ELEVEN

IN DEFENSE OF JERUSALEM

The General Islamic Congress, 1931

Through the Jerusalem Muslim congress of December 1931, that faction of Palestine’s Arabs under the leadership of Amin al-Husayni (1897-1974) attempted to commit wider Muslim opinion to support for the cause of Muslim Palestine. The aim was to challenge the Western sanction accorded the League of Nations mandate and the projected establishment of a Jewish national home. The proposed congress, devoted ostensibly to the preservation of the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem, was ruled by British authorities to be of a religious nature, and while the mandatory power was out of sympathy with the aims of the congress, it thus did little to impede the efforts of the organizers. These were left to surmount only those obstacles raised by Muslim opponents at home and abroad. Such opposition, which was considerable, was either overcome or ignored, and the congress, once convened, endorsed a series of resolutions for the defense of the holy places against encroachment, and the preservation of the Muslim-Arab character of Palestine.

Because these resolutions entailed a number of ambitious and costly projects, such as the building of a Muslim university and the purchase of land, the participants went further, establishing a permanent secretariat and scheduling future congresses at two-year intervals. The permanent secretariat functioned for perhaps as long as five years, but with steadily diminishing results, and the congress was not reconvened. The failure of the secretariat to raise funds to effect the congress resolutions appears to have been the principal cause of the withering of this initiative. In 1937, with the flight of Amin al-Husayni from Palestine to an exile abroad, the organization finally ceased to function, although the network of political and personal ties which it created continued for years afterward to work on behalf of the Palestine Arab cause.

Because of the widespread interest in the conflict over Palestine and the conscious efforts of the organizers to seize the limelight, the congress
won coverage more extensive than that accorded any of its predecessors. In addition to the Palestinian press, which was consumed with the event, the Western and foreign Arab press showed a sustained interest in the proceedings. The prelude, proceedings, and aftermath of the congress were therefore amply covered in the open press, and it was a participating journalist, Muhammad 'Ali al-Tahir, who left one of the fullest accounts of events behind the scenes, written only six months after the congress.1

As was to be expected, Rashid Rida's al-Manar also covered the congress, but from the narrow vantage point of his own contribution to its proceedings.2 A fairly straightforward account in Arabic was written by the Palestinian Arab historian Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, who had served as recording secretary to the congress.3 Later came other memoirs, the most interesting of these by 'Ajaj Nuwayhid.4

The desire to write about the Jerusalem proceedings while they were still fresh was also great for Western scholars and publicists. H. A. R. Gibb's account was the most influential of these several studies,5 all of which were superseded once British, French, Palestinian Arab, Zionist, and Egyptian archival materials became available. A number of documented historical studies then appeared, some more thorough than others.6

There remains an important source which has yet to reappear and fully illuminate the congress: the archive of the congress itself. The location of these documents was known as recently as 1955, when the papers were searched by an Azhar historian for a manuscript autobiography of Shakib Arslan. The material was then stored in a disorganized fashion in a room near al-Aqsa, but now cannot be located.7

The Palestinian Arab initiative for a general Muslim congress dated in a sense from the dispatch of an Islamic mission to the Hijaz in 1922. At that time, the delegation prevailed upon Husayn of Mecca to convene precisely this sort of gathering, and then actively participated (see chapter 8). Large Palestinian Muslim delegations also figured in the subsequent congress of 1926, organized under Saudi auspices (see previous chapter). Personal ties were forged at these encounters with the Indian Khilafat Committee leaders Muhammad and Shawkat 'Ali. Upon their disappointment with Ibn Sa'ud's policies, these brothers were in search of an alternative Arab alliance, and in early 1929 Muhammad 'Ali first suggested the creation of a Supreme Islamic Council in Jerusalem composed of representatives drawn from throughout the Muslim world.8 The bond was sealed in early 1931 upon Muhammad 'Ali's death, when Amin al-Husayni wired Shawkat 'Ali asking him to inter his deceased brother in Jerusalem.9
From the interaction of Amin al-Husayni and Shawkat 'Ali on this occasion, the idea of a general Muslim congress in Jerusalem was reborn. Earlier, in 1928, when it became evident that the congress organizations established in Cairo and Mecca two years before had collapsed, Amin al-Husayni had convened in Jerusalem a "general" Muslim congress in defense of the holy places, but it had been attended only by delegates from neighboring territories. With the promise of cooperation from the Indian Khilafat Committee, a new Jerusalem congress was sure to attract far wider participation and attention. The Khilafat leaders, in turn, would then perhaps be in a position to forge that Muslim alliance which had repeatedly eluded them, most recently in their falling out with Ibn Sa'ud.

A preparatory committee was established, which entered into widespread correspondence with influential Muslims abroad, while Amin al-Husayni and Shawkat 'Ali began to lobby in public and private on behalf of the projected congress. Their themes were the defense of the holy places, and their concrete project was the establishment of a new Muslim university in Jerusalem. A third theme, the restoration of the Hijaz railroad to Muslim control, emerged with the sudden seizure of the Damascus station's premises by French authorities while the congress was in preparation. But the prelude to the congress was a round of confrontations with those who opposed the organizers personally or the idea of a Jerusalem Muslim congress generally. Both forms of opposition were either reconciled or defeated, but not without influence upon the congress itself.

Because Palestine was a territory under British mandate, it was first necessary to secure British acquiescence in the congress plans. There was much concern at the Foreign Office over the possible effects of the congress on British relations with certain states, and the banning of the congress was briefly entertained. The most worrisome of these considerations, to judge from the official correspondence, concerned Italian apprehensions about the congress. Italian forces had just crushed the last vestiges of Muslim resistance in Libya, and in September 1931 had captured and executed its leader, 'Umar al-Mukhtar. A wave of revulsion had swept the Muslim world, and the Italian government greatly feared that it would be made the butt of the resolutions of any such congress. The Foreign Office was given to understand that were this to happen in Jerusalem, Anglo-Italian relations would suffer.

But there were weightier considerations. It was the view of the Colonial Office that any step to ban the congress "might be so much resented [within Palestine] as to precipitate disorder possibly even on the scale of an Arab rebellion." A similar threat was seen by the India Office, which was informed by the Government of India that "Muhammadan feeling [in India] is very unsettled and disturbed," that
"causes of discontent to Muslims should be avoided so far as this is possible," and that "the proposal to prohibit the Conference be definitely abandoned." In the face of these reiterated appeals, the Foreign Office relented in its opposition, and the strength of these purely pragmatic arguments was then linked to a principle by a Foreign Office official: "I think there is so much to be said for maintaining our traditional attitude of non-intervention in such quasi-religious matters, that we had better adopt the line the C.O. [Colonial Office] suggest." That line finally prevailed.

The subsequent efforts of British authorities concentrated upon extracting various assurances from Amin al-Husayni, to the effect that issues liable to embarrass Great Britain or disturb public order would not be raised at the congress. Such assurances were readily given by Amin al-Husayni to the new British High Commissioner in Palestine, Sir Arthur Wauchope, who wrote advising that "prohibition of the congress should not be contemplated. It would cause deep resentment and would, in addition, be impossible to enforce, since even if Shawkat Ali and other intending participants were to be refused entrance into Palestine, local adherents of the Mufti would probably meet in [the] Haram area and go through [the] agenda of [the] congress." In any case, "I believe he will carry out his pledges and so he will go far to make me feel that we can work together when his word has once been given in the cause of law and order." The Secretary of State for Colonies replied to a pointed parliamentary question on the congress in this fashion: "As a result of inquiries made of the High Commissioner for Palestine, I am convinced that the Mufti [Amin al-Husayni], who has issued invitations for the congress, realises his responsibilities and is anxious to conduct the congress in such a manner as to cause no embarrassment to His Majesty's or the Palestine administration." At various stages, British authorities thus brought pressure to bear upon the organizers, but there was never any serious doubt that the congress would be permitted.

