

Documents and Personalities of the 1936-1939 Riots

From the archives of the Arab Militias/Gangs

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This analysis was undertaken and written at the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem by Jewish observers of the Arab riots and rebellion that took place between April 1936 and early 1939. The tone of the publication is that of Zionist nationalists, which should not diminish the accuracy of the reporting found in the pamphlet. (RE, April 2011). Note to reader: the transliteration of Arabic and Hebrew names may not follow the standard rules accepted by professional translators. Similarly sometimes the tenses used in sentences may seem awkward. We have tried to be as true to the original Hebrew as possible. Kws (August 2021)

Introduction

The use of violence for the purpose of determining controversial issues between two rivals is usually viewed as a mean of last resort. It is supposed to serve as a decisive factor in a struggle. The nations that are being attacked and are faced with the danger of annihilation and loss of hope are also seeing armed resistance as the only alternative left for their struggle.

Our moral standing and the aim of our national enterprise are contrary to the concept of a victory with the power weapons. But even for us, as reflected in our experience since we started to return to our land, the wars and armed struggle have become a necessity for us in order to live our lives and develop.

Even us who believe in the ideals of peace and friendship among people are forced to draw our sword to drive away those who threaten our essential interests.

The chronicles of the Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel are filled with numerous instances that may not be strictly defined as “war,” but their purposes were as basic as the definition of war: to force the opponent to give up a cardinal principle that he refuses to do so voluntarily. This purpose can be achieved only if the enemy is successful in breaking the spirit, the will and the strength of the opponent. Such events constitute stages in a long war that has one purpose. The stages are spread over a long period of time with intervals and each has its own tactics and methods.

During the period between the Balfour Declaration and the beginning of WWII there were five major waves of bloody events conducted by incited Arab mobs against Jewish targets.

The study of all the causes and the forces that accompanied the actions of our foes during these various periods in Eretz Israel and in neighboring countries can help us discern important characteristics.

These events did not occur in precise intervals and on specific dates. All the eruptions of violence and their aftermaths were preceded by long periods of instability and insecurity. These periods can also be regarded as part of the overall war.

The war against us here is not like any other war between people in which an army fights an army. Our war is distinguished by the fact that our civilian population serves as a “military target” to the enemy.

The indiscriminate murders of Jewish civilians, babies, women and the elderly plus the looting and theft of our belongings are executed by unruly gangs who are incited by terrorists. These are in essence the Arabs’ “military actions” that are aimed at scaring us and create a climate of disturbances in order to make us give up our aspirations for independence and freedom, and the redemption of our brethren in the diaspora. These tactics are evident in all the acts of our enemy.

It will not be attempted here to assess these issues by moralistic or military criteria, but it should be proper to classify the typical nature of hostile activities as manifested by these acts of violence.

The most primitive forms were the riots in which incited and ecstatic mobs entered Jewish quarters and neighborhoods and in order to kill and carry out actions of looting and destruction of properties. These types of attacks were characteristic of the riots in 1920, 1921, 1929 and were somewhat evident at the beginning of the riots in 1936. These skirmishes occurred primarily in the cities. But they did not last for a long time.

From the moment the Jews got organized with small armed groups, they could easily ward-off such attacks and inflict heavy casualties on the attackers. And indeed, such attacks did not last for long. They were altered by more “efficient” methods: Small groups of terrorists, or terrorists who

acted independently ambushed civilians and attacked them by surprise. This system reached its apex during the 1936-1939 riots and caused tangible threat to the people in towns, villages and on the roads. The efficiency of this method emanated from the fact that it did not require the deployment of many people. It could hit unexpectedly almost anywhere and left little room to create an efficient way of protection. Most of the Jewish casualties resulted from such terror attacks. Great damage incurred to unprotected properties by fires that were set by the attackers.

These types of hostile activities became the major ways of operations by the enemy. The operations started to change during 1936-1939 where small units consisting up to 50 people started to get organized. These units were well-equipped and well-armed and it seems that even though they acted independently, they were actually directed by a centralized command. On the whole, the military operations of the enemy did not reveal efficient military capabilities. They lacked weapons and ammunition and were not well trained. Their commanders were not very good and their low level of education prevented them from being significantly successful. But they were increasingly getting better and were presenting a growing threat. Because of these factors, it is quite important to follow that classic rule: Know your enemy.

These periodically recurring riots had a purpose: to target the Zionist enterprise which is progressive and constructive and in direct opposition to an environment which is stagnant. To these factors we could add additional ones. Each could have acted independently but they were interrelated:

1. The inconsistencies of the British policies in the Middle East with regard to the peoples in the regions and its attitudes toward the Muslims in the entire British Empire.
2. The power games between the various Arab countries and their desire to appear as the protectors of the Arabs in Eretz Israel.
3. The political considerations of local leaders who assumed that their Hostile acts would bear better results than mere verbal negotiations. This attitude was a reflection of the awareness of the local Arab leaders of the apparent weaknesses of the British bureaucracy.
4. Inciting the masses by the exploitation of religious fanaticism and by cultivating the sentiments of different sects to get rid of all infidels. Also, mobilizing the masses by fabricated instances of desecrations of holy places.

5. Utilizing various acts by us to instigate negative reaction, as was the case of the demonstration that was held by the Jews at the Western Wall in 1929.
6. Direct and indirect intervention of European nations in Middle Eastern Affairs. This meddling was aimed at hurting the British but resulted in instigating riots and protests throughout the Empire.
7. A local case of restlessness which was not related to us directly turned into events that were aimed at us. This can be illustrated by the fall of Tel Chai and the Bedouins' inner fighting in Tzemach.

The intensity of the riots usually depended on various causes and circumstances. The Arab population in Eretz Israel carried the main burden of fighting against the Jews and the British. Though they had outside assistance, like the well-trained mercenaries of Kaukji or thief gangs headed by Ismail Abd-el Chak or individuals who came to the rescue of their brothers, none had any significant influence on the course of events in the country. Their numbers were small and their function was primarily demonstrative and confrontational. At the height of the uprising in 1938, they were virtually worthless.

As for the participation of the local Arab population in the riots, it is necessary to make a distinction between the instigators and the undertakers. The main instigators were:

1. Small groups of leaders of political parties who resided in the cities but had deep roots in the Arab village. The members of this group included professional politicians and office holders such as mayors, landowners, and merchants who profited from exuberant interest rates. It also included lawyers, doctors, government officials and the clergymen. The Muslims were predominant in these groups but there was evidence that the Arab Christians, though small in numbers, were quite effective in their manipulations. They attempted to overcompensate for being so hated by the Muslims who constituted an overwhelming majority of the Arab population.
2. A small group of the remaining feudal landowners in the rural areas who never adjusted to the British rule.
3. Violent and aggressive villagers who gained economic eminence independently and not through familial association.
4. Teachers, who were very active at the beginning of the riots but their activities were mitigated under the pressure of the government.

5. Communities that tried to fish in the shallow and murky waters and added fuel to the fire. This category of Arabs was not very successful because the majority of the Arab population did not support them or their actions.

The main activists were:

1. The villagers. The activists for the most part were low in status – young, hired hands, workers and shepherds. Only few were farmers who owned land. Also, the first ones who promptly joined any form of violence were the criminals. The nature of the criminal law in the country and the limited effectiveness of the police encouraged the growing numbers of the criminal elements among the Arabs rioters.
2. City dwellers of rural origin who held either temporary or permanent jobs and guided the rioters to targets in the cities. Among those were policemen who resided in the cities but kept close ties with their villages of origin.
3. Doctors, lawyers, policemen and government clerks provided significant assistance without actual participation in the riots. They refrained from providing either financial or physical support.
4. Villagers who joined religious groups. The leaders of these groups were able to attract relatively large number of followers who executed their commands with no contest. The leaders incited their fanatic followers who became quite effective in their operations. However, these types of groups emerged and disappeared with great frequency. The followers would become disillusioned when faced with some great challenges. However, while they were active, they gave the impression of being fully devoted. One such group was headed by Az-A-Din El-Kassam whose followers were nicknamed “Kassameyn.”
5. Professional laborers and specialists who worked in train workshops, the Department of Public Works, the telephone and the telegraph services, small industries owned by German immigrants, professional Armenians, and instructors in the Police Academy in Jerusalem.
6. The migrant workers were used to incite riots. They were away from their homes and their familiar social framework, and it was easy enough to instigate them into rioting. They usually served as a “first wave” and were never considered to be a combat force. They were exploited as an incited mob in the initial purpose of disturbance.

The weapons were considered to be a decisive factor. During the 25 years prior to these riots, the number of weapons was inconsistent. But the riots of

1936-1939 were instrumental in increasing significantly the number of rifles and pistols, though they were old and used. Their main value was not as an effective fighting tool but had more of a disturbance factor. The ammunition was limited and it was well known that the diminishing quantity of ammunition was decisive in the outcome of the riots by 1939.

The Arabs' weaponry situation was always viewed with exaggeration by both the British and the Jews. It was always spoken of huge stockpiles of ammunition which served as a basis for propaganda against the Arabs. This was meant to serve as a cover up and an excuse by the British to justify their failures.

The current World War changed the situation: The Arabs purchased huge quantity of new weapons and ammunition. It included tens of thousands of rifles and pistols and millions of bullets. All these caches were concentrated only in some areas but gradually they were distributed throughout the country. These weapons enabled the Arabs to carry on these riots for long period of time.

