

27th June, 1936.

Dear Haj Amin Eff.

The High Commissioner has asked me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd June containing the observations of the Supreme Moslem Council on the speech of the Secretary of State for the Colonies delivered during the debate on Palestine in the House of Commons on the 19th June.

The High Commissioner is willing to transmit a copy of your letter to the Secretary of State, but before doing so His Excellency would like to invite your attention to certain aspects of your letter, which perhaps may not have been fully appreciated by Your Eminence.

2. In the first place, the High Commissioner cannot discuss with you the policy of His Majesty's Government in Palestine except on the basis of the Mandate. On that basis, the High Commissioner understands from your present letter as well as from many previous discussions with Arab leaders that the Arabs complain of grievances in respect of three principal issues, viz:

- (i) the immigration of Jews;
- (ii) the sale of land;
- (iii) representative Government.

His Majesty's Government have promised that as soon as order is restored the King will be advised to appoint a Royal Commission to visit Palestine and carry out a full and searching investigation into the causes of unrest and any grievances which may be brought to their notice either by Arabs or by Jews.

His Eminence,  
The President, Supreme Moslem Council,  
JERUSALEM.

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3. It now appears from your present letter that Your Eminence is raising a fourth issue. The Secretary of State cannot fail to conclude from your letter, as it now stands, that the principal Moslem religious authority in Palestine is making an appeal to religious feelings throughout the Moslem world in order to achieve certain political aims in Palestine. Such an appeal must of necessity have unfortunate results at present when the minds of large numbers of Arabs are excited by lawless and violent acts which have been so sadly frequent during the last two months and which you have yourself publicly deplored.

4. For example, Your Eminence suggests that the Moslem Holy Places are in danger from action by the Jews.

His Excellency is aware that you professed a similar belief before the Shaw Commission. You will no doubt recall that in their Report which Your Eminence refers to as "well considered", the Shaw Commission said that they could not believe that the Mufti or any educated Arab could genuinely have entertained the idea that any of the pictures put before them was to be taken seriously as an indication of Jewish designs on the Moslem Holy Places.

That is also the opinion of the High Commissioner and of His Majesty's Government.

5. As regards your statement that the Supreme Moslem Council believes certain things as to what is the principal motive of the Jews in rebuilding a National Home in Palestine, the High Commissioner cannot agree with your statement that the Zionist case is fundamentally and principally a religious case; but he is not concerned to enter into any discussion on matters of opinion.

But he is gravely concerned to contradict your assertion that the Moslem Holy Places



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and inviolability of the Moslem Holy Places are guaranteed by the Mandate. This is a Mandatory obligation of His Majesty's Government from which therefore there can be no question of receding. Moreover it is universally known that the policy of His Majesty's Government is and has always been to protect the Holy places and religious rights of all those entrusted to their charge. This policy has been consistently maintained in Palestine as in all other territories under His Majesty's jurisdiction and will continue to be so maintained.

6. Before leaving this subject, I would take up several allegations in Your Eminence's letter about military action in connection with mosques and a Sharia building. The allegations are being investigated but in the meantime you should be aware that the information in the possession of Government is as follows.

Your Eminence complains of firing at the Jazzar Mosque in Acre. The facts are that the building occupied by offices of the Waqf Administration which adjoins the Mosque has been used as a place of concealment for snipers and bomb throwers, and that from it shots have been fired and bombs discharged at the Police Station opposite.

This fire has been returned but no shots have been aimed at the Mosque either by the Police or soldiers.

Now that Your Eminence knows the facts, His Excellency will rely on you to take steps to prevent the continuing misuse of the Waqf offices by lawless elements.

As regards the Sheikh Raslan Mosque in Jaffa, the new road was specially diverted in order to avoid this building, which I am informed is a Zawieh. If any damage has been done, you may rest assured that Government will

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completely repair any damage for which it is responsible.

The premises of the Sharia Court of Nablus have been occupied by the troops as an unavoidable military necessity for the protection of the Post Office which had been frequently bombed. The Sharia officials have had and will continue to have every assistance from the District Administration in the removal and arranging of their registers, documents, and other effects.

7. The High Commissioner has asked me to explain his views to you at this length as he feels it is only fair to give you an opportunity of re-considering your attitude as expressed in certain paragraphs of your letter. Remembering your correct attitude up to the present in reprobating acts of violence, he would remind you of the responsibility which rests upon you as the head of the Moslem Community in Palestine to declare publicly and emphatically that you are on the side of law and order. If on the contrary, you officially write a letter whose main intent and purport is an appeal to religious feelings and whose effect, if published, would be most unfortunate, the High Commissioner can only say that he will forward your letter to the Secretary of State but he considers it would be much to the interests of the Arabs of Palestine if you altered those paragraphs which seem calculated to excite religious feelings unduly, more especially at this time when the population is so excited.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) J. HATHORN HALL.