There were two parties in Palestine who were disquieted by British policy. The Zionists first had hoped that the congress would be banned outright. Once the British decision was made, they concentrated their efforts upon diminishing participation in the congress. Publicly it was declared the policy of the Jewish Agency to maintain "absolute silence with regard to the preparations for this conference. We consider this in the present case the more wholesome, I may say only useful, tactics, and I am glad that we have succeeded in winning the Hebrew press over to a similar attitude. Any interference on our part would have immensely strengthened the Mufti's position both in Palestine and abroad." But the Agency did go so far as to secretly employ a minor
Arab journalist to conduct a covert campaign against the congress in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, a service for which he was paid. The results of this effort were negligible.21

Another opposition group was that faction of Palestinian Arabs personally opposed to Amin al-Husayni. Their challenge was somewhat more effective.22 They suspected that Amin al-Husayni would use the congress as a tool for self-aggrandizement from which they, his rivals, were likely to suffer most. This faction, headed by the Nashashibi and Khalidi families of Jerusalem, first attacked the congress and its preparatory committee in a manifesto that claimed the entire effort to be unrepresentative of Palestinian Muslims on account of their own exclusion. They then called for a restructurin of the preparatory committee to include them.23 The Husayni faction's newspaper retorted with a refutation, as did Amin al-Husayni himself, in a counter-manifesto to the Muslim world.24 As a gesture, the preparatory committee then unilaterally announced that several new members—among them two Nashashibis—would be added to its ranks,25 an offer that the opposition rejected. A last-minute mediation effort by Shawkat ʿAli and the president of the Young Men's Muslim Association in Egypt, ʿAbd al-Hamid Saʿid, then failed, and the Palestinian opposition opened a relentless campaign against the congress throughout its deliberations.26 They went so far as to convene a counter-congress, attended by about 1,000 local notables and shaykhs, under the presidency of Raghib al-Nashashibi.27

The presence of so vocal an opposition to the congress among so many Muslims just beyond the congress hall not only made for bad press, but split the failed negotiators Shawkat ʿAli and ʿAbd al-Hamid Saʿid from Amin al-Husayni. "The mufti and his party would not allow the others to share in the planning of the Conference and the invitations to it," Shawkat ʿAli wrote to a friend. "I protested, and I must say that the opposition behaved nobly; they made it known that they were in sympathy with the Conference and willing to support the university-to-be, but they could not but oppose the mufti's directing the whole affair. If the mufti would have followed my advice we should have obtained even better results."28

Different results perhaps would have been obtained if Shawkat ʿAli himself had not spoken of the caliphate during the preparatory stages of the congress. To the distress of the Palestinian organizers, he made no secret of his continued allegiance to the deposed Ottoman caliph Abdülmeid, then in exile in France. "Do the Muslims now have a caliph?" he was asked in an interview. "Yes," replied Shawkat ʿAli, "and he is an exile in Nice. In my heart and mind, he remains caliph; I accepted him and swore allegiance to him already in the past, and I cannot go back on what I have done."29
The exiled Ottoman pretender apparently believed that the caliphate indeed would figure in the congress agenda, and through his secretary he reminded the Muslim world and the impending congress that the allegiance pledged to him upon his ascension in 1922 was still binding.30 There were parties who made a connection and immediately feared that Shawkat ‘Ali envisioned a restoration of Abdülmecid to the caliphate at the Jerusalem congress.

Egyptian circles were the first to respond with suspicion, since the Azhar committee which convened the Cairo caliphate congress of 1926 had expressly repudiated Abdülmecid’s claim.31 The Azhar journal reminded Amin al-Husayni of the conclusions of this congress, in which delegates of his own faction had participated.32 Amin al-Husayni, who hoped for full Egyptian participation and had written King Fu‘ad requesting the dispatch of official delegates,33 was thus forced to deny to Egyptian authorities that the congress had anything to do with the caliphate, and maintained that rumors to the contrary were fabrications manufactured by the Zionists.34 Finally, in an attempt to undo the damage Shawkat ‘Ali had done, Amin al-Husayni traveled to Egypt a month before the congress, to reassure the king and other worried parties that the caliphate was not on the agenda.

Shawkat ‘Ali’s detailed comments on the role of the projected Muslim university in Jerusalem also had direct repercussions in Egypt. The university, as he imagined it, would have fulfilled many of those tasks coveted by al-Azhar.35 Naturally the Shaykh al-Azhar, then Muhammad al-Ahmad al-Zawahiri, was distressed, and told Amin al-Husayni so.36 Rashid Rida believed that this response was unjustified, and that the proposed new university would not detract from al-Azhar’s central role.37 But the concern drew upon the justified sense of insecurity engendered by the Azhar-sponsored caliphate congress of 1926. This had revealed the frailty of al-Azhar’s claim to primacy among Islamic institutions, which no reassurance could alleviate. Amin al-Husayni first retaliated, and his paper published a scathing attack on Zawahiri.38 But Amin al-Husayni later apologized, and offered his assurances. He declared that the new Muslim university, planned on a modest scale, was intended only to counter the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and not to challenge al-Azhar.39

These assurances, on both the issues of the caliphate and the university, were embodied in a letter from Amin al-Husayni to the Egyptian premier Sidqi Pasha, but King Fu‘ad remained unconvinced of Amin al-Husayni’s sincerity.40 The fact that several members of the Wafd party, rivals to the palace, had accepted their invitations to Jerusalem further concerned Egyptian authorities, who asked that British consular authorities issue visas to these opponents only with the warning that
they behave themselves. All this had so unnerving an effect in official Cairo that no official delegation was dispatched from Egypt, although care was taken to covertly finance an unofficial delegation that would defend the royal palace's interests against the Wafd in the congress sessions.

The sons of Husayn of Mecca—Abdallah, Faysal, and 'Ali—also required assurances on the question of the caliphate, for they too had an interest here, and while they now advanced no claim, it was certainly undesirable that some act of the congress exclude the possibility of a future claim on their behalf. Husayn himself had died earlier in the year, and Amin al-Husayni had been permitted by the sons to arrange for his burial in Jerusalem near Muhammad 'Ali. The Egyptian consul in Jerusalem felt certain that part of this understanding was a secret agreement with Amin al-Husayni to secure the caliphate, probably for Faysal of Iraq, at a future congress. For the existence of such a deal there is no other evidence, but Amman and Baghdad certainly did insist on guarantees similar to those given to Cairo, and these Amin al-Husayni made during a trip to Amman.

Saudi suspicions, on the other hand, could not be alleviated. There remained a profound distrust of Shawkat 'Ali, who had so incensed the organizers of the 1926 Meccan Muslim congress. And there was a general reluctance to see others succeed where 'Abd al-Aziz Ibn Sa'ud had not. Saudi annoyance was expressed to British diplomats, and while Ibn Sa'ud pleaded that the congress invitation sent to him by Amin al-Husayni simply had arrived too late, it is certain that a decision was taken against sending a representative to Jerusalem. The Saudis furthermore threatened the Palestinian project by encouraging the circulation of a rumor that the Meccan congress first held in 1926 was about to be reconvened.