It should not be ignored that the military and technical competence of the Arabs was very low. Their modern military training was nil. They had utilized the experience that they gained in their villages where they were trained to fight for survival as a result of their lifestyle. It was manifested in confrontations, blood feuds, fist fighting, shooting from an ambush, constant thefts, setting fires to crops, ruining new plants and harvests, backstabbing and sharp shooting. Indeed, as a result of the War, the number of those who received advanced military training had increased significantly. It was given to those who served in the police, the border corps, the Syrian army, the Arab Legion, and the Iraqi military, all of which could be used as a source for instructors who would be able to upgrade the training of thousands of Arabs.

All these factors when combined together – opposition to Zionism, national awakening, the intensity of confrontations, and the incitement of the population and the growing volume of weapons – were liable to cause further disturbances in the future.

In the past, the riots erupted under a variety of circumstances and in different locations. There was no distinction between attacking Jews who lived in Hebron or Tzfat and have maintained for many generations good relations

with their Arab neighbors or attacking immigrants who had just arrived. Distinctions were not made between settlements that held different social attitudes or between members of different social strata – rich and poor, the educated and the uneducated, a communist or a Zionist. They all were subjected to indiscriminate attacks. The only criterion that counted was the fact that they were Jewish.

During the past 25 years between the end of WWI and the beginning of WWII, there emerged changing methods in how terror attacks were executed. However the scope of the 1936-1939 riots had created the perception that they were almost an uprising – the British defined them as “disturbances” or “confusions,” the Arabs named them “mutiny” and “holy war” and the Jews called them “occurrences/riots.” Whatever was the perception of each group there were some factors that characterized the rioters despite the changing circumstances. One major rule though stood out: Do not make future battle plans based on past examples. This axiom stood with regards to weapons and technical improvements of the enemy. However, they could not be applied towards the character and the process of thinking of the adversary. These were permanent factors more or less, and only small variations might have been noticed during relatively short periods of time during the past 25 years of British rule.

One of the most efficient weapons that could be used against the Arab rioter was the knowledge of his mental attitude and his modes of reactions. These included: The way he congregated with peers, his modes of attacks and defense, his escape during the attack, his child-like love for status, his ability to resist bribery; his sincerity, his tendency to be argumentative with his colleagues, deserting a friend-in-arms in time of distress; the influence of social discrepancies; his readiness to betray his commander, his attitude towards his enemy and neighbor; what were his battle rules, what was his fighting decency – what was permitted and what was forbidden; what were the circumstances that shattered his nerves and destroyed his incentive to continue; under what circumstances the leadership was effective and to what degree his subordinates were motivated. These traits, among others determined the character of the enemy and his psychological make-up.

We have made a significant progress in our understanding of various circumstances. The time had arrived to study the soul of our enemy and his characteristics. Without such understanding we would have to pay a dear price whenever he chooses to hurt us.

Since we have reached the inevitable conclusion that the riots will always accompany our efforts in settling in the country, it is therefore necessary for us to be prepared in the most rationale fashion. We had to learn the weaknesses and the qualities of our enemy in order to have an effective and swift confrontation with only few casualties. If we would be able to retaliate effectively, it is certain that the appetite of our enemy for action, or the willingness of the fathers to send their sons to fight, will diminish.

When discussing these matters, we should stay above our political and social differences. Our first and foremost objective is the wish to live and function as free people. It is doubtful whether history will judge us favorably if we are too cautious and apprehensive in squelching the riots. We cannot be too cautious in order to avoid casualties. This type of behavior may lead to the loss of lives of thousands of innocent people. The righteous behavior cannot be justified by attempting to avoid confrontation and the use of force.

It is our duty to conduct our lives in such way that it will put a wall between political discussions and the use of force. This is being said with no false illusions and with full awareness of the limits of our strength. It is well known that we are a minority in a small country which is surrounded by heavily populated Muslim countries. It is also understood that our strength is limited in the international arena. But we have to remember that during the past quarter of the century we were attacked and suffered losses. We shall therefore avoid the recurrences of such phenomena in the future. In the land of our freedom, we will prevent at any expense those who may try to hurt us.

There are those among us who are so engaged in details and elaborate analysis of certain issues that they tend to diminish the true image of our enemy and dismiss its real strength. This is totally inept. The ones who fall into this trap are those who have had the experience of an occasional advantage over the enemy and use it for generalization.

There is no point in ignoring the rudimental fact of the existence of a national Arab movement that conducts its affairs according to its own style. This style in most cases differ from what is practiced by us or by the Western world. Some examples of the actions taken by this movement were the various uprisings in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Eretz Israel. We also have to take into consideration the accumulation of benefits that our enemy gained as a result from these experiences: it improved their ability to develop, increased

the efficiency of the training and there have growing numbers of better qualified instructors. However, there were many instances, especially during the last War, that taught us not to give up our hope about our capabilities to overcome complicated situations despite the growing strength of our enemy and its improved capabilities.

Let us remember that we are living in the Middle East. We should study the details of all circumstances and then identify the major landmarks, the direction and the necessary means that we should undertake. Let us look around and observe how other minorities and small nations are fighting for their freedom and liberation. By doing so we are bound to arrive at the right conclusions. These are the foundations which will enhance our chances to defeat the rioters who aim to hurt us and our national enterprise. This might turn out to be our important contribution to peace and to the fraternity among the peoples who live in this country and its neighboring states.

We'll be acting like an ostrich if we ignore the truth and deny the fact that only few have acquired a profound knowledge about the characteristics and the mentality of the rioters. We have paid dearly for our lack of knowledge which provided our enemy with the opportunity to attain too many successes. These outcomes have had negative effects on our efforts to establish here a modern economy which depends on an intricate infrastructure of roads, railroads, electricity and other elements of modern civilization. The Arabs at this stage do not seem to prioritize these factors as much as we do.

It is not enough to decide to be firm and guard our security by extreme measures of offense and defense. We have to know many details regarding every framework within Eretz Israel: where to hit, when, whom and how. To hit and make a mistake will have adverse effect. We have to hit and not fail or get caught; to hit and pretend to adopt the enemy's behavior. Only those who have mastered the knowledge about Arab mentality will know how far it is possible to emulate the enemy's behavior and methods; what is permitted and forbidden in the confrontation with such an enemy that has no boundaries.

The purpose of this book is to contribute to the study of the above-mentioned problems. The book contains the following elements:

1. Descriptions of the personalities of some of the major leaders. These sketches were drawn by their close assistants who had knowledge of the ensuing events. We have not used materials on leaders who reside in Syria and directed their people in Eretz Israel from a safe distance.
2. Translations from Arabic to Hebrew of the letters that were written by some leaders during the uprising. We did not have access to the large and organized archives; nevertheless, the material here reflects real occurrences.
3. We have added comments to the communiqués and the letters in order to illuminate the necessary details for those who are not familiar with the chronicles of the uprising.

Finally, most of the letters originated in Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarem which have been defined as the “dangerous triangle.” This is the area from where most of the attacks were launched. We have not written any conclusions. The reader will have to draw his/her own. The description here can be supplemented by further study. There are many books that have been published on these issues in Arabic, English, French and German.

Fawzi Al-Qawuqji

[**Editor’s note:** The Al-Qawuqji story is of interest because of his initiatives. He was instrumental in the attempt to recruit military support from Arab countries in order to affect the outcome of the political negotiations about the future Eretz Israel.]

He was born in Tripoli, Syria in 1885. When he commenced his activities in Palestine/Eretz Israel he was about 50 years old. He had an average build and height, light complexion and blue eyes and he looked more European than Middle Eastern. He studied at the military school in Constantinople, Turkey and earned the rank of an officer. At the end of WWI he returned to Tripoli. He joined the Syrian uprising from its beginning. It was there that his talents and bravery were discovered and he was promoted to be the representative of the command of the uprising.

When the uprising ended, he left Syria and settled in Baghdad where he was appointed as a lecturer in the Iraqi Military Academy and was granted a status of a political refugee because he could not return to Syria and Lebanon since the French Mandatory Government had sentenced him to death.

The Iraqi Government supported the imminent Arab uprising in Eretz Israel. They rendered every conceivable support in economic, political and spiritual areas. The Iraqi founded the League for the Defense of the Interests of the Arabs in Eretz Israel and when the uprising finally erupted, they sent 100 Iraqis soldiers to assist the local Arabs.

At the same time the League had reached an agreement with Fawzi Al-Qawuqji that he would assume the responsibility for the organization and command the uprising. He arrived in Jenin and joined the negotiations to solidify the forces of the Iraqi soldiers with volunteers from the National Bloc of Syria. He also got involved in securing the means to purchase large quantities of weapons for the Eretz Israel uprising. The Iraqi League sent 3,000 pounds worth of gold and a large amount was also raised in Jerusalem for weapons and for the transportation of the volunteers. 60 volunteers arrived from Syria and 30 Druze arrived in Beit Shean from Transjordan.

At the time, when Al-Qawuqji and the volunteers arrived, the local Arab parties were generally united on various issues. However, there were some conflicting views with regards to the arrival of Al-Qawuqji. Some welcomed him and others maintained that the uprising can and should be executed by local leaders and local warriors.

Al-Qawuqji agreed to assume the post of the Supreme Commander only after all the gangs' leaders had signed a document in which they recognized his status as such and agreed to follow his orders.

On August 28, 1936, Al-Qawuqji called on the local youth to join the uprising. He divided the militias into four groups: The Iraqi Company; the Syrian Company; the Druze Company; and the Palestinian Company. He had also established an "intelligence unit" in order to gather information about the (British) Government and its secret orders and public announcements. He infiltrated special agents into governmental agencies both to secure information and to plant false information regarding the gangs' activities.

Al-Qawuqji chose to place his headquarters in the Mount Nablus region. He prepared maps, locations for operation, set strict military ordinances, established a military court and was successful in gaining the support and the trust of the general population.

