

period no further Jewish immigration would be permitted without Arab consent. In certain areas of Palestine no transfer of Arab lands would be permitted whilst in other areas transfers would be restricted.

The Zionists received the White Paper with hostility¹⁴⁰ and vowed to fight it to the finish. From 1939 onwards the Zionists could no longer depend on the British Government as protectors and sponsors of their plan to establish a Jewish State in Palestine; they had to turn to the United States of America for that role.

Resisted by the Zionists as it were, the 1939 White Paper left something to be desired where the Arabs were concerned. Only 'Abdullah and the Defence Party came out in favour of the new British policy'¹⁴¹ Rebel Headquarters viewed the White Paper in a different light. As there was no promise of amnesty for the rebels and no inclination towards a rapprochement with the Mufti, they immediately announced the rejection of the British proposals and promised that the Higher Committee would issue a reasoned and detailed statement shortly thereafter. Before the promised reasoned statement was published, British sources 'had good reason to believe that the members are not unanimous'¹⁴² as some members were inclined to co-operate with the Government's policy as the best means of obtaining further concessions.

Internal squabbles notwithstanding the Higher Committee's statement welcomed Britain's recognition of Arab rights in principle but regretted Britain's failure to grant Palestinian independence 'the holiest of rights and the most precious aspiration of a nation'. Even the postponed independence was subject to a Jewish veto and made condition on Jewish co-operation. Furthermore, the Arabs, the Higher Committee hinted, had no faith in the British Government,

And as long as authority is not in the hands of the inhabitants of the country, there is nothing to prevent the use of means commonly practiced by imperialism.¹⁴³

The Higher Committee's statement concluded by rejecting the White Paper as it did not meet Arab demands which were summarised by their motto, 'Palestine Will Get its Independence within the Arab Federation and Will Remain Arab Forever'.

The Last Hurrah!

Although 'tired of disorder and anxious for peace' the majority of the Palestinians mistrusted the Government's intentions. As a result of rebel

propaganda 'a distinct hardening of opinion against the White Paper' was apparent during the latter part of May 1939. Strenuous efforts were made to continue the rebellion;

Reports from all parts of Palestine are unanimous in confirming that gangs are being reformed under the newly returned leaders and are beginning to move freely about the country. Further evidence of this fact is the occurrence of several engagements in the past 10 days.¹⁴⁴

In Zionist circles, the High Commissioner reported, the policy of violence was 'gaining ground particularly among youths'.¹⁴⁵ For a while it seemed that each side of the Palestinian triangle was involved in a fight against the other two sides.

Mistrust of the Government's intentions, Jewish terrorism¹⁴⁶ and illegal immigration as well as season factors supplemented to rebel headquarters' efforts to reinvigorate the Rebellion. Yet even before the outbreak of the Second World War, it was quite evident that after years of rebellion, the Arabs' power and ability to resist Britain and Zionism by the force of arms had been weakened and exhausted.

One by one the rebel leaders began to disappear, to lose influence or get killed. On 25 March the most sincere and best respect of the rebel leaders, 'Abdul Rahim, was killed in an encounter with British troops and a general strike of sympathy was observed by the all over Palestine. On 13 April, 'Aref 'Abdul Razeq decamped from Palestine and surrendered with twelve of his men to the French over the Syrian border in a state of complete physical collapse owing to hunger,¹⁴⁷ and, on 24 July, Abu Durra was captured near Jordan River by the Arab Legion of Trans-Jordan.

War weariness, continued military pressure, hope that the favourable aspects of the White Paper would be realised in addition to a shortage of arms and ammunition¹⁴⁸ militated against the continuation of the Rebellion. The approach of war brought forth the complete suppression of the rebel headquarters in Damascus by the French. Soon after the declaration of war, the rebellion started to peter out, and MacMichael was able to report that 'as a whole the Arab community has declared its support for the Government in the war with Germany in no uncertain fashion'.¹⁴⁹

The outbreak of the War eclipsed local politics and disorders; the great Palestine rebellion had ended 'not with a bang but with a whimper'.