Among those consumed by rumors of a resurrected Ottoman caliphate were Turkish diplomats. They were particularly concerned lest Abdülmecid be admitted to Palestine as a participant in the congress, a possibility raised by Shawkat 'Ali. The deposed caliph resided at Nice, and so the Turkish ambassador to France personally applied to the Quai d'Orsay. Münnir Bey explained that a new caliph inevitably would group around him all of the forces hostile to the Turkish republic, and that European powers with Muslim interests, including France, could not afford this permanent menace to their tranquility. The ambassador hoped that the French government would offer new proof to the Turkish government of its amicable disposition, and would abstain from facilitating the departure of the deposed caliph for Palestine. The French government was unreceptive. Münnir Bey was told that Abdülmecid had always exhibited reserve and correct demeanor in France; the French
government neither could encourage nor impede his ambitions. The Turks were advised to take their problem to the British who, after all, held the mandate for Palestine.46

This the Turkish foreign minister did. Tevfik Rüştü [Aras] informed the British ambassador at Ankara that a revived caliphate would constitute a “subversive force,” a “focus of intrigue and rebellion” against the British Empire, and an instrument of reaction within Turkey. The Turkish government did not find Abdülmecid alarming; he was a harmless old gentleman. It was the institution, not the figurehead, which disturbed Tevfik Rüştü’s government.47 This time, the Turkish appeal struck a responsive chord. The Colonial Office asked Sir Arthur Wauchope, British High Commissioner in Palestine, whether “it would be practicable to refuse [Abdülmecid’s] visa on grounds of public order should an application for one be received.”48 While awaiting Wauchope’s reply, an interdepartmental meeting held at the Colonial Office agreed that once Abdülmecid was admitted to Palestine, it would be impossible to get him out, and so it was best to bar his entry. Until Wauchope’s reply was received, passport authorities were asked not to issue Palestine visas to the deposed caliph or any of his entourage.49 The eventual answer from Jerusalem was unequivocal: a visit to Palestine by Abdülmecid was undesirable, and any visa application should be refused.50

On this recommendation, consular and passport control officers were instructed not to grant the deposed caliph a visa for Palestine without first consulting the Foreign Office.51 Amin al-Husayni himself was not unaware of the discomfort experienced by the Turks, distraught over the rumor of the Ottoman caliphate’s revival, and announced that Abdülmecid would not be invited to the congress.

Having thus fulfilled the desiderata of the Turkish government on this point, Amin al-Husayni attempted to invite an official Turkish delegation, and approached the Turkish consul in Jerusalem with a request that the consulate forward an invitation to Ankara. The consul refused to accept any communication, and Amin al-Husayni was forced to send his message by ordinary post. Tevfik Rüştü did not intend to reply: the mufti held no representative office in Palestine which qualified him to invite the head of a foreign state to send official delegates to an unofficial gathering.52 At the same time, the Turkish foreign minister had hoped that the congress would be prohibited altogether, and “was distinctly disconcerted and somewhat cross and resentful” upon learning that British authorities intended to permit the gathering. “He thought it an easy matter to prohibit what purported to be a pan-Moslem conference summoned by a minor religious dignitary of a town of secondary sacred importance who had no standing for issuing invitations to Governments, and that the anti-British and anti-Jewish character of the
mufti's invitation would have afforded sufficient cause for suppression of the congress. But as the congress was to be held, Turkey would ensure that the Republic was not alone in declining the invitation. This was the decision of Mustafa Kemal himself, who told a French diplomat that the congress was contrary to the principles which he himself had championed, and that he was determined that no independent Muslim country participate. To this end, Turkey approached Iran, Afghanistan, Albania, Egypt, and Iraq, while the Turkish consul in Jerusalem acted personally to defeat the congress. Not only did he decline his invitation to a reception for the delegates; he discouraged the Egyptian consul from attending as well. When the Turkish consul learned that the Turkish flag flew among the flags of Muslim states in the assembly hall of the congress, he successfully insisted upon the banner's removal. Tevfik Rüştü made Turkish policy a matter of public record in his reply to a question from a member of the National Assembly:

It is true that we also received invitations from the promoters of the congress, but republican Turkey can have nothing to do with undertakings of this kind, which aim at holding peoples back on the way of progress, and which have, undoubtedly, deplorable consequences. We are especially opposed to the use of religion as a political instrument in internal and foreign policy. We are watching developments closely. As long as it shows no near or distant connexion with our national affairs, this undertaking will remain a matter of local importance for the regions represented by those assembled there, but immaterial to us.

Among the results of the Turkish diplomacy of opposition was the reluctance of other states to send official delegations, for fear of harming relations with Turkey. Following the congress, Shakib Arslan wrote a lengthy indictment of Turkish policy toward the congress, in which he focused on the activity of Tevfik Rüştü. To oppose the Jerusalem congress, he wrote, was not the business of a state that considered itself secular; and he pointed to the discrepancy between Turkish participation in the Meccan Muslim congress of 1926, and hostility to the Jerusalem congress of 1931. In Arslan's opinion, Turkish policy was directly responsible for the absence of Muslims from Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Greece. In particular he cited Turkish pressure brought to bear on Greece, which prevented the participation of the former Ottoman Şeyhülislam Mustafa Sabri, then in Greek exile.

Thus the Jerusalem congress was reduced to a gathering of unofficial participants, some important and others self-important. From Egypt, Rashid Rida came once again. Ṣabd al-Rahman Ṣazam, later secretary general of the Arab League, was also in attendance, on behalf of the Wafd. From Syria came Riyad al-Sulh (1894-1951), later prime minister;
Shukri al-Quwwatli (1891–1967), later president; and Sa'id al-Jaza'iri, grandson of the Algerian resistance leader 'Abd al-Qadir and president of the Damascus Society for the Defense of the Hijaz Railway. The Tunisian reformist 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Tha'alibi, a participant in two previous Muslim congresses, contributed much to the organization and deliberations of this congress. And for the first time, an important Moroccan delegation attended, led by Muhammad al-Makki al-Nasiri and Muhammad al-Kattani, two leading activists from Rabat and Fez respectively. A large delegation of Bosnian Muslims also participated, and they established ties with Amin al-Husayni which became important during the mufti’s subsequent wartime exile (see chapter 13). From India came Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1876–1938), the noted Urdu and Persian poet-philosopher. A number of important expatriates purported to speak for Soviet-ruled Muslim territories. Among them was the Volga Tatar author and journalist Ayaz Ishaki [Idilli] (1878–1954), at this time in European exile. Ishaki had been a friend of Gasprinskii’s. Also present was yet another Tatar activist, Musa Carullah Bigi (1875–1949), who had been invited to the Cairo congress and had participated in the Meccan congress. He had now opted for exile. The organizers made much of the presence of a grandson of the Imam Šamil, Said Šamil, who conducted a vigorous campaign from exile against Soviet rule in the Caucasus. Also in attendance was Ziya al-Din Tabataba‘ī, former prime minister of Iran then in exile in Switzerland.

Of particular interest to many contemporary observers was the presence of Shaykh Muhammad al-Husayn Al Kashif al-Ghita (1877/8–1954), the first noted Twelver Shi‘i cleric to participate in a Muslim congress. His father, Shaykh ‘Ali Al Kashif al-Ghita, had been very much a Muslim cosmopolitan in the nineteenth-century tradition, having lived both in Iran and Iraq, and having traveled in the Hijaz, Syria, Turkey, and India. His son had also traveled widely as a youth, spending several years in Syria and Lebanon after a pilgrimage to the Hijaz. During a short stay in Cairo, he lectured at al-Azhar, and impressed a number of noted Egyptian ulama. Shaykh Muhammad al-Husayn first gained fame for his published correspondence with the Maronite man of letters, Amin al-Rayhani, and attracted further attention upon his return to Iraq in 1914, when he joined a group of Shi‘i ulama to fight in the Ottoman jihad. He then embarked upon a period of great literary productivity, and nearly all of his theological works appeared in both Arabic and Persian.

