

RADIO WAR IN PALESTINE

"Strafing" On The Ether

In a recent issue of "Radio Pictorial" a member of the Military Police gave a vivid account of the way in which radio is being used in Palestine. These are some of the things he had to say:

FIVE hours of continuous rioting . . . three British military police stoned by Arabs . . . Jewish rioters beat up native police . . . Arabs set fire to Jewish farms.

That's what's happening now in the Holy Land, and I'm one of the chaps helping to keep the peace. We in the Palestine police have recently been joined by reinforcements of the Black Watch, and armoured cars and aeroplanes are now patrolling the streets of Jerusalem, Haifa and the bigger towns.

At sundown there is a curfew. All lights must be out. Everyone must be indoors. Except for snipers and occasional fire-raisers, all is peace till morning.

But only on the surface. When curfew begins, the radio "war" in Palestine takes on a sinister form. If you listen on your radio sets you may be able to eavesdrop on some of the ether "strafting."

Behind the Scenes

If I tell you what is happening behind the scenes in Palestine now, you will know what to expect when you tune in.

While all the fighting and rioting are going on, the authorities are still trying to give a daily five-hour programme from the Jerusalem "national" transmitter.

We have three-language programmes, in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. Most Jews and Arabs regard these as "propaganda" programmes, and not only refuse to listen, but bombard the studio building with stones.

The Arabs, particularly, scoff at the British programmes, and one of the Arab announcers goes in danger of his life, and has to be billeted near the station so that his compatriots won't get at him!

Dirt First

Several of my men have an intimate knowledge of Arabic. I am assured that the Italian Arabic broadcasts are often of licentious songs, and the Arabs cluster in groups around their communal sets and chuckle with glee as this radio dirt is broadcast.

Then they are in a happy and receptive frame of mind to listen to anti-Jewish and subtle anti-British news.

That night, worked up to fever-pitch by village squabbling following the broadcast, there is more rioting, more pillage, more burning of Jewish farms and homes. As one of the police on the spot, I say that radio is directly to blame for this.

Tel-Aviv has been terrorised by fire-raising Arabs who were certainly centrally organised. We believe that 20-25-metre radio field equipment is being used, and that this German-built stuff is not given to the Arabs just for love!

Explanation of a Raid

Only a week or so ago we had a severe raid. Two Britons were shot, and one died of his wounds. Assistant Police Superintendent Gerald and ten constables were injured by stones. Over a hundred Jews and Jewesses were wounded, and the rioting went on for five hours.

What was the cause? I believe that it all began as a result of anti-Jewish propaganda put out from the Nazi station at Witzleben. Rumours began to spread, and Jewish officials were given to understand that the broadcast had been made by British authorities!



HIS LIFE IN HIS HANDS: Husseini, chief Arabic announcer at the Palestine Broadcasting Service's Jerusalem station is here seen leaving the station building. Note the armed Arab sentry on guard

Both Jews and Arabs are getting better programmes in their own tongue from Italian stations. They can hear, too, much stuff about "British atrocities in Palestine" from Nazi stations. All they get from our local station is stuff which is far too "B.B.C."

Rioting has always been the curse of our radio here. When our radio system was started in a big way in 1936, pioneered by good old Sir Arthur Grenfell Wauchope, there was trouble on opening night.

Modern Davids

Programmes were delayed because some marauding bands of rioters had pillaged the luggage of artists on the way to the Jerusalem studios! Stones slung by Arabs were just as effective in this modern hold-up as in the days of David and Goliath.

Lord Melchett has a big estate just off the Jaffa-Haifa road. Here Jews gather to listen on a communal receiver. As the Jewish programmes come to a close, parties of Arab lads bombard the Jewish listeners with stones, driving them away from the communal set so that by the time the Arab programmes start they have the set to themselves! That's what radio listening is like in Palestine!

There are cinemas and dance-halls in Jerusalem's new city. We get dance-music relays. The other day they did a relay from the police-dog training depot on Mount Scopus!

Armoured cars, police radio and many other interesting things are kept at the Mount Scopus depot, but the vivid account of police-dog training, given by the English announcer from the Jerusalem station, kept rioters quiet (probably in silent fear) for days.

An Irishman Has An Idea

That's the sort of broadcast we want more often. One of our men has a good idea now. He's an Irishman—once was in the Navy, and knows a good bit about radio. He's built himself a short-wave receiver with four intermediate stages and A.V.C. (using German valves, bought in Jerusalem!). He takes this out at night in the Hebron hills and listens-in.

Next morning he sends to the Commissioner a detailed report of what the chief Nazi and Italian stations have been doing—and he also keeps watch on the ether for any secret messages from snipers or marauding Arabs using German transmitters!

This chap is just an amateur, but he's done a power of good in warning the authorities.

At exorbitant prices you can buy American and German radio sets. Dusky youngsters in their *tarbosh* (fez) puzzle out super-het circuits and build their own receivers.

Unfortunately, there is too much temptation for them to use these new toys in picking up transmissions which will soon poison their minds against British rule.

The British Government must do something to stop the radio "war," or military police and the Black Watch in Palestine won't be able to stop more brutal rioting.