

Terrorism In Palestine: “Democracy” at Work

Vernon Richards

1937

The tragic events in Palestine have provided yet another happy hunting ground for Mussolini.

The Press announces that Arab notabilities in Lybia have sent a message to Mussolini reaffirming their solidarity with the Arabs in Palestine. This message naturally comes as a result of Mussolini's fine words when he called himself the “defender of Islam.” On the other hand Alfred Roke, a member of the Arab Higher Committee declared to Arthur Koestler, News Chronicle special correspondent that he was expressing the opinion of the Committee, including the Mufti, when he said “We know that Italy regards the Arab question only as a card in a bigger game. She aims at annoying Britain until the conquest of Abyssinia is recognised.”

However, apart from once more exposing Mussolini as the opportunist par excellence, the events in Palestine once more shows that all Imperialisms, whether they be democratic or totalitarian are ruthless.

Mussolini brought “civilization and Christianity” to Abyssinia with bombing aeroplanes and mustard gas. An attempt was made on Graziani's life. It was followed by the wholesale destruction by fire and bombs of human lives and the huts in which the natives lived. The British Government regretted that such methods should be adopted. The British Government also disagreed with Germany's methods of reprisals by shelling Almeria, over the Deutschland incident.

And yet the British Government does not deprecate such action on the North West Frontier, or in Palestine.

As a result of the destruction of various aerodromes, General Wavill, Commander in Chief of the British Forces in Palestine ordered the destruction of houses belonging to “Arab extremists, suspected of having been involved in these acts of incendiarism.”

Le Temps reports that an order from Jerusalem states that “amongst the punitive measures taken by the authorities in order to put an end to the wave of terrorism which has broken out in the country, the houses in regions where arms have been stolen are to be “branded” in equal numbers to the number of arms stolen. For one rifle stolen, one house will be blown up, for one rifle handed back one house will be exempted.”

“By order of the authorities and to repress the latest acts of terrorism, twenty houses were dynamited today in different villages suspected of having sheltered rebels.”

Further, Le Temps (October 20) states that a telegram from Jerusalem reports that “as reprisals against the attacks launched by Arabs in Damaria, on Monday, where members of the police

force were obliged to give up their arms and ammunition, a detachment of British troops, aided by police authorities, the following morning dynamited three houses in the town.”

It should be noted that the police had only been obliged to give up their arms, and were not killed by the Arabs. So that this incident should not be repeated, the British mercenaries blow up three houses. And the National Press talks of Democracy! And British Ministers talk of the “ruthless ” tactics of Mussolini and the “Reds” in Spain!

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