It was this mujtahid of standing whom Amin al-Husayni invited to attend the Jerusalem Muslim congress of 1931, and Shaykh Muhammad al-Husayn accepted. That he agreed to participate was almost certainly due to the repeated assurances of Amin al-Husayn that the caliphate
would not figure in the agenda of the congress. Shaykh Muhammad al-Husayn’s departure for Jerusalem was made the occasion of a celebration in Najaf, and a motorcade of more than thirty cars accompanied him to Baghdad, the first leg of his journey.67 Once in Jerusalem, he met the many assembled delegates, and led them all in prayer at the opening celebrations in the Aqsa mosque.68 Shaykh Muhammad al-Husayn also addressed the congress, and later visited Haifa, Jaffa, Nablus, Jenin, Tyre, Sidon, and Beirut.69 Much was made of the mujahid’s presence by the congress organizers and by outside observers.70 There was no Sunni–Shi’i dialogue on religious questions at Jerusalem, nor were there advances in the moderation of doctrinal differences. But a political understanding was reached that had important implications later, for Shaykh Muhammad al-Husayn remained for many years the most consistent critic of Zionism in Shi’i clerical circles. The pattern of participation at Jerusalem, then, did not differ from that of the earlier congresses. Known figures with reputations that spanned Africa and Asia mingled with obscure local notables. Yet the participants from distant parts were overwhelmed numerically by what were essentially local delegations of Palestinians, Transjordanians, Lebanese, and Syrians. As soon became clear, these were nearly all supportive of Amin al-Husayni’s view of how the congress should unfold, and were poised to sweep all opposition aside.

By all reports, the opening of the congress stirred the participants. Accounts relate that the choice of Muhammad al-Husayn Al Kashif al-Ghita7 to lead in prayer had a marked effect on the participants, and another noteworthy innovation at the opening of the congress was a collective oath-taking “to defend the holy places with every bit of strength.” These opening exercises seemed auspicious, although even the first evening’s ceremonies were marred by a verbal altercation between two Egyptians, one of whom was beaten by the assembled crowd and had to be extricated by the police.71

But more serious differences soon surfaced. Once convened, the congress divided into committees, and then split in the plenum along lines anticipated by the controversies that raged in the preparatory period. On the issue of the Muslim holy places of Jerusalem, a broad general consensus obtained. All agreed that some action was necessary to protect these sites from possible encroachments. But a heated debate arose as to whether the defense of the holy places required an end to the British mandate, and Palestinian Arab independence. All recognized the value of the proposed Muslim university, but a dispute erupted over whether Arabic should predominate on campus, which subjects should be taught, and the general spirit which would prevail in the institution. On all of these central issues, Shawkat ‘Ali found himself opposed by a bloc that
had drawn closer to Amin al-Husayni as he himself had drawn away during the preparations. He warned the congress of the possible reaction by Great Britain to any broad condemnation of the mandate for Palestine, and insisted that the university be multilingual and teach law and medicine, thus assuring its essentially liberal and cosmopolitan character. These positions perhaps owed less to principled conviction than to a lingering ambition to lead or at least define the themes of the congress.

But Shawkat 'Ali and his supporters were simply outnumbered. Only two days into the congress, he made these angry remarks to his own small bloc, the leadership of which he shared with fellow mediator 'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id:

Shame them, gentlemen, by your greatness; the greatness which I expected from Haj Amin ef[endi] I have found in you. You have behaved remarkably. Wallah "my friends" have hurt me. You have shamed them. I know it is very hard for you, but I want more sacrifice from you. I swear by God that the whole Moslem world will be at your feet. I beg you in the name of Islam to sacrifice. You have done greatness—do more. And "those people," they talk in the name of God!

In two days I have heard things which have staggered me. Mad people do not talk like them.92

Amin al-Husayni's publicist, Muhammad 'Ali al-Tahir, wrote at some length of the obstructionist activities of the Shawkat 'Ali-'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id faction, which he identified as a bloc (kutla) seated separately.93 But this group was too small, and resolutions were carried by the plenum over their objections. Another faction, also described as a separate bloc by Tahir, disrupted the proceedings on occasion, perhaps in cooperation with an official of the Jewish Agency, but this had little effect on the proceedings.94 On the whole, the success of Amin al-Husayni in keeping his personal opponents outside the congress hall left little doubt as to the outcome of the deliberations.

The policy which he chose was to make the congress memorable for its militant posturing. This called for delicate maneuvering, for he had drawn up an agenda for approval by the authorities that shunned all issues of possible embarrassment to the mandatory government, and was confined to the theme of Muslim holy places in Jerusalem and their welfare. Framed in narrow religious terms, this was not a controversial or exciting issue; to charge the atmosphere of the congress, the discussion of more overtly political subjects was necessary. This Amin al-Husayni encouraged by never explicitly informing the participants themselves of those assurances which he had given to British authorities. As a result, the deliberations were punctuated by moments of overexuber-
ance, and by speeches and resolutions which went far beyond the scope of the approved agenda.

The impassioned speech by the Egyptian participant ’Abd al-Rahman ‘Azzam, on the subject of Italian ‘atrocities’ in Libya, so contradicted the organizers’ prior assurances that the British High Commissioner did not wait for the inevitable Italian representations, but immediately ordered the offender’s expulsion from Palestine.75 ‘Abd al-Hadi, a Palestinian Istitqalist and a pillar of the congress, made a speech on Zionist aspirations considered by the authorities to have exceeded all acceptable bounds, but which went unpunished. A general resolution against colonialism (istif‘mar) was also carried, and colonialism’s various manifestations in different Muslim lands were attacked by many participants in their plenary speeches. When reproached by a distraught British High Commissioner over the course of the deliberations, Amin al-Husayni pleaded that he had been unable to restrain the participants involved, and so had not violated his prior pledge.76 In fact, he had made no effort to inform even those participants with whom he was closely allied of the assurances which he had given. In public, he was reluctant to admit that he had even discussed such assurances at all. By this tactic, Amin al-Husayni had assured the transformation of the congress from a forum devoted to one issue in its narrowest religious sense, to a general assembly concerned with the political causes of Muslims everywhere.

When the organizers made provisions for a permanent bureau and subsequent congresses (see appendix 7), this was done with a very real anticipation of success, and a desire not to allow the congress to expire on any account. This zeal was conveyed to participants and observers. The optimistic note upon which the final session concluded, in such marked contrast to the disillusionment in which past congresses had disbanded, excited much optimism in H. A. R. Gibb. He attributed the change to the development of an organizational aptitude in Islam. The congress, he wrote, “undoubtedly achieved a very substantial measure of success.” Of the proposals, he concluded that “there is every likelihood that they will have practical results of some kind. If this should be so, we may regard it as certain that the congress movement will steadily gain in strength, and that its work for the maintenance of cultural unity will assume decisive importance.”77 “It deserves to rank as an epoch-making conference for this reason,” wrote George Antonius, “that for the first time in centuries Moslem effort has at last found its expression in a systematic and business-like organization. . . . I have no hesitation in regarding this as potentially the most important constructive effort among Moslems in recent years, and one which is fraught with far-reaching possibilities.”78
Less sympathetic observers were less sanguine, but were disturbed nonetheless by the potential of the congress. As a Zionist leader pointed out in internal correspondence, "a conference which is almost a failure may become the starting point of a development which in the future leads to a conference which is a success." British High Commissioner Wauchope felt strongly that "a second Moslem Congress might arouse great excitement in Palestine; that, owing to the position of the Jews in Palestine, it is an unsuitable country in which to hold further Moslem Congresses." But he was "loath to suggest at this moment that a decision should now be taken to prohibit the holding of any Moslem Congress in the future," on account of "legal difficulties" and Muslim opinion. In the view of the French consul in Jerusalem, "a dangerous instrument of propaganda and agitation has been put in Hadi Amin's hands which, if he uses it skillfully, could complicate the task of those powers in authority in Muslim lands.