Secured and Hidden Locations

1. **The Friday's Mountain** (located north of the city of Tulkarem). It's a high plateau overlooking a large area including the coastal roads and olive orchards where the gang members hid from the British military and its airplanes.
2. **Yassid Village** was on a top of a high mountain with difficult access roads that required tough efforts to reach it.
3. **Jab'l Hureish**, a very tall mountain surrounded by many villages in the Jennin Region.
4. **Kefar Zur** – A village located in the Tulkarem region on a high mountain with difficult access roads.
5. **Za'eida** – A village that was chosen because of its high location that enabled the rebels to observe large areas.

Supply and Logistics

The supplies which were forwarded to Al-Qawuqji and his people were in abundance and always on time. It included rice, sugar, coffee, tea, soap, flour and tobacco. He and his men were treated with generosity in every village that they visited. When they were in hiding, they were provided with ready meals that were prepared in nearby villages.

Arms and Ammunition

Usually, it was customary for the villages to provide the arms to their fellow members who joined the uprising. The big cities provided unlimited sources of weapons, especially in Nablus where arms could be bought in the open markets and the buyers tested them by firing a few bullets in the air. Weapons and arms of great variety were also smuggled from across the Jordan River and from Syria, most of which were left from WWI.

Al-Qawuqji's Battles

The Battle of Bal'ah: On the morning of September 3, 1936, a unit of the (British) army was deployed along the Tulkarem – Nablus road in order to defend a Jewish cars' convoy. When the military convoy reached a curve on the road, mines were exploded under the cars and the soldiers were deployed for the arrival of the Jewish convoy. The gang's members then began to exchange fire with the soldiers. The British military called for reinforcement which also included nine airplanes. When the battle ended after many hours, three airplanes were hit and a couple of British officers were killed. The gang's casualties mounted to nine dead and six wounded. among them Iraqis and Syrian fighters. This was considered to be one of most important and successful of the series of the battles under the command of Al-Qawuqji.

The Battle of Jebba: On the eve of September 24, 1936, intelligence sources informed the British Government that members of the gang were concentrating in the Jebba plains. Soon after, soldiers and police were dispatched to the area to confront the gang fighters. At the end of the fighting, 60 gang members were killed and the British lost one corporal, and one airplane was downed and its pilot was wounded. When the British forces were on their way back to Nablus, a mine exploded under a truck and the four horses that it carried were killed.

The Battle of Beit Amarin: On the morning of September 29, 1936, reconnaissance airplanes spotted a big gathering of gang members near the village of Beit Amarin. The British dispatched military forces from Tulkarem and Nablus to surround the fighters. The battle lasted until the evening and ended with 30 dead of the gang's fighters. The British had only three wounded soldiers.

The Battle of Kefar Zur: On October 8, 1936, a battle between the gangs and the British military took place on the mountains surrounding Kefar Zur. The British also deployed a number of tanks. The gangs had 30 casualties and one tank was disabled. That same day the assistant of Al-Qawuqji was killed on the road between Beit Lechem and Hebron and the commander of the Jerusalem region, Abdul Kader Al Husseini was arrested.

These were the main battles that took place during the tenure of Al-Qawuqji as the supreme commander. They did not deserve the honor and the publicity that were bestowed upon him. Their outcome did not live up the assistance and support that he received from the Arabs in Eretz Israel and the material things that he accumulated during the short period that he spent in the country.

Rescue from Danger

When a gang was encircled by the military and it felt that it was in dire circumstances, its members were accustomed to seek help from neighboring villages. The villagers would then swarm toward the army with sticks, staffs and arms in order to frighten the soldiers and allow the gang members to escape during the ensued confusion. Such cases were often deployed by Al-Qawuqji. At times, the women followed the men, cheering to incite them as was their custom from ancient times.

Money and Presents

Al-Qawuqji had made great fortunes in Eretz Israel. The sources of his wealth were many and they included donations from the general population that were collected by the regional branches of the “National Committee,” contributions from the Supreme Islamic Council in Jerusalem, from wealthy merchants and from ordinary people.

He had also received expensive personal gifts such as a gold watch from a large landowner (the rumor was that this watch was originally given to the owner by a Jewish dignitary) and an extremely valuable mare. It is estimated that he stashed away 12,000 pounds that he managed to transfer to Tripoli via numerous intermediaries.

Al-Qawuqji Leaves the Country

Following the call of the Supreme Arab Council to terminate the uprising as of October 12, 1936, Al-Qawuqji and his entourage decided to leave the country via Transjordan. More than 10,000 people came to bid them farewell.

Altogether, Al-Qawuqji stayed in the country for not more than two months – from August 22 until October 20, 1936.

Was There an Outside Help?

There was no doubt that the Iraqi Government assisted the uprising. It established the “League for the Defense of Palestine,” it allowed people to leave the country and return with no transient documents, it permitted Iraqi soldiers to take a leave from military service and join the uprising. The Government of Transjordan also assisted by allowing the Iraqis to pass through the country with no official documents.

There is no doubt that the British authorities knowingly allowed Al-Qawuqji to leave the country with no repercussions. And the few shots that were fired at his entourage were only a pretense since the British had an agreement with the Supreme Arab Council to allow Al-Qawuqji and his people to leave the country with no interruption.

Selected Letters from the Uprising Headquarters

(These letters reflect the dilemmas of the organizers of the uprising. There emerged many phenomena that diverted the uprising from its initial course and goals. On the one hand

the uprising gained some measured popularity and participation but it also provided an opportunity for criminal elements to exploit the nationalistic sentiments. It raised concerns about the issuance of identity cards to the Arab population and the effects of the unauthorized financial levies that were imposed by leaders of the uprising on various communities. These letters reflect the desire to establish a centralized control over the uprising.)

December 26, 1938

In the name of Allah the Merciful,

To my brother the office secretary,

We have received your letter and we wish you success and good health. We are aware of your difficult situation but we have full trust in your loyalty and devotion upon assuming this important work.

The question if we should allow the public to submit requests for identification cards is very complicated and we pray to God that He keeps the land and the uprising from dire consequences. We were justified in demanding that you should consult with us on any step with regard to this issue because it has great ramifications on the uprising and on the *jihad* movement. You should have waited for our letter and learned about our views on that matter.

We are convinced that the persecutions and the arrests that were made among those who did not obey the mutiny were not justified. We also wrote to you that it was necessary to wait with the clerks' strike so that we would not make a mistake that we will be sorry for, as we have been with identification cards. Make sure that any decision on that issue be postponed.

[Editor's note: The British military did not trust the Arab policemen who served with British police forces to fully cooperate in identifying criminals and gang members. The rebels' leaders objected to the issuance of universal identification cards for fear of being identified and captured. But the general Arab public found that obtaining these cards was very convenient and they started to rebel against the policy of the leaders of the uprising on that issue. The leaders had finally realized that they could not be effective in their demands and eventually decided to also obtain identification cards but under false or distorted names.]

We found out that a tax of 60,000 pounds was levied on Jaffa. We were shocked because of this huge sum. We believe that the pressure to

collect so much money, specifically when the Government is engaged in adopting the traitors, may bring about the opposite results for our cause.

We were deeply sorry about the horrible and barbaric actions that were carried out in Atil (near Tulkarem), and we plan to appeal to public opinion and protest those actions both here and abroad. We will expose the behavior of the military that pretend to bring us blessings and civilization.

[**Editor's note:** In Atil there occurred a confrontation between the British military and a small gang that did not have a chance to escape. The gang ambushed the army unit and killed the British commander. As retaliation the army unit entered Atil, destroyed few homes and burned their content. The Arab propagandists claimed that the British raped women, desecrated the Koran and burned one person alive.]

We are concerned now that Nablus's turn may have arrived. We expect that there will be there much suffering, riots and looting as was in Jaffa. We assume that you know the bad and the good guys in Nablus.

We have heard that Abu-Zarzur leads a company of warriors there and we are very interested that it will consist of dedicated people who could halt the traitors and secure peace and safety in the city. We sent you two checks of 100 pounds each to be submitted to Abu-Feisal and to Abu-Kammal. Please verify their receipt.

We pray to Allah for your success.

(Signed: The Central Committee of the National *Jihad* in Palestine.)

P.S. We received a letter today that informed us that the uprising levied a quota of 14,000 pounds on Nablus. We do not know if it is true or not, but we want to bring it to your attention. If it is not true, we find it necessary for your office to deny it publicly. However, if it is true, then the amount should be reconsidered. Your office will not benefit from such a large sum. It will only raise bitterness toward the uprising. We believe that with regard to Nablus, a quarter of that sum will suffice.

The flow of information and the reports from the local leaders are not forwarded to us in an orderly way. The dissemination of information should be centralized through us. All the reports should be published in the Syrian newspapers and in other Arab countries.

December 26, 1938

In the name of Allah the Merciful,
To the hero leader, Abu-Kammal,

We received your letter and we thank you for the good news. We were surprised by the actions of Abdulla Al-Husseini but we will relate to it in the future.

As for your question regarding the activity of one of your units in the Jerusalem area, we prefer all units that are active there be under the existing command because that would be more efficient.

We have heard that Abu-Abban left your region and arrived in Damascus. It's rumored that he has a letter signed by you that permits him to return to Jerusalem and work there. We have already informed you that our intelligence indicates that he is a dangerous man and is suspected of having relations with some traitors. Therefore, sending him to Jerusalem might have grave results. We recommend that you keep him in your region under strict supervision. We advise you to send him a letter immediately and demand that he reports to you, because you need him. Once he is back, do not allow him to travel to Jerusalem. We have found that he left with you a promissory note of 1,000 pounds. Please keep this note and don't return it to him.

