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EXTRACTS FROM WAR DIARY
OF

INTELLIGENCE (POLITICAL) G.H.Q., E.E.F.,

APRIL 1918.

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2nd.

Intelligence Officer RAM ALLAH reports that the chief topic of conversation in that district at the present time is the Jewish question. All the Mohamedans and Christians are strongly averse to the introduction of a large number of Jews into PALESTINE. They are convinced that Jews are already starting to purchase land through native agents. They are prepared to go to any lengths to hinder Jewish immigration.

The following information has been received from a British Officer attached to the H.G.'s of the Sherif ABDULLAH's Army, sent from EL CHOR (south of the DEAD SEA):-
"The seizure of arms from Bedouins in the Occupied Territory is causing a very painful impression amongst them. A Howeitat Sheikh recently said "We are allies and fight together, yet you seize the arms of Beouins. You would be angry if we seized arms from Englishmen who are among us, but what you do amounts to the same thing."

The Chief Political Officer has recommended that no action should be taken on this telegram unless the Foreign Office see fit to take the matter up again.

3rd.

A telegram has been received from the Foreign Office suggesting that the following measures might now be taken:-
1. Recognition of FAISAL'S authority in area now occupied by us East of the JORDAN.
2. Reception of FAISAL by the G.O.C.
3. Gifts and decorations for FAISAL and his followers.
4. Message on these proceedings, embodying a re-affirmation of our pro-Arab policy for the King of the HEJAZ.
and asking the Chief Political Officer for his views on the above points.

The Chief Political Officer has accordingly replied in the following terms:-
"The attitude of Sherif FEISAL does not necessarily mean disloyalty to us or any intention of making terms prematurely with the enemy. He has already expressed the opinion to Major Lawrence that it will be necessary for the Arabs to make terms with the Turks as soon as they have secured their aim in Arab territories. A hostile Turkey immediately north of Arab territory would constitute a perpetual menace to Arab Independence and a source of anxiety to us to whom the Arabs would naturally turn for protection.

It does not follow therefore that FEISAL is doing more than try to find out Turkey's attitude towards an eventual "reprochement".

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If Arab aims were fully secured an agreement between the Arabs and Turks would remove some of the obstacles to a separate peace between Great Britain and Turkey, and provide a channel through which British influence might undermine German control over Turanianism. The establishment of Arab independence would be a proof of Great Britain's disinterested support of the ideals of national independence and liberty.

A counterpoise to hostile Pan-Islamism working on parallel lines to Turanianism under German direction would be provided by a friendly Moslem Arab State or confederation of States. Fear of German control accentuated by German policy in RUSSIA, would incline Turkish national sentiment towards Great Britain whose policy compares favourably with that of Germany.

At the same time, it must be borne in mind that FEISAL is a strong Moslem and may not, as such, regard with complete equanimity the destruction of Turkey as a great Moslem Power. Exaggerated accounts of German successes may also tend to precipitate matters. Other influences are no doubt a certain distrust of Zionist aims and deeprooted suspicion of French policy in SYRIA which has not been allayed even by the speeches of M.M.PICHON and GOUT. It is, therefore, desirable that the Arab alliance with Great Britain should be cemented by all possible means.

FEISAL'S authority is recognised in all territories East of the Jordan of which he is in occupation and districts further North are looking towards him. Although at present our forces are not in occupation of any considerable districts East of Jordan, we can confirm to him our recognition of this.

A visit of FEISAL to JERUSALEM to meet the Commander in Chief is very desirable and is being arranged as soon as possible, subject to the possibility of his being able to leave his army on Military grounds. If possible he should meet Dr. WEIZMANN and be reassured in regard to the scope of the Zionist movement. It is also very desirable that French Government should instruct M. PICOT to give an authoritative statement to FEISAL disclaiming any idea of French interference in SYRIA unless requested to do so by the majority of the Syrian people.