Early in the congress, the question of an executive committee was raised. Shawkat 'Ali argued for a large committee of fifty members from forty-one Muslim regions. India would be entitled to three members; Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Egypt, China, Java, and Sumatra would each have two members on the committee; and the rest would have one. These members would be selected not by the congress then assembled but by the regions which they were to represent. And this division would also serve as the basis of voting in future congresses. Precisely such a method had been instituted, at least formally, at the Meccan congress of 1926, where votes were reserved even for territories from which no participants were in attendance.

But the idea did not carry at Jerusalem six years later. "Let us not grasp at fantasies," retorted one participant. 'Abd al-Rahman 'Azam argued that Shawkat 'Ali's proposal demanded a measure of local organization that was exceptional in the Muslim world:

We ask for a logical, democratic way to give the congress the right to elect the executive committee. If some of you fear that the congress will fall under a clique of people, this will never happen. We will be obedient and we will represent freedom. No one will tyrannize another. The election of the committee is the prerogative of the congress. Our Indian brethren are right in that, in their country, there is an organized Islamic movement, and we hope it will become so in our country. [But] they speak for their country, whereas we are factions and parties, and are unable to agree on one view and send representatives to the executive committee.

Ziya al-Din Tabataba'i argued in his turn that a large executive committee opposed all conventional norms of congresses and assemblies. A
smaller administrative arm for the congress would be far more efficient, and he argued for a maximum of five members. In the end, the congress adopted a compromise figure of twenty-five, all of whom were elected by the participants in a secret ballot. Few of those elected had any intention of immersing themselves in the work of the congress after its adjournment, so that a position on the executive committee became an honorary distinction. The real work was left to a seven-man permanent bureau with wide powers, which was to function in Jerusalem between congresses. Shawkat Ṭalib responded to this course of events by resigning the seat to which he was elected on the executive committee:

During the conference I tried to counteract the disagreement, when it appeared, but I did not succeed, so one of the leading Egyptians [Abd al-Hamid Sar'id] was kept out of the Standing Committee that is to carry into practice the resolutions of the conference. Only those whom the majority wished were elected to the Committee. I myself was elected nearly unanimously, but when I saw how things were, I said I wanted to be an ordinary member of the Conference only. This is rather sad, but don't lose heart; the good people in Palestine understand this, and later on our efforts will no doubt bring about a reconciliation. We are sure of success and victory, but the leaders must understand that they are to sacrifice. Next summer I shall return to Palestine, then we shall try again to bring about peace.

Shawkat Ṭalib's resignation in protest signaled his break with the congress and its passage completely into the hands of his opponents. The participants furthermore agreed that Amin al-Husayni, as president of the congress in session, would also be president of the executive committee, and that future congresses would meet at two-year intervals. There had been a debate on all of these issues. Some were afraid of losing momentum during an interregnum of two years, and Shawkat Ṭalib strongly favored not only an annual congress, but its meeting in India the following year. But Abd al-'Aziz al-Tha'alibi pointed out that those participants who came from afar could not bear the repeated expense, and the resolutions were too ambitious for execution in one year. Rashid Rida pointed out that the congress had been convened specifically in defense of Palestine, and so should always be held in Jerusalem. In the end, it was decided to meet every two years, and to recognize Jerusalem as the seat of the congress.

The members of the executive committee, on the day after the congress and before dispersing, elected a series of officers to the permanent bureau. They chose as secretary general the former prime minister of Iran, Ziya al-Din Tabataba'i, who had been among the more active participants at the congress. Ziya al-Din was famous for his crucial role in the ascent of Riza Shah. At that time, he was prime minister, but was later exiled, took up residence in Geneva, and befriended Amin al-
Husayni, Shakib Arslan, and other activists. An able organizer, he was urged by many delegates to supervise the permanent secretariat of the congress. Ziya' al-Din finally agreed, and upon his shoulders fell the burden of administration and fundraising after the close of the congress. It was theorized by some that his selection was made in the hope that Iran might be drawn into the congress in the future. But in Iran, Ziya' al-Din had ceased to count for much, according to an American observer:

After being Prime Minister for a few months he was forced to leave the country and had long since been almost forgotten. It is astonishing, in this land of bazaar rumors, how little is known by usually well informed persons as to his subsequent movements. "He appears to have lived by his pen, principally in Scandinavia" is about all the Legation has been able to ascertain through casual informal inquiry.

To dispel any doubt, Iran and other Iranian newspapers denied the rumor that Tabataba'i represented his country at the Jerusalem congress, and affirmed that the government had not appointed any representative. In fact, Ziya' al-Din then played an elusive role in Muslim émigré circles in Europe that has yet to be clarified. Shakib Arslan relates that Ziya' al-Din was in fact the instrument of the ex-Khedive 'Abbas Hilmi, who had promised to finance a Muslim information center in Geneva under Ziya' al-Din's directorship. According to Shakib, the Geneva plan fell through when 'Abbas Hilmi decided that the idea would be opposed by Mustafa Kemal, who had promised the Syrian throne to the ex-Khedive.

But another more complex Geneva plan tied 'Abbas Hilmi to Tabataba'i. In November 1931, the ex-Khedive announced the creation in Geneva of an Alliance Musulmane Internationale. The charter of this organization dictated that it would compete directly with the Jerusalem congress. The Alliance, according to this document, would organize a world Muslim congress every three years, attended by a hierarchy of dues-paying and honorary members. From this congress, too, would emerge a supreme council and an executive committee. To this initiative he had attracted no organizer of stature. The space left for "founding members" in his own copy of the charter was blank. Rashid Rida described what was then learned about this initiative:

It was rumoured that H. E. Prince 'Abbas Hilmi Pasha, former Khedive of Egypt, had created a society in Geneva called the Alliance Musulmane, which would hold periodic Muslim congresses. Then we learned that he had made Sayyid Ziya' al-Din Tabataba'i secretary general of this organization. Now the executive committee of the first General Muslim Congress [in Jerusalem] also had chosen this Tabataba'i to be their sec-
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retary general, and he hesitated to accept the post. He travelled to Europe, promising the president of the congress [Amin al-Husayni] that he would write to him as to whether or not he would accept. When it became clear that he worked for ‘Abbas Hilmi, his acceptance became problematic. He nonetheless wrote to Amin al-Husayni accepting, and asked Amin al-Husayni to consult with the other members of the executive committee in this matter. From what we understand of the Alliance Musulmane, he will have to work to annex the executive committee of the Jerusalem congress to the European Alliance Musulmane, and entrust the matter of a second congress to the latter, to expand the Alliance’s breadth, on account of the wealth of the Alliance and the freedom that prevails at the site of its headquarters [Geneva]. This contradicts an official decision of the executive committee of the congress, and the president of the first congress [Amin al-Husayni] cannot decide the issue alone.

Rashid Rida obviously disapproved, claiming that Tabatabari could not serve both these masters at once, nor could he absorb one organization into the other.53

Two possibilities thus suggest themselves. Ziya2 al-Din may have continued his close relationship with ‘Abbas Hilmi even after accepting his new position, with the ultimate intention of making the Jerusalem congress an avenue for the ex-Khedive’s return to Muslim politics. Or perhaps he was offered the office of secretary general as an inducement to abandon the Geneva congress plan which he had drawn up with ‘Abbas Hilmi, and which was liable to compete with the Jerusalem congress. Following the adjournment of the congress, Ziya2 al-Din returned to Geneva to wrap up his affairs and arrange to move his family. According to an intelligence source, his return to Palestine was “delayed for various reasons, one of which was the proposed formation at Geneva of the International Islamic Association. The policy of the proposed Association in relation to the Islamic Congress of Jerusalem was not definitely decided and it was suggested that the persons who were interested in the Association had agreed to dispense with the services of Dia el Din in order to secure through him control of the Islamic Congress. It, however, appears that the proposed Association at Geneva failed to materialize.”54

What is certain is that he took to his office with an unrestrained zeal.55 He immediately drew up a fourteen-point list of aims and procedures for the permanent bureau.56 The resolutions of the congress on the Hijaz railway, and protests against Jewish encroachments on Muslim holy places, Italian atrocities in Libya, and the Berber dahir, were all formally conveyed to the mandatory power, various governments, and the League of Nations.57 The formation of branch committees within and beyond Palestine proceeded apace. Ziya2 al-Din completed a detailed
set of regulations for these branches, outlining the dues structure and the division of revenues between the central treasury and the branches. Nearly all the branches were located in Palestine, Transjordan, and Syria, and in a speech to an assembly of representatives of local branches, Ziya al-Din set a target of 50,000 members for Palestine.