Important evidence has reached us— we are not yet sure of its validity — that Sayed Shukeiri, while still in command of his platoon, plotted to kill three of the leaders of the uprising. He was making the plot under the pretense that the three had accused him of looting and defamed him.

We once again reiterate that you should pay special attention to the peacemaking advances between the Druz of Daliat Al-Carmel and Issifya.

We ask you to be alert and careful towards the restlessness of the traitors and the secessionists, especially now when they are being assisted by the authorities who attempt to put a wedge between us.

We pray to Allah and for your success.

(Signed: The Central Committee of the National *Jihad* in Palestine.)

December 26, 1938

In the name of Allah the Merciful,

To our respected brethren, Abu-Kammal,

We found out that a sum of 60,000 pounds was levied on Jaffa. This is a huge and astonishing amount of money and we believe that it will generate

waves of quarrels and disagreements, especially when the authorities are supporting the isolationists waging their campaign against the uprising and our fighters.

We therefore hope that you will use your wisdom to settle this matter and issue orders so that smaller sums should be collected. We were told that some of Jaffa's merchants were ordered to pay 500 or 1,000 pounds each. These are alarming sums considering the current economic situation.

We will soon send you the dynamite that you requested and we are also preparing additional ammunition for you which will be delivered as soon as possible. As of the beginning of next month, we will forward you 50 pounds a month for uniforms.

The permission to accept identification cards raised a negative reaction. It is considered to be a retreat from the uprising's objectives. We take this opportunity to emphasize that you and your brethren should consult with us on all important issues, so that it will not hurt the *jihad* movement.

You did well by posting a warning to the public not to pretend to act in the name of *jihad* while looting and stealing, especially in Jaffa.

Be aware of those who make plans to hurt our movement because London is exploiting such cases. We have numerous complaints from people who were highly taxed. It is a regretful situation that we have to be concerned with financial wrongdoings in one of our most important areas. In no other place do we have such complaints, and such practices rarely occur.

P.S. It is important that all our messages regarding the uprising should originate from our "Arab Bureau." We ask you to send all your messages directly to us, because we have found out that some people in Beirut are publishing false reports and information and at times they are even using the seal of the Mutiny Council.

(Signed:) The Central Committee of the National *Jihad* in Palestine

The Verdict in the Trial of Sayed Shukeir

October 23, 1938

After the investigation of the case of Sayed Shukeir we found him guilty in the following counts:

- A. Solicitation of money under threats and without consulting his Commander, contrary to the principles of the uprising.
- B. Suppression of villages in demands for food supply.
- C. Granted authority to some people to act without the permission of the Central Command and the Uprising Office.

Thanks to his regret and his agreement to follow orders and act in good behavior, the Court decided, from a military standpoint, as follows:

- 1. To suspend him for 15 days.
- 2. To return him to his commanding post, but under close supervision.
- 3. To reprimand him for his actions.

This verdict should be brought to attention of all the leaders and the platoons' commanders.

The Decisions of the Central Bureau of the Uprising concerning Rules and Regulations

- 1. Appoint five members to the Headquarters of the Arab Uprising. Others may be added with the consent of the Central Council.
- 2. The Uprising Bureau will be directly in charge of those units that were under the command of the five appointed members.
- 3. The President the Council will be on a rotational basis.
- 4. One person will be in charge of logistics and arms and will distribute it according to the directives of the bureau.
- 5. General communications, exchange of letters, memorandums, and the imposition of fines will be the responsibility of the bureau.
- 6. Commanders' deputies will not be involved in legalistic or administrative issues.
- 7. The Arab Uprising Bureau decided to confiscate all the assets of the Arshaid family, because of the following conviction: Mustafa Arshaid was observed to be with the British army and is known to be spying for the British authorities. The testimony to this effect was submitted by a reliable person.
- 8. The Commanding Bureaus decided to relieve all the currently deployed combat units in Jaffa and replace them with other units under the command of two reliable commanders.

The Uprising's Court

(A Review by a Justice of the Court)

In 1937, when the actions of the gangs intensified, people began to be afraid to deal with various governmental departments and started to use the terrorists' headquarters for legal and civil matters. These appeals increased in numbers and they became a nuisance that distracted the uprising command from its main duties.

Consequently, some concerned people recommended that the headquarters should not include in its duties attending to civil issues and should instead establish a special court to deal with such cases.

From that point on people started to consider seriously who would be the Chief Justice and who would be the members of the court. The preference was for a person who was known to be a supporter of the uprising so that the people who apply for the court's services would not be intimidated.

Based on these criteria Abed Al-Kader Youssuf was elected to the post. Two other people were chosen to assist him as judges. With these appointments the separation process of the court from uprising headquarters was completed. The procedures of this court were similar to those of the governments' courts and the due process of the law was strictly observed. When the court clashed with some of the gangs' leaders the issue was brought to the headquarters for arbitration and the leaders were ordered not to interfere with court procedures.

The public appeals to this court increased in volume and became imperative that some courts should be established in villages in order to deal with small matters.

Eventually, every village had a committee that dealt with the complaints and the claims. If these committees had difficulties in settling matters, they were referred to the main court. In cases of appeals, the issue was brought up to the Central Council in Syria or Beirut.

The main court had the authority to deal with criminal, financial and land cases. Its authority was eventually extended to religious and family matters as well. The court charged fees for every claim. These fees were later

submitted to the Headquarters and the money was used to cover the expenses of the uprising, or to purchase arms.

The court had the authority to sentence a death penalty on two occasions: One, spying against the terrorists and two, the murder of an innocent person. All other types of murder were settled in the court according to the tribal's customs.

[**Editor's note:** At the end of 1938 when the Chief Justice moved to Syria, the legal system moved gradually into the hands of the gangs' leaders whose judgment was based on serving their own interests. In most cases, judgment was slanted as a result of bribery or family relations. The whole justice system turned into anarchy. This caused many to seek justice in Syria or find refuge at another leader's domain. When the uprising ended, people returned to the government's courts.]

**Abed Al-Rahim Al-Hajj Mahmud:
The "Commander of the Palestinian Uprising"**

(A testimony given by one of his assistants)

He was from the D'naba village in the Tulkarem region. He was about 50 years old, tall, heavy set with white complexion had big eyes and a deep baritone voice. He had rudimentary education and knew the basics of reading and writing. As a young person he was a farmer and later became a grains merchant.

He joined the uprising after he lost his fortune and became bankrupt. His debts to other merchants grew and when they complained to the authorities, it was found out that he could not pay his debts and was sentenced to 91 days in jail. He was also accused of forging documents of land transactions. He ran away from Tulkarem in order to avoid the jail sentence.

It was then (1936) the beginning of uprising and he wandered from one village to another where he had some relatives and spread the word that he rebelled against the government and some armed people who were thieves and looters joined him.

In the beginning his actions were focused on shooting at Jewish convoys on the Tel Aviv – Tulkarem – Haifa highway. Every so often he also had

confrontations with the British army and consequently he lost 25 members of his gang. When the uprising spread, he further exerted his influence onto additional villages. Upon the arrival of Al-Qawuqji, he was officially ordained as a company commander and his past became irrelevant.

At that time, the economic situation in the villages was extremely bad. The laborers suffered the most. So, the numbers of those who joined the rebellion grew steadily. They enjoyed the abundance of food and the availability of tobacco and began to benefit materially from joining the uprising. He increased his influence among the villagers by using religious causes to incite. The villages provided him with money, food and arms which enabled him to recruit more members to his gang. He had a few platoons with a total of 200 terrorists.

He imposed supply logistics on the villages. He forced them to deliver to him flour, rice, sugar and tobacco. He also appointed some of his relatives to raise donations and presents for his personal use. He established an information network and recruited people who brought him intelligence on the government and on the British military.

When Al-Qawuqji arrived in Palestine to assume the command of the uprising, Abed Al-Rahim was the first to greet him and remained his loyal supporter until the day of his departure. Abed Al-Rahim himself left for Syria temporarily and returned to Palestine after the uprising movement underwent a reorganization.

He began to instigate battles with the British and to attack Jewish settlements. He recruited some teachers who assisted him in organizing the uprising and in publishing posters and writing communiqués.

At that time people started to call him “the Commander of the Palestinian Uprising.” This title led to jealous reactions by other local gang leaders who wished to own that title. They put pressure on Damascus to reduce his monthly allowance and took initiative to send him a letter accusing him of neglecting the worthy causes of the uprising and of disobeying orders. The tensions between the local leaders continued and a special mediating conference bore no positive results.

The uprising was in its last stretch and about to subside. Many people started to express their disregard for Al-Rahim and even joined the government

forces in order to squelch the uprising. Some assisted the government to locate large caches of arms that were hidden by the gangs.

Those who began to cooperate with the government were people who had gotten hurt by the gangs that had inflicted on them not only a death toll on relatives but economic hardships as well.

One such group that took the lead was the Arshaid family. They sent emissaries to follow Al-Rahim and trace his exact hide-out. When they found it, they surrounded him and his people. When they tried to escape, they fired at them with machine-guns and killed Al-Rahim and many of his followers.

After his death many details emerged about his methods of operation. He apparently displayed on some occasions indecisiveness, fear and lack of self-confidence. He would always “cover” himself by assigning others to execute sensitive assignments or by murdering people. He deployed a network of people who collected money for his own purposes so that he would not be suspected of wrongdoing. He created an image of being a benevolent leader but after his death, it was found out that he inflicted more harm and damage than good. Some people asserted that he joined the uprising because of religious and nationalist zealousness. But this was not true. Before the uprising he was involved in selling lands to Jews and was involved in forgery. If he was not killed, the government would have prosecuted him on these cases. It became known after his death that he accumulated personal wealth during his active years in the uprising and that his sons were building a house for themselves that was worth at least 10,000 pounds.

