The Nabi Musa Festival Under British-Ruled Palestine

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During the period of Ottoman rule, the Nabi Musa festival became a focus of political and nationalist sentiments in Palestine. In the 1920s, the British colonial authorities attempted to integrate the festival into their rule, recognizing its potential as a means of cultural and political influence. The festival was viewed as an opportunity to assert British authority and to strengthen the political position of the British regime.

The festival became a means of promoting British interests and gaining the support of Palestinian communities. The British authorities hoped to use the festival to foster a sense of loyalty to the British Empire and to promote the idea of a united Arab Palestine under British rule. The British were aware of the festival’s significance in terms of religious and cultural heritage, and they saw an opportunity to use it as a tool for political influence.

One of the key figures in the British administration who participated in the festival was Herbert Samuel, who was later appointed as the British High Commissioner to Palestine. He used the festival as a means of demonstrating British support for Palestinian interests and to reinforce the idea of a united Arab Palestine.

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Palestinian national identity arose during the period of British rule (1917-1948), the Nabi Musa (Prophet Moses) festival was one of the most visible examples of British participation in the festival. An argument for the necessity of a British presence in the activities that took place around the festival was made by Herbert Samuel in May 1921, arguing that a British-sponsored band in the festival could raise Britain’s prestige.

The according of a Band for the occasion was a means of improving the relationship between the British government and the local community. British aspirations to be involved with the festival was one of the ways they hoped to demonstrate their commitment to the region and its people.

In conclusion, the Nabi Musa Festival under British-Ruled Palestine reflects the British government’s efforts to integrate the festival into their rule and to gain the support of the Palestinian community. It also shows the tension between the desire to promote British interests and the efforts to respect and preserve Palestinian cultural and religious heritage.

Notes

3. CO 733/20/4950, ‘Report on the Political Situation in Palestine during the Month of April 1922’, 10 May 1922, 2.
4. File 26, 26 April 1921, 2.
5. FO 373/2/4596, Letter from High Commissioner for Palestine, Herbert Samuel, to Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 30 April 1921, 3.