By late 1932, however, the crucial issue had become one of money, for Ziya al-Din wished to show real progress in the construction of the Muslim university before the next congress, scheduled for 1933. The development of the three faculties planned by Ziya al-Din—theology and religious law, medicine and pharmacy, and engineering—required substantial sums for the hiring of faculty, the construction of a building, and the purchase of equipment. Ziya al-Din hoped to raise the starting expenses within Palestine, and the figure he gave in an open appeal was £P5,000. Amin al-Husayni explained to an American visitor that £P4,000 per annum would be raised by subscriptions, and a slightly larger sum, the annual revenue of a valuable waqf building, would be dedicated in perpetuity to the university. An appeal was simultaneously issued to Muslim kings, amirs, and influential persons.

But it proved difficult to raise money strictly through postal appeals, so Amin al-Husayni, Ziya al-Din, and treasurer Muhammad 'Ali Alluba planned a fund-raising tour to Iraq and India. The party set out in May 1933 for Iraq, where they remained for two weeks, and visited the Shi'i shrine cities as the guests of Muhammad al-Husayn Al Kashif al-Ghita. The delegation then proceeded to India. The outcome of this trip, both financial and political, was unsatisfactory. Antonius wrote that no announcement was made concerning the sums collected, "but I have been given privately to understand that they fell far short of expectations."

Unable to carry forth the university plan, the permanent bureau began gradually to sink into inactivity. A respite was offered by the outbreak of war between Ibn Sa'ud and the Imam Yahya of Yemen, and this opportunity was seized to send a mediation delegation to Arabia consisting of Amin al-Husayni, Muhammad 'Ali Alluba, and Shakib Arslan. For a time, the mission captured headlines, and was not without effect. But in settling that dispute, a different breach widened, this time between Amin al-Husayni and Muhammad 'Ali Alluba. Alluba, on his return to Egypt, attempted to have the permanent secretariat transferred to Cairo, a move which Amin al-Husayni resisted successfully. This case for moving the headquarters to some site outside of Palestine, and hence away from Amin al-Husayni, was enhanced by the failure of negotiations between Amin al-Husayni and his Palestinian opposition over the delayed second congress. Many of those from beyond Palestine who participated in the first congress urged Amin al-Husayni to arrive
at some kind of accord, so that a second congress would not be accompanied again by a counter-congress of his own opponents across town. Shawkat ‘Ali briefly tried his hand as mediator in these negotiations in 1933, and two Syrians made a similar attempt in early 1935. Later that year the congress had virtually ceased to function, and Ziya al-Din again spent the better part of his time in Europe. Amin al-Husayni continued to employ his title of congress president on occasion, and did so in 1936 when issuing a fatwa declaring the “Alawis of Syria to be true Muslims.” But before the year was out, an Arab rebellion had spread throughout Palestine, and a Jerusalem Muslim congress would never again be convened in Palestine under mandate.

Amin al-Husayni may have considered the reconvening of the congress in Mecca once it was no longer possible to do so in Jerusalem, and his pilgrimage planned for February 1937 gave rise to much talk about the possibility. But Ibn Sa‘ud, consistent with his policy, informed Amin al-Husayni that no such congress could be permitted. Amin al-Husayni was forced to declare that his visit was “solely for religious purposes” and that no congress would take place. When a number of pilgrims met informally to discuss various issues, Amin al-Husayni addressed them only reluctantly, and was careful to avoid all political references, never once mentioning even Palestine.

Amin al-Husayni later settled upon Berlin as his chosen place of exile, and he passed the war years there (see chapter 13). Much of his time was spent attempting to convince the German Foreign Office that he exercised greater influence than other Arab exiles in Berlin, leading him to make this assertion:

There is a supranational association, the “Muslim Congress,” under his—the Grand Mufti’s—leadership. Delegates of all Muslim countries belong to this congress. The congress, he said, still exists and functions today. The political possibilities for Germany which might stem from cooperation with the congress are, he says, undoubtedly significant. The Grand Mufti repeatedly expressed his regret that the existing possibilities for working together are not being fully exploited. He and his collaborators could do much more for the German cause if closer cooperation could exist between the German authorities and himself.

Like Kawakibi’s fiction, the Jerusalem congress finally became a figment of one man’s imagination.
APPENDIX SEVEN

CHARTER OF THE GENERAL ISLAMIC CONGRESS

Adopted by the Congress in its fourteenth session
held on Tuesday, Shaban 6, 1350/December 10, 1931

Art. 1.—A periodic, general congress of Muslims from throughout the world shall be held and known as the General Islamic Congress.

Art. 2.—The aims of the Congress are:
   a). to promote cooperation among Muslims of whatever origin or sect, to spread Islamic culture and virtues, and to promote the spirit of general Islamic brotherhood;
   b). to defend Muslim interests and preserve the holy places and lands from any intervention;
   c). to combat Christian missionary efforts and campaigns among the Muslims;
   d). to establish universities and scholarly institutions to work for unification of Islamic culture and the instruction of the Arabic language to Islamic youth, through the founding of a university in Jerusalem to be known as the al-Aqsa Mosque University;
   e). to examine other Islamic matters of importance to the Muslims.

Art. 3.—Future congresses shall be composed of the following persons:
   a). those who were present at the first congress;
   b). those invited by the preparatory committee to future congresses, whether as individuals or as representatives of Islamic organizations;
   c). those Muslims whom the Congress itself invites to participate during its sessions.

Art. 4.—The Congress may regard any individual as a member, even though he may be absent from its sessions, provided he has rendered notable cultural or material services to the Muslims.

Art. 5.—The Congress shall meet once every two years. The ex-

SOURCE: Al-jami'a al-`arabiyya, December 18, 1931.
executive committee, by a three-fourths majority, may convene the Congress in the interim should unforeseen circumstances warrant it.

Art. 6. — The seat of the Congress shall be Jerusalem. The Congress may choose another seat for its activities, and each session may choose the site of the following session. The executive committee shall determine the site of extraordinary sessions.

Art. 7. — The Congress, while in session, shall be directed by a board composed of the president, four deputies, four observers, and four secretaries, to be elected by the Congress in accordance with its internal statutes.

Art. 8. — The Congress, while in session, shall establish such committees as it deems necessary, to study projects and submit reports.

Art. 9. — The Congress shall elect an executive committee from among its members, to be composed of twenty-five members representing as many Islamic peoples as possible. The executive committee’s special tasks will be:

a) to implement the resolutions of the Congress, and supervise its committees and bureaus;

b) to take measures to convene the next Congress and define its agenda;

c) to establish branches throughout Islamic lands, and send delegations abroad to explain the aims of the Congress.

The executive committee shall set down internal statutes to regulate its work, sessions, and finances, and these statutes shall be presented to the next meeting of the Congress.

Art. 10. — The executive committee shall elect a bureau of seven persons from among the Congress members, among them a secretary general, an assistant secretary general, and a treasurer, with these responsibilities:

a) to implement the decisions of the executive committee;

b) to conduct the secretarial and accounting tasks.