Excerpts from Letters issued by Al-Rahim Al-Hajj and his Headquarters

July 13, 1938

To Abu-Haled, regards and respect,

I have not heard from you in the past four days. I found out yesterday from Abu Al-Abed that they attacked the Jewish settlement of Givat Ada and killed all its people, took eight horses and slaughtered the rest of the horses and a few cows.

[**Editor's Note:** indeed, an attack was launched against Givat Ada but the results were quite different from those described in that letter. For many years Givat Ada was isolated in an area surrounded by Arabs and constantly had to ward off attacks. There are two memorable attacks in the history of Givat Ada: One was the murder of woman by a gang in front of her two daughters, and the other was the kidnapping and the murdering of three youths.]

August 7, 1938

Dear Abu Haled,

I wish you successes. Time pressure prevented me from expressing my appreciation for your fine work. Do not meet with a foreigner – British or otherwise. God ordered Muslims not to trust anybody but people of their own faith. They do not wish to meet with you because they love you, but because they wish to promote their intrigues. Do not record in your books details concerning weapons and arms that may be used against you once these books get lost or confiscated. Send me immediately details of your invaluable work and let me know specifically who executed the attack on the bank in Nablus. This was brilliant work that made us very proud. Send your emissary to receive the merchandise. Inform your brethren, the region's leaders, that they should not welcome any foreigner, whoever he might be, because it's strictly forbidden.

August 18, 1938

To Abu Haled,

I received a letter from the commander of the "Al-Kassam" unit who had visited the Ramallah region and informed me that there are people there who willingly want to donate 1,000 pounds for arms purchases. I told him to send a delegation that will meet with us. I also urge you to send a letter to our brother Al-Zakzuk and ask him to collect the money as required by our guidelines.

I'm informing you that in a close by location there are 100 new rifles with ammunitions and in another place, there are 85 new rifles. When this money arrives, we'll be able to purchase these weapons.

[**Editor's note:** The people of Ramallah were not so eager to donate 1,000 pounds by their own will. That's why the terrorist Al-Marzuk was sent there to "convince" them. The wealthy Christians in that region were afraid of the Muslim terrorists and that's why they gave what was demanded of them. Also, there is no evidence that new rifles were for sale. Ordinarily the weapons were old and used. The "new weapons" classification was used in order to extort more money.]

August 23, 1938

From: The Headquarters of the Uprising Military in Palestine.

To: The brethren Abu-haled.

I received a letter that informed me that you went to Kabatiya and took some rifles from our people there. We do our best to keep this mutiny going but many problems may lead to its demise. We are living now in an atmosphere of confrontations and quarrels among ourselves and so far, we were not able to appease the people of Kabatiya.

We were not successful in settling the dispute there (regarding monies) between the two factions and we were not able to solve as yet another major problem. I heard that you went to Kabatiya but if you respect us, do not go there again. Let the disputes settle down. The *jihad* demands of us to take actions and cooperate and prevents splits. I urge you to allow the leaders of Kabatiya to negotiate with me directly so that we can face the dangers to our cause and to our country. I am worried that we might fail if everybody acts independently.

The young warrior, Al-Hajj Mahmud

August 29, 1938

From: Headquarters' Council

To: Abu Haled

I urge you to settle the dispute over the rifles between the rival factions. Otherwise, I'll have to visit you in few days and settle the issue myself. As for Abdul Razek, I would like to inform you about the money that was collected for his units.

In the first round, Company A collected 850 pounds, Company B – 250 pounds and Company C – 360 pounds. During the second visit, Company A collected 450 pounds. In addition, 380 pounds were collected

from various villages and 870 pounds were raised in the Jaffa Region. The total sum was 1,360 pounds.

Yesterday, Abdul Razek sent a criminal fugitive to the house of the Dhahab family and he collected from them 80 pounds in addition to the rifles that he confiscated. He also collected 60 pounds from a nearby village.

You must be well aware of the fact that these villages are in great need for these weapons in order to protect themselves from nearby Jewish settlements. I sent a letter yesterday to Damascus and asked for their permission to allow me to put a stop to these sad cases.

According to the agreement that was reached, you are to send two companies to the Ramallah region and put an end to the despicable situation there.

Respectfully,

The servant of his faith and his country, the young warrior,
Al-Hajj Mahmud

September 3, 1938

To the dear brethren, Abu-Haled

You have to take care of those cases where rifles were used against our fighters. These persons should be punished. In the instance of the "Turk," I told you that I sent few people to confiscate his personal weapons. This is an important issue because it hurts our cause. We know of other such disturbances and I beg of you to suppress them as soon as possible. The cases that happen among our fighters are caused by irresponsible people who joined the uprising. We have to sort out the people who are reliable and trustworthy.

You informed me that you have decided to dispatch some units to the mountains. That's a good step. Please instruct them to arrest every person who falsely raises money. You told me about a couple of such persons. You have to be cautious because they might plan to escape eastwards to Transjordan. Please select ten well-trained fighters to arrest those people and we'll know how to treat them.

You have written in your letter that we have sent two people to rob some money for us. I swear in Allah's name that I'm innocent. They came to me 15 days ago and I gave them 40 pounds to purchase ammunition. You should order your units to guard them and if they are act improperly, it is

necessary to arraign and investigate them so that I could punish them severely.

With regard to Al-Sheikh, I did send him to the mayors of El-Bire and Ramallah to inform them that the uprising is not poor and if we need something, we appeal to affluent people, but we never resort to begging. If it is proven that Al-Sheikh had done something wrong, I'll be ready to punish him. I have also sent emissaries to our brethren, the Hussein family, to inquire who the people who rob money are.

As for Al-Razek and the monies that he collected – well, these facts are known to everyone. In the last few days, we conducted several meetings in order to find out directly from the villagers about Al-Razek's cruelty and the money that he collected. But all the people denied these allegations.

With regards to organizing the uprising movement, the preservation of its holiness and the creation of a council, Aref responded that he approves the establishment of the council that would include all those who take part in the uprising. He demands to appoint the president and supervisors to oversee the action of the council. I regard this man as arrogant and aloof. We shall discuss it in our meeting. I have made it public that Hammed took the post office bag that contained 2,000 pounds. I'm looking for him everywhere in order to arrest him and properly punish him.

My brother, allow me to relate once more to the Arshaid family. They have hired several people to assassinate me. If I'm going to die from the bullets of these people, I would not consider myself dead as long as I leave behind me such heroes as Abu-Haled and others who follow great principles.

My regards to all my warrior brothers,
The server of his faith and his country,
The young fighter, Al-Hajj Mahmud

Assortment of Activities Reports

- On October 23, 1938, I was in the village of Beit Dajan. A person came to me and told me that his niece was beaten by her cousin who was from a different village. That evening I went to his village and surrounded his relatives' house. We discovered that the criminal had escaped. We captured him the following day and I returned with my soldiers back to Beit Dajan.

[**Editor's note:** The courts that operated under the supervision of the Uprising Council dealt with many cases of abuses towards women. Many such cases resulted from the desire of two people to win the

heart of a certain woman and get the family permission to marry her. If her relatives had suspected that the woman did not behave properly, they would punish her in order to “keep the dignity” of the family intact.]

- Two days ago, the “Al-Valid” company had planted mines along the main road. When cars passed the road, the mines exploded. The fighter opened fire and they think that they killed two people. The following day, we found there traces of blood. We had no casualties.

(Signed) Abdullah Al-Beiruti, commander
Hamis Al-Combar, commander

- On November 6, 1938, our company went to Jericho. We took over the city for nine hours and before we left, we went to the Government Police Station. We found some Arab policemen on duty and we searched them for weapons. We then opened the clothing warehouse and confiscated government issue as follows: shoes, bandages, socks, shirts, raincoats – overall we took more than 300 complete uniforms. After we took the loot, we left the city close to midnight and the fighters were cheerful and sang in the streets.

(Signed) Abdullah Beiruti

- I brought my company on October 24, 1938, to the Al-Hatab village. At 7:30 PM there was a wedding there. During the payment of the dowry I heard somebody insulting the Prophet (Muhammad), may he rest in peace. When I tried to inquire who did it, everybody kept silent. Then we heard a sound of shots from the edge of the village. I immediately got my company out of the village and surrounded the area. One of my soldiers told me that he saw somebody running away and we fired at him (one rifle exploded). When I found out that there were no British soldiers in the area, we returned to our previous post. I found out the identity of the person who had escaped because he insulted the Prophet.

(Signed) Abdullah Beiruti

The Main Headquarters
The Arab Revolt in Palestine

October 26, 1938
In Allah's name

To the great warrior, Abu-Abdullah,

We understood that you did not know what our intentions were when we took the sheep. I do not understand your objection. The theft was in the village of Kalil in the Nablus region which is not under your jurisdiction. Our brethren have people to feed, so we too have to take care of our people.

I therefore think that you should return the sheep to them and not make this an issue that might lead to rifts and confrontations. If you had asked us to give the sheep to you, even more than what we have, we would have complied. But your action cannot be tolerated. I have always told you that our channel of communications should stay open and we should settle our differences in a friendly fashion and not use force as you do.

I am waiting for your letter. The situation does not allow us to act one against the other. We have only God to fear. Tolerance is the best route for honest work.

(Signed) the young warrior, Al-Hajj Mahmud

October 31, 1938
Best regards to the warriors Al-Gajji and Al-Farres,

We shall clarify the issue of the sheep with Abu-Abdullah. In the meantime, keep the money for the Company, the city and the warriors' needs.

