

RIOTS IN PALESTINE INSPIRED BY YOUTH

Fanaticism Fanned by Groups
Telling Arabs That Their
Religion Is in Danger.

By JOSEPH M. LEVY
Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

JERUSALEM, May 29.—The present disturbances in Palestine indicate, first, that nothing but force and iron-handed methods can put Eastern hotheads in their place, and secondly, that Moslem religious fanaticism is a fire that once kindled is difficult to extinguish.

The Moslem motto is "Mohammed's religion is by the sword." This originated at a time when rifles did not exist, but today both swords and rifles, with the innovations of burning crops and uprooting trees, are used to defend the religion of Mohammed.

Any one acquainted with the Moslem Arab mentality is aware that it is no easy task to arouse the Arab to rebellion. But once the Arab's religious fanaticism is aroused he becomes wild and almost uncontrollable except when faced with strong force at the outset. The least sign of weakness on the part of the authorities encourages him to pursue acts of violence.

Origin of Rebellion

The present troubles in Palestine are the best example of this. Rebellion has been fomenting for the last few years.

When Abu Jilda, a notorious Arab brigand, appeared in the mountains of Nablus and spread terrorism there, even causing bloodshed among other Arabs, he was exalted by the Arab press and public merely because he was an outlaw against the government.

Every brigand since then has been praised in the same way. When Sheik El Kassam last year instituted a reign of terror in Jenin, he was called a hero of heroes. When he was apprehended and killed in a clash with the police, his funeral was attended by thousands of Arabs from all parts of the country. He was eulogized and praised for killing Jews and Britons in the name of Islam, and to this day he is a martyr and a hero.

When a gang of raiders held up Jews' cars on the Nablus-Tulkarem road last month and killed three Jews, these brigands, despite government warnings, soon became heroes fighting against the infidel government and the infidel Jews.

Youth Came to Fore

It was then that Arab youth came to the fore. They seized the opportunity to spread sensational propaganda and arouse Moslem fanaticism. In all Arab centers, particularly Jaffa, Nablus and Jerusalem, there are Moslem clubs that are centers of the militia, young men's organizations with the most patriotic nationalist ideals and hotbeds of agitation and incitement.

The first place seized by British troops in Nablus this week when open rebellion broke out was the Moslem club, where the troops established their headquarters. Likewise in Jerusalem the first center to which the police directed their attention after a British constable

was murdered was the Moslem club there. In Jaffa, too, all acts of violence and terrorism originated in the Moslem club.

When the present troubles began on April 19, Arab youths immediately availed themselves of the opportunity and entered the field of action, and it was they who on the same evening devised the plan for a general strike. They organized it, forced it on all Arabs and insisted on its strict observance.

When after several days the Arab public began tiring of the strike, the youths again brought about sensational incidents in order to nourish the movement, first in the form of minor acts of terrorism, which gradually developed into major ones.

The Peasants Incited

There were Friday gatherings in the mosques after which street demonstrations were staged, defying the police. Later the method of touring villages, inciting the peasants and telling them that the Mohammedan religion and the country were threatened was used.

With the feelings of the masses thus aroused and aided by the government's leniency in dealing with the troublemakers, the youths without difficulty achieved their aim of creating the state of rebellion now existing in Palestine. These youths are now masters of the situation with the backing of an army of wild, fanatic Arabs as well as educated elements. The latter organize the activities the masses carry out.

The government having allowed the ambitious young Arab patriots a free hand for several weeks, they have had ample time to increase their agitation and incitement activities throughout the country, resulting this week in changing the situation from isolated terroristic acts against Jews to a real rebellion against the government.

In the larger Arab districts in Northern Palestine, in Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarem, sporadic battles are now continually going on between gangs of rebels and British troops.

Heavy Loss of Life

During these five weeks the Jews, while suffering a heavy loss of life and property, have continued to remain law-abiding citizens. They have kept consoling themselves with statements by Sir Arthur Grenfell Wauchope, the High Commissioner, in which he praised highly their self-restraint in not retaliating against the Arabs, and also with repeated statements in the House of Commons by the Colonial Secretary that the British Government would not yield to Arab intimidation and would stand by its obligations under the mandate to aid in the development of the Jewish national home.

The possibility of an Arab-Jewish understanding is now remoter than ever. Here again the government's leniency is largely responsible. It has made the Arabs feel that they are an important force to be reckoned with and they are therefore determined to insist that every demand be fulfilled, especially the stoppage of Jewish immigration.

On the other hand, the Jews regard immigration as the foundation and backbone of the building up of the national home.

From all present indications it seems that the solution of the Arab-Jewish problem will have to be left to Providence. As conditions now exist even the most farsighted observer is unable to predict how long the state of rebellion will continue. It appears to depend largely on how soon the government decides to adopt the most stringent methods.

IN JERUSALEM



Widows of some of the Arabs slain in the outbreaks in the Holy Land. Palestine police (shown at top) are armed with shields and clubs.

Times Wide World and Seibelman.