The secretary general shall organize the meetings of the bureau and implement its decisions. The bureau shall be collectively responsible to the executive committee.

Art. 11. — The president of the Congress shall preside over meetings of the executive committee.
Art. 12. —The executive committee and the bureau shall continue their work until the next congress, at which time a new executive committee shall be elected, which shall in turn elect a new bureau. Members of the executive committee and bureau may be reelected.

Art. 13. —The finances of the Congress shall be drawn from subscriptions, contributions, and other sources.

Art. 14. —The treasurer shall be responsible for the funds, accounting, and financial transactions of the Congress. These shall be examined annually by a certified accountant.

Art. 15. —All funds received on behalf of the Congress by any of its members or committees must be turned over to the treasurer. Expenditures shall be authorized only upon the approval of the bureau, and in accordance with the resolutions of the executive committee and the Congress. The funds of the Congress are to be kept in accounts opened by the bureau, in the name of the General Islamic Congress. No funds may be withdrawn without the signatures of two members of the bureau, one of whom must be the treasurer.

Art. 16. —The Congress may decide by a two-thirds majority of those present to expel a member, if it is established that he has conspired against the Congress or has worked to frustrate it. The accused shall have the right to defend himself in person or through a representative.

Art. 17. —This Charter may be altered only by a two-thirds majority decision of Congress members in attendance, provided that the change and its purpose are presented to members of the Congress at least two days before debate over the matter.
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3. Muhammad 'izzat Darwaza, Husla al-hareka al-arabiyya al-hadiya, 75-82. Darwaza for a time was the trustee of the congress archives. See al-famia al-arabiyya, December 1931.


7. Ahmad al-Sharabasi, Amir al-hayun, 2: 584-86. Amin al-Husayni said that he had left the autobiography, entrusted to him by Arslan for publication, among the congress papers, but Sharabasi did not find it. Years later another copy surfaced in Beirut, and was published as Arslan, Sirr al-thaqiyya. My own search for the archive yielded no results. The permanent secretariat also had planned the publication of a detailed book on the congress and its antecedents, but no such volume ever appeared. For a description of the planned volume, see al-famia al-arabiyya. July 3, 1932.


10. Resolutions in al-Manar (December 12, 1928), 29(8): 628–32. The Syrian publicists Shakib Arslan, Ihsan al-Jabiri, and Riyadh al-Sulh, were signatories to a petition to the League of Nations Permanent Commission on Mandates, "in the names of, and as representatives of, the Muslim congress recently held in Jerusalem." Text of petition dated December 11, 1928, in FO371/13749, E9229/204/65.

11. For the text of the standard invitation, see al-Manar (February 1932), 32(2): 117–18; translated texts of invitations intercepted by postal authorities in India, in L/P&S/10/1314, file 1350.


13. Note by O. G. R. Williams (Colonial Office) on his meeting with Foreign Office and India Office representatives, November 17, 1931, CO732/51, file 89205, part 1. Minutes of the meeting on November 16, 1931, in FO371/15282, ES711/1205/65.


17. Wauchope to Cunliffe-Lister, FO406/68, E6040/1205/65.


21. The journalist was Tayyib Duwaji, an Arab nationalist who volunteered his services to the Jewish Agency Arabist, Haim Kalvarisky. See Duwaji's letters to Kalvarisky in CZA, S25/5789; and Haim Arlosorov's political diary for September 30, October 27, and December 4, 1931, CZA, Z4/3663 (II–III). The published version of Arlosorov's diary conceals Duwaji's identity, as it does the identities of many Arab interlocutors. See Haim Arlosorov, *Yemeni Yerushalayim*.


25. Al-jami'a al-'arabiyya, December 4, 1931.

26. On Sa'id, see G. Kampffmeyer, "Egypt and Western Asia." For the course of the negotiations, see al-Muqattam, December 5–8, 1931; and review of the entire process, December 18, 1931. For a copy of the December 4, 1931 proclamation of Shawkat 'Ali and Sa'id on the progress of negotiations, see IS4, division 65, file 43. Rashid Rida gave his own version of the dispute, in which he, too, attempted to mediate, in al-Manar (February 1932), 32(2): 128–32.

27. For accounts of the counter-congress, see Wauchope (Jerusalem) to Cunliffe-Lister, January 30, 1932, L/P&S/10/1314, file 206; and the hostile account in al-jami'a al-'arabiyya, December 23, 1931.
29. Interview in al-Muqattam, December 12, 1931.
33. Amin al-Husayni to King Fu’ad, October 29, 1931, DWQ, Prime Ministry, al-islamiyya al-carabiyya, uncatalogued box.
35. See his remarks as reported in al-famica al-’arablyya, November 14, 1931.
36. Zawahir, al-Siyasa wa’l-Ahwar, 318. For another version of their meeting, see Tahir, Nasariyyat al-shura, 99–100.
38. Al-famica al-’arablyya, November 12, 1931. See FO141/728, file 1132, for the discrete Egyptian protest against the article, made to British authorities.
40. Text of letter in al-famica al-’arablyya. November 11, 1931; CO732/51, file 89205, part 2. For Fu’ad’s disparaging views of these assurances, see report on audience, in Sir Percy Loraine (Cairo), dispatch of November 17, 1931, CO732/51, file 89205, part 2.
41. Sir Percy Loraine (Cairo), cable to Jerusalem, November 30, 1931, CO732/51, file 89205, part 2.
42. Egyptian consul (Jerusalem), undated dispatch (c. late October 1931), MRJ, file 1935; another copy in ISA, division 65 (captured archive of the Egyptian consulate in Jerusalem), file (old number) 1068; Egyptian consul (Jerusalem), dispatch of November 2 or 3, 1931, in same file.
43. Chargé d’affaires (Jidda), telegram of November 14, 1931, FO371/15282, E5667/1205/65.
44. For the text of the belated Saudi letter to Amin al-Husayni, see al-Muqattam, January 10, 1932.
45. The Hijazi minister of war, Jamal al-Ghazzi, was the medium for this rumor. See interview in al-Muqattam, December 4, 1931.
46. Münir Bey appeared at the ministry on October 22, 1931, and the exchange of views was described in a report on plans for the Jerusalem congress, condensed from "diverse sources," and circulated internally in the ministry on December 3, 1931; see AFC, carton 71, file 13/4.
47. Sir George Clerk (Ankara), dispatch of November 12, 1931, FO406/68, E5784/1205/65.
48. Cunliffe-Lister (London) to Wauchope (Jerusalem), November 18, 1931, FO406/68, E5742/1205/65.
49. Rendel’s notes on meeting, November 20, 1931, FO371/15283, E5770/1205/65. The India Office was reportedly in agreement with this conclusion, but an undated draft letter from the Undersecretary of State for India to the Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs offered that “the refusal of a passport to Abdul Majid might have unfortunate effects on [Shawkat ‘Ali’s] behavior during his visit to Palestine for the Conference.” L/P&S/10/1314.
51. Cunliffe-Lister (London) to Wauchop (Jerusalem), November 30, 1931, FO406/68, E5920/1205/65.
52. C. Clerk (Ankara), dispatch of November 12, 1931, FO406/68, E5784/1205/65.
53. Clerk, dispatch of December 1, 1931, FO406/68, E6050/1205/65.
55. Egyptian consul (Jerusalem), dispatch of December 3, 1931, ISA, division 65 (captured archive of the Egyptian consulate in Jerusalem), file 1068.
59. For his role in Jerusalem and his activities on behalf of the Hijaz railway, see Muhammad Sa'id al-Jaza'iri, Mudhakkirat 'an al-qadaya al-'arabiyya wa-yi'sal al-islami, 240–60, 270–71.
60. For a translation into Arabic of his Urdu address, see al-jam'a al-'arabiyya, December 16, 1931. On that occasion, he said: "You have seen that I have not participated much in your deliberations, because of my lack of familiarity with Arabic."
61. On Ishaki, see the volume by Tahir Çağatay, et al., Muhammed Ayaz Ishaki. See also his pamphlet submitted to the congress, entitled Risala khattir ila al-mu'tamar al-islami al-'amm... "an halat al-muslimin fi 'l-Rusiya. a copy of which is preserved in MRJ, file 1951.
62. See his proclamation to the congress entitled Bayan ila al-mu'tammar al-islami al-'umm... "an halat al-muslimin fi 'l-Qadaya, a copy of which is preserved in MRJ, file 1951. Also preserved here is a letter from Ishaki and Şamil to King Fu'ad of Egypt, appealing for material and political aid for Russian Muslims. Their agitated remarks to the congress on Soviet policy appear in al-jam'a al-'arabiyya, December 20, 1931. The presence of two leading Russian expatriates evoked a Soviet polemic against the congress by L. I. Klimovich, Musul'manam dalat khalifa, summarized by N. A. Smirnov, Ocherki islamii isuchenii islama v SSSR, 232–33.
68. For a defense of his role as prayer leader to a Sunni congregation, see Hashim al-Dafsdar al-Madani and Muhammad 'Ali al-Zubâl, al-islam bayna al-sunnah wa'l-shi'a, 1: 56–57. For criticism by Rashid Rida on the way in which Shaykh Muhammad al-Husayn conducted himself on this occasion, see al-Manar (September 1933), 33(5): 394–95.
69. For the text of his address, see the pamphlet al-Khalif al-bir'ikhiyya. This was published under the auspices of the congress itself.
70. H. A. R. Gibb wrote that the invitation to Shi'is was a "striking innovation, inasmuch as it was the first outward manifestation of a new spirit of co-operation (born in part of common adversity) which held out the hope of healing the age-long breach between the Sunni and Shi'ah branches of Islam."
71. The altercation occurred between 'Abd al-Rahman 'Azam, of Wafdist affiliation, and Sulayman Fawzi, a journalist of royalist sympathies who was in the pay of the Egyptian consulate in Jerusalem. The incident attracted much attention. See the account
of the Egyptian consul (Jerusalem), dispatch of December 8, 1931, IS4, division 65 (captured archive of the Egyptian consulate in Jerusalem), file 1068. The file also includes Fawzi's own handwritten account of the incident, dated December 7, 1931, and a dispatch from the Egyptian consul of December 13, 1931, reporting the disbursement of £30 to Fawzi. For the published account, see al-jami' al-arabiyah, December 7, 1931.