Al-Hajj Mahmud

November 2, 1938
The office of the Arab revolt in Palestine
In the name of Allah the merciful,

To our dear brethren, the great warrior Abu-Abdullah,

We found out that Abu-Zakzuk [**Editor's note:** a well-known terrorist that ran away from the authorities and had to keep hiding to this day], asked you to permit him to collect 150 rifles from the merchants of

Nablus. I presume that you may agree with me that we do not need weapons and ammunition. There is an abundance of it in the country. [**Editor's note:** The argument that there was a shortage of arms and ammunition provided the outlaws with the opportunity to extort money]. What we really need in is a new source for ammunition. As you know we were instructed by our highest authorities to reorganize the collection of contributions and to issue receipts. We are presently preparing the paperwork for that purpose.

We are therefore asking you to issue an order to stop all collections, so that the work of receiving of money will be easier in the future. This is especially pertinent because we do not need arms. We are waiting for the receipts books to arrive from Damascus. Once they arrive, we shall then ask the public to contribute money and get receipts. I hope that you will stop the money collection that is being carried out by Abu-Zakzuk.

We fired at the driver of the post office car who was a dirty spy. We found out that there are threats that 20 of our men will be killed if the driver dies. We have witnesses. Are you going to interrogate them, or should we do it ourselves?

Best wishes to our brethren,
The young warrior,
Al-Hajj Mahmud

November 4, 1938
The office of the Arab Revolt in Palestine
To the great warrior Abu-Kammal,

We received your letter on the sheep issue that was sent from one devout believer to another. This letter exposes your leanings. Your people did not take the sheep. They were brought in by another company. At the time I sent you a letter and asked you what the arrangements with regard to these sheep should be. We do not intend to receive gold from a traitor. We demand the traitor's blood, not his possessions.

Your words on the infighting among the warriors caused us much distress. It is a wonder that such words came from a person of your caliber who is the commander of the whole region. If this is your intention, then it seems like you're going into great length to create a rift among the believers.

We did not take anything from the supply as you have done. We continue to spend our own private money. Make do with what you have taken from Nablus, especially as the donations there belong to us.

You should not forget those of us who brought you thousands of pounds and enhanced your fame and status that you currently enjoy. If you are presuming that you are the person of control and influence, then we want you to know that we don't regard you as such. Remember the past and forget the sheep. Who was the one who caused the death of Abu-Haled? It was you and your greediness. The cup is already spilling.

I put my trust in Allah and his Messenger,
Abu-Abdullah

(No specific date, 1938)

Instructions to the Companies' Commanders

Dear fighters,

I would like to bring to your attention the instructions that you are required to follow:

1. When a gang enters a village, the commander has to post guards at the outskirts of the village in order to follow the movement of the (British) army. Any negligence on that matter will carry severe consequences for the commander.
2. Because of the complexity of the operational structure of the uprising and because it is the responsibility of the fighters to stay united and avoid promoting self-interests, you are requested to scrutinize every piece of information. You have to adhere to God's command: Oh, you the believers, if an informer brings you information, you have to make sure that it's valid so you will not have to regret it.
3. We have noticed that our fighters compete with each other to gain greater influence. We are issuing a warning against such evil actions. We demand that the competition be based on humility, modesty and God fearing with compassion for our people and resistance to the British who are our enemy.
4. No person will be sentenced to death, even if there is legitimate evidence against him. The final decision on such penalty will be under the jurisdiction of the headquarters.
5. In order to maintain the sanctity of the uprising and the respect of our people, the commanders of the gangs should refrain from demanding money and clothes. They are also forbidden to levy financial penalties. The commanders are permitted to arraign a person until his

- case is brought before the court of the headquarters. It is our opinion that the penalty for treason or subversion should not be monetary.
6. The headquarters will issue two weekly reports on the activities of the gangs. It will include details of actions against the enemy, attacks, sabotages and other effective undertakings. We hereby forbid the gangs' commanders to issue their own communiqués.
 7. A fighter who will not carry out an order will be considered negligent. In the first such instance he will be reprimanded, and afterwards he will be detained for not more than 15 days and his case will be reported to headquarters.
 8. No commander is allowed to add to his gang a fighter from another gang. Any commander who will not comply with this order will be punished.

(Signed)

The young fighter
Al-Hajj Mahmud

(No specific date, 1938)

The office of the Arab Uprising in Palestine,
To the great warrior, Abu-Abdullah

I have never doubted your good intentions, but I was surprised to find out that matters that relate directly to the *jihad* were given to one of my subordinates while ignoring me and without prior consultation with me. I can attribute this behavior to two reasons: The first is that my brother does not recognize my authority. The second is to diminish my authority and reduce my influence.

All the issues that you directed to Mustafa Al-Ostah should have been directed to me. My orders state clearly that my men will attack only government officials.

If your people presented you with a plan to act against the government and had requested my people's cooperation and they had refused, then you may talk about it with Mustafa Al-Ostah. My investigation of the clash indicated that you attacked few trucks that passed by. The trucks continued on their way and they were followed by large military force. It just happened that the company of Abdullah Tahah arrived when your men retreated. Abdullah's people confronted the military and its airplanes, and your people did not partake in that battle.

Two rifles were taken by two youths from Nablus – one was the younger brother of Ostah and both are not rebels – and were given to Mustafa Ostah. It is my opinion that only well-trained people should use rifles.

[**Editor's note:** It was the practice that Arab teenagers assisted the uprising to some degree. Such was the case with Boy Scouts whose activities were merely demonstrative. But the unruly youth, drivers' helpers, delivery boys, shoeshine kids and as such undertook important actions in the cities. They used to spread nails on the roads, puncture trucks tires, and they were sent to force shopkeepers to close up during a strike. They were the ones whose job was to demean the traitors. In the villages they were assigned to deliver messages and to collect information. The older ones participated in real actions though they were small in numbers.]

(Signed) The young fighter,
Al-Hajj Mahmud

A Report on the Activities of Abdul Rahman Zaidan

April 3, 1939

To the Headquarters of the Arab Uprising in Palestine

Enclosed are reports on the actions that were conducted against the (British) military during the years 1936, 1938, 1939.

Sample activities:

- A tough battle was launched against a British unit near Tulkarem. We exploded a bridge, damaged telephone lines and burned telephone poles. Four British soldiers were killed.
- We derailed a train. Five soldiers were killed.
- We derailed a trolley that was followed by a cargo train. Seven British soldiers were killed and eight were wounded.
- We derailed a train. At the site of the incident, we had planted a land mine. Its explosion caused the death of 18 British soldiers and injuries to an additional ten.
- We sabotaged an electric pole near Hadera.
- We blew up a bridge.
- A land mine that we placed under rails caused an explosion that ruined a trolley that carried soldiers, nine of whom were killed.

- We carried an attack on a quarry in Karkur. Seven Jews were killed.
- A mine that exploded near Ramat Hakovesh killed 30 policemen.
- Attacks on a Jewish orchard resulted in a few deaths and injuries for the guards there.
- Various attacks on railroads resulted in the deaths of scores of guards.

These are the attacks that Allah helped me to execute.

The courageous and loyal fighter and God fearing,
Abdul Rhaman Zaidan

[**Editor's notes:** Zaidan was in his late thirties during these activities. He was a farmer who was illiterate. Once he joined the uprising, he commanded a small group and concentrated on sabotaging trains and railroads, electric poles and laying mines. The sabotaging of the railroads underwent a few stages. In the beginning they uprooted the rails, but once that was detected by trolleys' patrols, they changed their methods and started to use explosives. Their initial sabotage was blowing up bridges. Once guards were placed on the bridges, they started to place mines under the railroads. These activities greatly frustrated the British authorities, and they placed large military units to guard the railroads and started to use different methods to collect intelligence, such as negotiations and payment for information. The explosives that were used by this terrorist gang were put in pipes and in gas containers that included nails and metal fragments to increase their deadly effects.

The explosives were obtained from quarries in Palestine and much was smuggled from Syria and Lebanon.

In addition to attacking British targets the gang, like many others, also attacked Jewish targets as well. They chose places like orchards, as many were guarded by Jewish guardsmen and, in some places, by Arab guardsmen who at times cooperated with the terrorists. As for the number of casualties that were reported, they were highly exaggerated and detached from reality.]

The Report of Halled Hammed Al-Yassin from village of Atlit

On December 12, 1937, we damaged and ruined the Jewish citrus orchards of the city Hadera. We burned two packing facilities filled with boxes of oranges. Three days later, we ruined a Jewish water tower.

(Signed: Halled)

A Memorandum to all Butchers

From the Main Headquarters
of the Arab Uprising in Palestine.
1938

It came to our attention that you are not complying with the sanitary ordinances regarding the quality of the meat that you are selling to our people. By doing so you are endangering the public health.

We are therefore warning you that you should follow the rules. Any butcher that will not comply with these orders will be severely punished.

[**Editor's note:** This ordinance served as an excuse to extort money from the butchers. The cattle merchants were dependent on the gangs' commanders for securing the transference of the meat from the northern part of the country to the central region and had to pay exuberant sums for that service.]

An order regarding Identification Cards

In the name of Allah the Merciful
From the Main Headquarters

To the Honorable Arab Nation

1. We hereby announce to the Arab community that everybody, including clerks and people who hold official positions, is forbidden to accept from the British any identification certificate for traveling purposes. Non-compliance with this order will be considered an act of treason that carries the death penalty.
2. All travelers in taxis, buses and trains are forbidden to accept such certificates.
3. Exempted are trucks that transport citrus, as long as they are not used for another purpose.