It is recommended that the K.C.B. be awarded to FEISAL and that the C. in C. should present it to him when he visits JERUSALEM. Any distribution of gifts on a considerable scale might be interpreted as a sign of weakness but suitable individual cases may present themselves.

FEISAL will be in a position to reassure

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the King of the HEJAZ if a satisfactory result attends his visit."

Intelligence Officer, JAFFA, reports that several bazaar rumours are circulating. One, caused, no doubt, by the arrival of Indian troops, was to the effect that British troops in PALESTINE are going to France and will be replaced by Indians.

The fighting in France has attracted a good deal of attention.

A strong anti-British current in the feelings of the educated and partly educated classes continue to flow. It is sometimes asserted by these classes that the British will be bound to give up PALESTINE to the Turks, either by force of arms, or as a condition of peace.

4th.

The manner of burying the dead of the Egyptian Labour Corps and Camel Transport Corps has caused some comment. On arrival at the place of burial everything is removed and the body is placed in the grave naked. The poorest Moslem somehow manages to raise a shroud for his dead and it is felt that a Power like England should be able and willing to provide some decent sort of covering in which to bury men who have died in the performance of their duty.

The following are suggested as the fundamental lines on which should repose the desired policy of mutual understanding, Co-operation and alliance between Palestinians and Zionists:-

- (1) The inviolability of the Holy Places and their retention as in the past, in the hands of their respective owners with the free exercise of their rights and privileges.
- (2) The institution of a system of Government based on even handed justice, and equality of rights between the different elements irrespective of their comparative numbers (majority or minority of votes).
- (3) The laws of the country to apply equally to all elements of the population without distinction.
- (4) The official language to be the language of the country, viz:- Arabic, and the teaching thereof to be compulsory in both Government and Private Schools.
- (5) All persons coming into the country as colonists, whatever may be their nationality, are to be subject alike to the laws of the country.
- (6) In view of the general impoverishment of the population through the war, which affords a wide field for merciless exploitation, it would be necessary to suspend during the war any transaction of purchase or sale of property, whether rural or urban.
- (7) The institution at the earliest possible opportunity of an Agricultural Bank under Government control to afford impartial financial help to the people.

/ (8)

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(8) The advisability of framing a law, similar to the Five Feddan Law in Egypt, for Palestine.

(9) The offering of honest opportunity to Zionist Colonisation by facilitating the purchase of state lands, especially in the first rush of immigration, leaving a reasonable share of these lands to the other elements.

(10) The institution of a Mixed Commission composed equally of the three elements and independent of the Government, whose functions would be to examine any cases of aggression or injustice in economic or moral matters, that may arise between the different elements, and to take the necessary steps, under the Government auspices with a view to their settlement and their non recurrence. The permanent duty of this Commission would be to study and devise all such means as are calculated to strengthen the ties of friendship between the different elements, promote a good feeling of neighbourliness, inculcate the principle of union and solidarity, and inspire in all a public spirit, and the unselfish desire for the commonweal.

The above was drawn up by the following Syrians and submitted to a meeting of Syrians and Zionists on March 30th at CAIRO.

SULEIMAN Bey NASIF

FARIS NIMR

SAID Pasha SHUQAIR.

It represents the views of the Syrians and has not been yet accepted by the Zionists.

9th.

Intelligence Officer, BETHELEHEM, reports that a bad impression has been produced by the arrival of a large number of refugees from SALT and the places East of Jordan. These people were originally from the BETHELEHEM district and had emigrated to escape Turkish oppression. The whole population look upon our retirement as a defeat and much anxiety is shown for the future. The refugees show themselves very grateful for the help afforded them by British Troops during the process of evacuation.

10th.

The Commander-in-Chief has received a telegram from the War Office to the following effect:-

"Question as follows for answer by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on Tuesday April 9th begins - Whether he is in position to make statement about affairs of Kingdom of HEJAZ SULTANATES RIADH and HAIL and countries adjoining - ends.

