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COUNTRY Arab States/Israel
SUBJECT Activities of Former Grand Mufti and Arab Higher Executive

PLACE ACQUIRED Syria, Damascus

DATE OF INFO. Late September 1951

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE Palestinian Arab with good contacts among members of the Arab Higher Executive.

- Since May 1948, the influence of the Arab Higher Executive (AHE) has deteriorated steadily. The offices which it maintains in Cairo, Damascus and Beirut are largely concerned with identifying persons, recording births and deaths, providing laissez-passers and reporting general information to the Cairo headquarters of the former Grand Mufti, Hajj Amin Husayni. While the public treasury of the AHE still is in existence under Issat Tannus as General Treasurer, and while ostensibly a tax is levied on every person living in Arab Palestine, according to his means, this arrangement now produces so little revenue that the financial position of the AHE offices is extremely poor.
- In addition to the public accounts of the AHE, consisting of annual subsidies from Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia as well as from taxation and donations to the public treasury, the Mufti receives covert funds which he personally controls and for which no accounting is made.
- The Mufti maintains dictatorial control over the AHE. Committee members are pre-war supporters selected by him and representing no parties or communities as such.
- The Mufti presently, in effect, is using the AHE offices as a front for his covert activities. He is secretly organizing terrorist groups which will incorporate some of the membership of the Palestinian war-time organizations (the Gallant Guides, the Youth, and the Holy War Fighters).
- One such group, with jurisdiction over northern Palestine, Jordan and southern Syria, is directed by Dr. Da'ud al-Husayni assisted by Bahjat Abu-Ghartyyah and Qasim Rihawi, from headquarters in Arifa (Jericho), Palestine.
- A second group, with jurisdiction over Lebanon and northern Syria, is directed by Muhammad Salim Abu-Laban assisted by Muhammad Nizar Ardah and Muhammad al-Safuri, from headquarters in Beirut.

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