(Signed: The Servant of God, Abdul Al-Razek)

To the Chief Commander
of the Arab Uprising

On November 18, 1938, the “Offense” unit attacked a few Jews who went through the Summel area (in northern Tel Aviv). We shot at them and one Jewish person was killed.

On its way to Hadera, our unit attacked Rishpon (a village north of Tel Aviv). The fighting lasted for three hours; we suffered no casualties. We assume that the Jewish unit had casualties.

(Signed: The Company Commander)

November 24, 1938

To the Commander of the Uprising, Abu-Feisal

I, Mahmud Al-Sallah a member in the Al-Montar Company, would like to inform you that on November 23, 1938, we sent at nighttime ten of our fighters to attack a Jewish settlement near Ras- El-Ein [**Editor’s note:** Near the source of the Yarkon River].

When they reach the railroad at the intersection of Jaljulia and Ras-El-Ein, they encountered a British military unit and were engaged in fighting for over an hour. Our warriors then hid among the trees along the river. They found out that three British were killed and were injured. At nighttime, three of our fighters went westward, entered into one of the Jewish orchards and destroyed 400 trees, set fire to the water pump and the packing house and retreated with no casualties. Three other fighters went to the Bedouin tribes along the bank of the river in order to summon to trial a person who worked as a guard in the Jewish orchards. My other fighters encountered British soldiers. Because of the darkness our fighters could not find out how many casualties they inflicted on the British.

(Signed) Mahmud Abdul Rahaman Al-Sallah

December 12, 1938

An Official Announcement 110/38

As a result of a confrontation between Jewish guardsmen and the British in Migdal Zedek for over an hour, the enemy suffered many casualties. Twelve British and Jewish soldiers were killed and seven Jews were wounded. We did not have any casualties. Another one of our companies killed seven Jews in an attack that was launched against Petach

Tikvah.

[**Editor's note:** In the battle in Migdal Zedek, the Jewish unit had one soldier killed and three were wounded. The attack on Petach Tikvah actually never happened.]

(Signed) Al-Razek

Abu Dura and the Beit Shean Region

News Bulletin: October 14, 1938

1. In yesterday's communiqué we announced that our warriors damaged some roads. The (British) army came and bombarded a village and its surrounding mountains. They also fired at innocent villagers.
2. Recent news say that three Arabs were killed, some were wounded and few were arrested. The authorities levied 700 pounds as penalty on the villagers. We also received information that the army fired at women and killed four of them.
3. A Jewish guardsman was attacked by us yesterday in Haifa and was critically wounded. His friends opened fire on us but we had no casualties.
4. News from Jerusalem inform us about clashes between government forces and our fighters. The government admitted that it lost three airplanes and their pilots were killed. The British also suffered 40 casualties. During the course of the attack, the British opened fire on the elderly, women and children.
5. We were informed that a few Jews were killed and also two Arabs.
6. During the night, our people cut telephone wires and damaged a few telephone poles as well. They have also damaged the oil pipe in two places and oil was set on fire. Also, a few mines exploded, bridges were destroyed and the road between Tiberias and Nazareth cannot be used as a result of the ruined bridges. Our fighters burned both Jewish and British properties. The total damaged that was inflicted is estimated to be 75,000 pounds. The British received new reinforcement of 200 policemen who recently arrived in the country.
7. We have had a confrontation that occurred with 300 Jewish guardsmen. They attacked one of our villages near Zichron Yaakov. Our warriors rushed to the place and surrounded the guardsmen. I

have to emphasize that our warriors acted bravely under the outstanding leadership of Sheik Abu Dura, who demonstrated great courage. He reminded us of Hallel the hero and the rest of the Muslim heroes, when he laid down his rifle and led his soldiers while raising his sword and calling: “Allah the Great, Allah the Great.” His leadership aroused the enthusiasm of our warriors who killed 60 of the Jewish guardsmen. The lesson that Abu Dura taught the Jews was very important. In addition to their casualties, they learned that they should not try again to attack Arab villages.

[**Editor’s note:** In general, most of the stories in this report have some base in reality. However, all of them are highly exaggerated and threaded with fantasy. The purpose of such reports was to prompt the Arab population to support and join the *jihad*. The most extensive propaganda was waged in Syria and Lebanon where stories were spread about the desecration of holy sites and the dishonoring of Arab women by the Jews. As for the damaging of phone communications, this was done frequently because it was accessible and not every pole could be guarded. The damages that were inflicted to the oil pipes created a lot of nuisance and caused some disturbances to the production of oil. Though the local Sheiks received money from the authorities to protect the oil pipes, they did not provide the necessary protection. It was not until Orde Wingate and the Jewish Night Units, composed of Jewish and British soldiers, started to conduct nightly surveillances that the attacks on the oil pipes diminished significantly. As for the battle against 300 Jewish guardsmen, it is a story that has no basis in reality. None of them was ever killed or wounded.]

The Great Leader’s Proclamation on British Atrocities

October 14, 1938

Oh thou Arabs, read this proclamation very thoroughly, remember it by heart and relay its content to your children.

Oh the Arabs of Palestine, have you heard what happened in the village of Silat-al-Dahar? [**Editor’s note:** A village in the Jenin region known for being a center of terror activities.] The British authorities were not satisfied with the destruction of homes, the arrest of 100 villagers and levying financial penalties. During the week, they sent military forces to the village, gathered all the inhabitants and chose three people whom they led to a distance of 30 meters from the village. There they tied them up and

executed them. And so, their souls ascended to their creator in a protest against the British rule in the Holy Land.

Oh Arabs, this is not the first such occurrence in the country and you shall witness more libels and attacks against your honor. We therefore have to prove to the British that you are not slaves, but descendants to our nation's heroes who promised to God and his Messenger to fight against unfairness and against the oppressors until justice is achieved. Some of those who promised to God to do so found their death, or will be dead in the future, for the cause.

Oh thou British, now it's the time for you to understand that you cannot win over us by rapes. Our people will take revenge even if it will take years to do so. Your attitude towards the Arabs of the Holy Land – a land for which the Arabs are ready to sacrifice themselves – are putting to shame your past and recent history. Nothing will change the course of history except making a just peace with the Arabs by fulfilling their demands. You have to realize that by increasing your unjust behavior, we will respond with an increased strength and faith. God will support us in our struggle.

(Signed) Abu Dura

Selected Letters

To the Leader Abu-Al-Abed,
1938

We shall be grateful if you send us 4-5 good fighters, who will be able to stop the activities of the thieves who disrupt the public peace. We, the police workers of the railroad authority try to keep the dignity of the Arabs in the Haifa region. We fight the Arab criminals because these thieves demand money everywhere. We are requesting that you issue us a permit to arrest a person that is not authorized to collect money and submit him to you.

Your humble servant,
Muhammad Mustafa

Dear uncle,
1938

I wish to inform you that there is a young patriot who works for the trains' authority in Haifa. He has provided good services to his fellow

fighters. He operates the inspection trolley that precedes the train in order to discover mines. His job is to place the mines and send signal to the fighters where they are. The railroad management was surprised to discover that these mines never exploded under the trolley but rather under the trains. He was ordered to switch to another line and that means that he will not be active in the previous line any longer.

He wishes to know if you want him to carry the same duties in his new position. He is ready to fulfill his duty on the condition that you inform your people that they can trust him, because three days ago there was an explosion under a trolley and two Muslims and two fighters were killed.

(No signature)

In the name of Allah the Merciful

1938,

A warning to the policeman Fahd Tallal,

A reliable person informed me that you frequent the offices of the British Intelligence. This is not good for you and your reputation, since it benefits the Jews. This warning is meant to command you to refrain from such activity. If you will not stop you will be sentenced to death by the Supreme Command, and this sentenced will surely be executed.

(Signed) Husein Al-Radi

Letters from the South

1938

To the Supreme Commander of the Uprising, Abdul al-Rahim al-Hajj Mahmud, regarding Fakhri al-Nashashibi and Abu Dura

A week ago, Sheik Suleiman al-Huzeil came to us with others and asked us to mediate between Abdulla Halim al-Shalef and Abdul a- Rahman. The peace conditions that were agreed upon were as follows:

- A. Issuing an order to pardon all those who were sentenced to death by the uprising.
- B. All the residents of Dura and the neighboring villages will join the uprising and will honor and obey the local leaders.

- C. For those who were killed in fighting, compensation will be paid to their relatives according to the customs of the Bedouins.
- D. All concerned leaders were to go to Dura where the peace agreement was reached. An armistice for twenty days was established so that no side will carry out a hostile act until peace is signed.

P.S. Al-Huzeil has more than 100 armed soldiers under his command. They are strategically placed around the Hebron mountain region. They fear the Sheik and hold high respect for him. It seems that his adversary displays a great deal of stubbornness. Al-Huzeil issued a warning that if al-Shalef and his followers will not accept the conditions that were set by the Uprising Command he will blockade all the major roads for them.

The Opposition

Fakhri al-Nashashibi came with some of his men to a meeting in the city of Ramle. Hajj Adel left Gaza to meet with him and unashamedly came in on an armored vehicle. [**Editor's note:** The vehicle presumably was provided by the British who encouraged the opposition's activities.]

The Opposition's Efforts

They are attempting to remove our armed people from the control of the city of Ramle in order to distance us from the *jihad*. They have set a committee that is supposed to replace our High Command. They appointed 15 dignitaries to their committee in order to attract more people. They have also established two military units and are trying to lure our people to join them and obey their orders.

In addition, they started to spread malicious propaganda against us, claiming that we are traitors. Their purpose is to take control of the uprising or suppress it. Their purpose is to eventually destroy the uprising.

