership of Ahmed Tafish and mounted an operation during the same month against the Jewish Quarter in cooperation with their supporters within the town of Safad. During the following month the band was reinforced by a number of seasoned Druze revolutionaries who fought the French in the famous Druze Rebellion of 1925 and who soon became the backbone of the enlarged band. A second attack on Safad in mid-November spurred the Administration to despatch 'Palestinian and British Police reinforcements' to the area. Shortly after the arrival of the reinforcements in Safad, the guerrillas appeared in the Acre Sub-District where they started ambushing police patrols. Towards the end of December the arrival of large troop reinforcements made driving operations against the guerrillas possible. The French 'afforded valuable assistance by patrolling the Syrian frontier with a large force of French troops'.⁴

The guerrillas proved to be elusive as they were 'working in an area where many of the villagers were sympathetic to them'.⁵ However, lack of coordination and cooperation between the band and the Palestinian political leadership dimmed the prospect of the spread of armed resistance to other areas, notably, the Nablus District. Combined military operations conducted against the band in the first two months of 1930 caused a temporary break-up of the band and the apprehension of sixteen of their original number. As late as 22 February Chancellor reported that the band was reassembling and that further operations were being undertaken against the remaining fighters.

The coming of the dry season, the arrest of the band leader in Trans-Jordan, the combined efforts of the Police and the Army and the failure to organise armed bands in other parts of the country provide possible clues to the failure of the 'Green Hand Gang'.

The Foremost Arab Grievance

The Shaw Commission were convinced that Zionist land acquisition and Jewish colonisation were the foremost Arab grievance, 'the fears of the Arabs that the success of the Zionist land policy meant their expropriation from the land were repeatedly emphasised'.⁶ When the Jewish National Fund acquired Wadi Hawarth lands at an auction ordered by a court in satisfaction of a debt, Chancellor was certain that trouble was

inevitable as

further purchases of agricultural land by the Jews can be made only by dispossessing Arab cultivators of the land they are occupying and so create a class of landless peasantry.⁷

The Shaw Commission reiterated the opinion expressed by the Haycraft Commission that 'The Arab fellaheen and villagers are therefore probably more politically minded than many of the people of Europe'.⁸

The villagers, however, were not the only victims of pressure created by Zionist immigration. The Arabs, the Shaw Commission reported, were convinced that Zionist land settlement and immigration schemes would inevitably result in the complete subordination of the Arabs as a race, the expropriation of their people from the soil, the unemployment of a large number and their displacement by Jews.⁹

Despite the plight of the *fellahin*, the threat to urban Arab workers, and the failure of the Mandate to establish self-governing institutions, the political notables were determined to stick to their traditional attitudes towards the British Government. Encouraged by the findings of the Shaw Commission, the personal disposition of Chancellor and the emergence of a new Labour Government under Ramsay MacDonald, a new Arab Delegation elected by the Executive Committee proceeded to negotiate with HM Government in London a change of policy that would prevent disturbances and bloodshed in the future. The Delegation was headed by Musa Kazem and included Hajj Amin, Raghed Nashashibi, 'Awni 'Abdul Hadi, Jamal Husseini and Alfred Rock.

Negotiations in London

The composition of the Delegation represented the desire of the Palestinian political notability to reach an understanding with the Government that would prevent Zionist domination in Palestine and thus render their peaceful disposition towards the Government acceptable to the discontented Palestinians.

The Delegations reached London on 30 March 1930, and were received the following day by the Prime Minister and Lord Passfield, the Colonial Secretary. In subsequent discussions the Palestinian leaders demanded the prohibition of land sales from Arabs to non-Arabs, stoppage of Jewish immigration, the re-establishment of the (Ottoman) Agricultural Bank and the institution of a national parliamentary government in accordance with Article 22 of the League's covenant.¹⁰