The following points are included in proposed answer:-

1. Declaration of Arab Independence July 1916.
2. Turks in HEDJAZ originally 20,000 to 30,000 strong.
3. MECCA TAIF JEDDAH KUNFIDA seized.
4. Numerous tribesmen officers and men Prisoners of War volunteered to form organised permanent force.
5. This Army and HUSSEIN's 4 sons cleared RED SEA Coast for 800 miles.
6. Railway continually interrupted, MEDINA

/blockaded

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blockaded last 8 months.

7. FEISAL advanced 700 miles MECCA → TAFILA.

8. Recent AMMAN raid assisted ARABS to maintain position.

9. 10,000 killed and wounded and prisoners Turkish casualties to date; 47 guns, 40 machine guns captured.

10. ARABS occupied (engaged ?) or isolated 40000 Turks and over 100 guns.

Any comments you may wish to make on above, please wire "PRIORITY".

The Commander in Chief has telegraphed the following reply to the War Office:-
Reference your telegram of 7-4-18.

Following comments on points enumerated in above wire.

1. It was in June, 1916, that declaration of Arab Independence took place and not July.

2. 20,000 is an outside figure for forces in MEDINA and other HEDJAZ garrisons at outbreak of revolt.

3. Add TEIMA, AKABA, WEJH, and YAMBO.

4. Add MECCA Townsmen.

5. Bedouin Levies as opposed to organised permanent force did practically all this work. Latter for most part was merely in gar rison of permanent camps and posts. Bedouin are entitled to bulk of the credit.

6. MEDINA more or less blockaded for past 12 months sinze Sherif ABDULLA'S Headquarters were established in Wadi AIS about March 1917.

7. FEISAL advanced 800 miles from MECCA to KERAK which is now occupied by his forces.

8. Arabs were assisted to occupy KERAK and re-take TAFILA by the recent AMMAN raid.

9. Read 50 machine guns instead of 40.

10. (a) Eastern Coast of RED SEA has been secured against enemy activity.

(b) Considerable quantity of railway rolling stock has been destroyed by Arabs.

Reports continue to come in complaining of the behaviour of troops towards local inhabitants and interference with their women. The Intelligence Officer gathers that the Australian troops are the cause of most of these complaints.

Further reports have come in concerning the smuggling of HASHISH, and after enquiries the matter has been handed over to the Military Governor.

12th.

Intelligence Officer, JERUSALEM, reports that about 3000 of the people of SALT and vicinity have come into Jerusalem as refugees. In addition to these, about 1500 Armenians who were deportees in SALT have come to JERUSALEM. Both they and the people from SALT are being cared for by the Military Governor and Palestine Relief Fund.

The withdrawal of our forces from East of Jordan and the arrival of refugees have given rise to rumours of a British disaster East of JORDAN and the near approach of a

/Turkish

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Turkish Army reinforced by Germans, Austrians and Bulgarians. This has caused a certain amount of panic among the friendly classes of the population some of whom have even began to pack up and prepare for flight, while the ill-disposed elements have been rejoicing at what they regard as the near return of the Turks. The effect on the money situation has been very adverse, the Egyptian Banknote being now exchanged with great difficulty at 80 piastres per pound, the Turkish pound note having risen since the 1st April to 18 piastres.

On the otherhand, reports that the Sherif's forces have taken KERAK have caused rejoicing among both Moslems and Christians, and helped to dispel the bad effect of the rumoured defeat of the British beyond JORDAN.

17th.

The Commander-in-Chief has sent the following telegram to the War Office.
"With reference to your telegram of 17-3-18, I presume that men recruited locally for service with the Jewish Battalion will be treated as British soldiers in all respects, such as pay, pensions, allowances, etc. Please send confirmation.

20th.

The Chief Political Officer has received the following telegram from the Foreign Office:-
"As to FEISAL's good faith, I have no doubt, but cumulative evidence indicates that this latest development of his attitude is indirect result of German inspiration, either via NIEDERMAYER, or some other agency. It is certainly desired by the Germans to bring about rapprochement between Arabs and Turks, consequently any tendency on the part of the former to compromise should be consistently discouraged.
"It is dangerous in itself, and far from facilitating any future arrangement between Great Britain and Turkey, would jeopardize positive advantages we have already obtained over latter.
"For his information please repeat to High Commissioner."