When the opposition failed to take over Gaza, they initiated sporadic actions and began to deceive the public that they carry on the *jihad*. The public is unaware that these activities are done by the opposition who consult with the British military commanders both openly and covertly.

Personal Testimonies

1. When the Gaza City Council found out that I delivered a letter from you to the Regional Commander demanding that he hand over to me all monies that he collected from the clerks, the city erupted in anger. Ten men were appointed to capture me and my men. When they

failed, they sought an opportunity to reach me individually and assassinate me.

[**Editor's note:** It was the custom of the Arab Regional Commanders to levy a certain percentage on the salaries of the Arab city clerks. This money was then transferred to the gangs. The Regional Commanders exercised dual loyalty: They served the gangs and were informers to their British superiors.]

2. When Madchat, one of our loyal men, wanted to meet with one of our armed soldiers, the City Council forbade him from entering the city.
3. The council informed the British army about Madchat and they surrounded his home and found there a large sack filled with ammunition, a rifle and a pistol. The army then killed one of Madchat's soldiers and wounded another. He was able to escape and is now hiding outside of the city.
4. They (the council) informed the British about one of our men and the oppressive authorities arrested him.
5. They sent some mediators to me with the purpose of reaching an agreement with me according to which I'll receive from their council all the necessary funds to cover the expenses for my soldiers. When I refused, I was warned that neither I nor my soldiers should enter the city. Such message was sent also the village of Bre'r that has refused to participate in the *jihad*.

The penalty that was levied on the village of Harbaya

The current situation hinders our capability of collecting money in Gaza and in the surrounding villages because of a variety of reasons: The City Council ordered them not to pay any penalty and also convinced them that they should resist our attempt to collect money. They distributed rifles and placed many people on roof tops. I became increasingly apprehensive and worry that much blood will be spilled when we surround the city. But the instigations were not restricted only to Gaza.

They were spread to Majdal (a town north of Gaza) and the local leaders told the population that these levies are unlawful and the people decided to object to them. Such cases, in addition to our other problems that the opposition confronted us with, prompted us to reconsider the whole issue: Should we force the people into discipline and total submission, or should we collect as much as we can?

We were told that we are perceived as bullies and that is why we are being resisted by townspeople and villagers. But we found out that those who presented themselves as mediators were actually promising the people that they could cancel the penalty in exchange for payment. We found out that these actions are being under the direction of the opposition.

The Fighters' Situation

The residents of Majdal are initiating many ways to collect the money that they are required to pay. They charge 20 *grushim* (there are 100 *grushim* in a pound) from every truck. But we do not demand the villagers or the trucks owners to pay us and thus we have no financial source to support our fighters. Our fighters are tired for not having cash and they might be influenced by the fighting units of Gaza. I do my best to cover some of the expenses and I ask you to send us money and give us orders to collect money from the villagers for the sake of our fighters. In the last three months our unit spent its own money and we did not receive any assistance from the villages, the cities or the headquarters.

(Signed) The Armed Forces President,
Abdul Kader Hammed

October 18, 1938
From: The General Headquarters
of the Arab Uprising in Palestine
To: Yussof Abu-Sayag

Our best wishes,

The High Command decided to empower you to receive all the money that has been collected from the residents of Gaza against receipts that will be kept at your possession, until they are transferred to us.

(Signed) The young warrior, servant of his nation,
Al-Hajj

November 11, 1938

A Report submitted by the "Red Blood Unit"

A confrontation between the rebels and the military resulted in heavy casualties for the British. The mines that were laid on the railroads caused great damage, telephone lines were cut, and the train became immobile for two days. The rebels had no casualties. In a few consecutive actions, the rebels fought inside the city of Gaza and inflicted many casualties on the (British) military. We had no casualties. Please issue communiqués about our actions and mention our names.

(Signed) Manchat Dervish

The Abu-Bakhar Affair

[**Editor's note:** The letters relating to Abu Bakhar, one of the well-known gang leaders, were written between the end of March and the end of May 1939, which was the twilight of the uprising. He was a teacher who left his post and joined the gangs. Later on, he formed his own militia and had a few confrontations with the British military.

He was an educated person and a smooth talker which gained him respect. These letters reveal the situation in the country among the Arabs under the oppression of the terror, where those who started and led it could not manage it any longer.

The consequences were quite dire and they affected their cause and led to the negative responses from the masses that they aspired to lead. The uprising never became a neatly organized organization. Instead, it was characterized by a conglomerate of competing groups that managed to carry out various degrees of effectiveness in the name of the *jihad*.]

From: The Central Committee of the Holy War in Palestine

To: Abu-Bakhar

The *jihad* movement in the holy land needs the material, spiritual and financial assistance of all the inhabitants of the country. The *jihad* is the obligation of every Arab to contribute physically and materially. The Central Committee prepared a list of contributors whose responses will open the way for the contribution of the rich people who may have not been able to join the movement in person.

Whoever thinks that this contribution may be defined simply as charity is wrong: It is the *jihad* culture.

Please take note of the following comments before you begin your undertaking:

- When you present your demands for contributions, be honest and don't oppress anyone. You have to find out about potential contributors and their financial standing.
- We have printed letters in which we explain the goals of the *jihad*. We have informed the people that they will receive receipts for their contributions. Whoever is going to solicit money without offering a receipt is a liar who should be considered a traitor using the *jihad* for his own advantage.
- You are required to appoint people who will distribute those letters in every city. Each one has to be sworn to be honest and devoted.
- If a potential donor is out of the country, his relatives are obligated to forward the letter to him.
- If a person who is required to donate money claims that he has not enough funds, he can be granted ten days' extension.
- Make sure the public does not feel that its money will be used for other purposes other than the *jihad*.
- The *jihad* taxes will be 500 pounds per dunam on an orchard with no mortgage and 250 pounds per dunam on an orchard that has a mortgage.
- Arab clerks who work for the British authorities will be required to pay in one installment one fourth of their salary if it is up to 25 pounds per month. Those who make more will be required to donate half their salary in one payment.
- Local and foreign companies will participate in the donations because their profits derive from the resources of the fighting nation.

Best wishes,

(Signed) The Central Committee of the National Jihad in Palestine

A message by Abu-Bakhar

(1939)

It was God's will that we lost the hero of the *jihad*, Al-Hajj, who in our deep sorrow, died honorably in the battlefield.

After his death, we discovered many areas of negligence in our *jihad*. The British thought that they had squelched the uprising but they failed to realize that others have emerged to renew the flame of the *jihad*. Don't pay

attention to the British who proclaim that only few remain loyal to the uprising.

The uprising's flame has been reignited and I came with determination, guided by God, to continue and fight the enemy. I ask for your support. My enemy is the person who is a traitor to my country and my faith.

[**Editor's note:** Abu-Bakhar was not successful in uniting the various factions and getting the support of the religious groups. Infighting was going on and many people were involved in betrayals and in informing on each other. There were also increasing number of people who were not officially members of the opposition factions but became sympathizers and thus the enemies of the terrorists' gangs.]

(Signed) I, who rely on God,
Abu-Bakhar,
The Supreme Commander of the Rebel Forces

A Report sent by Abu-Bakhar to the Headquarters in Syria (May, 1939)

To my brothers, members of the Central Committee,

I recently left Syria and returned to my beloved Palestine. The government has become increasingly active and I encountered its military forces twice. After I received my ammunition, I moved towards the south. Once again, we encountered the enemy who was reinforced with two airplanes, but we had no casualties.

When we crossed Jezreel Valley, we realized that the spirit of the uprising had significantly diminished. The gangs' members are treating the villagers in a very cruel way. They rob them of their possessions, they kill without due process, and create confrontations for no apparent reason. The villagers are praying to God to guard them from the fighters of the uprising. The further I traveled, I found that this situation prevailed in many villages and the villagers were very desperate.

The government sensed this weakness and started to gather its armed forces. Our spirit is weak and it's necessary to strengthen us by supplying us with arms and ammunition. I have hired 30 young men from the north and paid them four pounds each to join our gangs.

In the cities the situation is dire as well. The people feel a deep mistrust towards us and they are in constant touch with the government. The spies are spreading all over and the trustworthy are hiding. So far, I did not have a chance to send our loyalists to take revenge against the traitors.

We are in hiding most of the time waiting for the tensions to subside. One colleague forcibly collected money from the villagers and I hope that I can straighten him up. I recently launched two attacks against the military and was successful in inflicting casualties on them. Please send me more money and ammunition.

(Signed) Abu-Bakhar

[**Editor's note:** The British became increasingly impatient with these gangs that acted according to whims of their mostly corrupt leaders. In one instance the British punished villagers who supported Abu-Bakhar, in order to set a deterrent. Abu-Bakhar felt that he had to exploit his occasional activities and exaggerated the scope of his attacks and the number of casualties that he inflicted on the enemy.]

A Message to the Arab People

The British claim that they were successful in suppressing the uprising in Palestine. This message will prove to you that the rebels are still active. On May 14, 1939, we fought few British battalions and eight airplanes. We were successful in killing the deputy commander of the British forces. On three occasions, we forced the British to retreat but at the end they overtook us. We lost 13 warriors and the rest had to retreat. The British had 40 dead. The government admitted to only seven casualties but we found 26 hats stained with blood.

(Signed) I, who rely on God,
Abu-Bakhar, Chief Commander of the Uprising

[**Editor's note:** The number of the British casualties that he cited was pure exaggeration because in reality there were no casualties. Also, he fantasized about the number of the airplanes that actually took part in these confrontations. These battles marked the demise of the Arab uprising in Eretz Israel and the end of the military "career" of Abu-Bakhar who shortly thereafter fled the country.]