72. Statement by Shawkat 'Ali at Palace Hotel, December 5, 1931, in presence of 'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id and others. IS4, uncatalogued file entitled "Hisab jari ma'a al-bank al-'arabi fi l-quds."

73. Tahir, Nazariyat al-shura, 190.

74. For the disruptive activities of this group, which even included smoking in the congress hall where this was prohibited, see Tahir, Nazariyat al-shura, 106-7. It was apparently Kalverisky who wrote to the Jewish Agency that "I arranged that a group of four people in the congress hall would conduct affairs such that there would always be dissatisfaction among the participants." Those named overlap the list given by Tahir. Letter of December 10, 1931, CZA, S25/5689.

75. Account of 'Azzam's explosion in Wauchope (Jerusalem), telegram of December 17, 1931 and attached communiqué, FO371/15283, E6296/1205/65.

76. Notes of mufti's interview with Wauchope, December 17, 1931, FO371/16009, E87/87/65.


79. Haim Ariosevov (Jerusalem) to S. Brodetsky (London), November 13, 1931, CZA, ZA/10042.

80. Wauchope (Jerusalem), dispatch of March 26, 1932, L/P&S/10/1314.


82. The discussion on this issue is drawn from al-jami' al-arabiyah, December 16, 1931.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid., December 17, 1931, for the results of the voting. For the full list of those elected, see Mu'tarrarat al-nur'tamur al-islam li-l'am fi dawratih al-'ula, 24-25.

85. Quoted by Nielsen, "The International Islamic Conference at Jerusalem," 344.

86. Al-jami' al-arabiyah, December 15, 18, 1931.

87. Described by Donald N. Wilber, Rita Shah Pahlavi, 39-55.

88. For his involvement, see Hidayat Allah Hakim Ilahi Faridun, Asrar-i sipasati-i kudat-e zindagani-yi aqa-yi Sayyid Ziya' al-Din-i Tabatabai', 109-14, 118.

89. Charles Hart (Teheran), dispatch of December 30, 1931, NA, RG59, 867n.00/138.

90. Hart, dispatch of January 15, 1932, NA, RG59, 867n.00/143.

91. Astalan, Sayyid Rashid Rida, 641-42.


94. A. J. Kingsley, Assistant Deputy Commandant C. I. D., to Chief Secretary for Palestine, July 30, 1932, L/P&S/10/1314, file 5326.

95. Ziya' al-Din himself gave an account of the beginning of his activities in a lengthy circular letter to members of the executive committee, dated August 14, 1932, IS4, uncatalogued file apparently from seized papers of 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi (hereafter: Tabatabai Report).

96. Typescript copy in IS4, division 65, file 707; another copy appended to Tabatabai Report.

97. For texts, see Filastin, June 11, 1932.
98. Typescript copy in ISA. division 65, file 707; another copy appended to Tabataba'ī Report.
99. For a list of branches, see Tabataba'ī Report, appendix 1. For Ziya' al-Dīn’s remarks, see Filastin, August 13, 1932.
100. For Ziya' al-Dīn’s detailed account of the various options for proceeding with the university, see his undated letter to the members of a committee for the university, in ISA. division 65, file 854; another copy is appended to the Tabataba'ī Report.
102. Record of conversation of March 16, 1933, between Amin al-Husaynī and Charles Crane, as recorded by George Antonius. ISA. division 65 (Antonius Papers), file 854. Numerous schemes to raise money—most based on some sort of tax or services provided by the Supreme Muslim Council of Palestine—were aired during the congress itself. See al-jamī'a al-‘arabīyya, December 12, 1931.
103. Filastin. December 4, 1932. For examples of appeals, see Tabataba’ī (Jerusalem) to King Fu’ad (Cairo), May 16, 1932, MRJ, file 1935; Tabataba’ī (Jerusalem) to ‘Abbas Hilmi, June 26, 1932, AHP, 125:16–17.
104. Departure detailed in Filastin, May 5, 6, 1933.
106. D’Aumale (Jerusalem), dispatch of May 9, 1935, ARC, carton 66, file 12/1. For earlier evidence of ‘Alluba’s interest in making Egypt the center of the congress functions, see Filastin, January 14, 1933. For an account of the mediation mission to Arabia, see al-Mansur (July 1934). 34(3): 232–35.
107. Secret police report, Palestine, no. 13/33, April 22, 1933, L/P&S/12/2118; Ely Palmer (Jerusalem), dispatch of March 6, 1935, NA, RG59, 867n.00/238; Palestine Post (Jerusalem), January 16, 1935.
108. For a view of the secretariat as essentially closed, see Antonius, Annual Report to the Institute of Current World Affairs for year ending September 30, 1935, Antonius-Oxford.
111. George Wadsworth (Jerusalem), dispatch of February 19, 1937, NA, RG59, 867n.00/440.

12. SWISS EXILE

2. Ihsan El-Djabri, “Le Congrès Islamique d’Europe”; La Tribune d’Orient. October 31, 1935, for what the sponsors regarded as a “compte-rendu exact.”
4. Iṣḥāq ‘Alī Shāhī, “European Muslim Conference at Geneva.” The authorship of this anonymous piece has been deduced from its contents.