The Chief Political Officer has sent the following telegram to the Foreign Office in reply:-
"I merely indicated a possible development of the situation after the war and made it clear that any attempt on the part of FAISAL to compromise with the Turks while war is in progress should be discouraged though it is very important that we should not give him any sign that we suspect him of any such intentions.
"Energy and determination far beyond that which he has previously displayed are being shown on FEISAL's part in the Arab operations now proceeding in the MAAN Area. This indicates that our influence is successfully counter-acting German and Turkish propaganda. All

/cumulative

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cumulative evidence indicating that FEISAL is being influenced by enemy propaganda with details regarding the agencies which the enemy are employing would be gratefully received. Also with regard to the conferring of a British decoration of FEISAL, should be glad to know how question stands."

The Commander-in-Chief has received the following telegrams from the War Office:-
16-4-18: "Your telegram of the 14th April, personnel of Jewish battalion recruited locally eligible for pay and proficiency pay as for British infantry. Am sending further instructions as to separate allowance and non-effective grants."

22nd.

Intelligence Officer, RAMALLAH, reports that recent operations East of the Jordan were regarded by the populations as a failure, and have done our prestige no good. The arrival of certain refugees from SALT and the tale that we induced inhabitants of SALT and other Arabs to fight for us and then abandoned them, has also caused bad feeling. The rumour is current that our expedition was a failure owing to the supposed employment of Jewish Battalions which were said to have arrived in Palestine.

Both the supporters and the opponents of the movement of the King of the HEJAZ seem to agree that he is having little effect on the progress of the war. Surprise was expressed that when we were operating against SALT and AMRAK his forces were no nearer than KERAK and it is thought that it was our operations that assisted him to take KERAK, and not vice-versa.

Taken all round, local opinion is not so favourable to us as it was three months ago. The people expected far more from us than we have given. The lapse of over a month without any forward move on this immediate front has had a bad effect. An advance on our part is not only a good object lesson to the people near the lines, but it also enables people to get back to their villages and their cultivation which is their chief object in life. The majority, whether pro-British or pro-Turk would like to regain possession of their land by an advance on our part, for the simple reason that it would save them from further experience of active operations. But there are still many who would prefer to see the Turk sweep back on this area again.

23rd.

The Chief Political Officer has received a telegram from the Foreign Office to the effect that, the encouragement of pro-Sheriffian propaganda East of the Jordan would be desirable, and asking whether he is able to take any action in this direction. He has replied by telegraph to the Foreign Office that everything possible in this direction is being done by us.

/26th

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26th.

The Chief Political Officer has received the following telegram from the Foreign Office:-

"Report what steps have been taken to remove German and Austrian influence in schools and institutions, as rumours of liberty enjoyed by Germans in Palestine is causing -----? in London and likely to provoke crisis. Public opinion has already been strongly influenced by the Germans' deportation of Belgians and French in occupied areas, whom they have forced to work for them. You should bear in mind that Germans have not hesitated to carry this out."

He has replied to the Foreign Office by telegraph as follows:-

"Your telegram of April, 23rd.

"We are taking steps to remove German and Austrian influence in schools and institutions which are set forth fully in the C-in-C's report to War Office, dated 8th April. They are also outlined in my cable of the 9th April, and action is proceeding on the lines of above quoted telegram, although no reply with especial reference to the last paragraph regarding German businesses has been received so far."

28th.

The Chief Political Officer has sent the following telegram to the Foreign Office:-

"With referenceto your telegram of 5-2-18, and my telegram of 28-3-18, paragraph one. Have now arranged that German, Austro-Hungarian, and Bulgarian subjects who are resident in occupied territory are to be registered under conditions similar to those carried out by Aliens Registration Committee in Egypt.

As soon as possible will forward the information you require."