

NEWS

from all over the world

VIA

CABLE
WIRELESS
TELEGRAPH
TELEPHONE

by the

JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY

1560 BROADWAY, N.Y.C.

VOL. VII. NO. 25.

Sunday, May 5, 1940.

ZIONIST LEADERS CONFER IN LONDON AS MEDITERRANEAN TENSION STIRS FEARS FOR PALESTINE

LONDON, May 3. (JTA) -- The Mediterranean situation is causing the deepest concern in Zionist circles over the grave effect that threatened extension of the war to the Mediterranean may have upon Palestine.

Palestine's economy has already been seriously affected by the war and may be further hampered by the British Admiralty's precautionary measure in barring the Mediterranean to British ships, while extension of the war would bring Palestine into the center of hostilities.

The entire Palestine situation was thoroughly considered Thursday at a long conference in which the participants were President Chaim Weizmann of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, members of the London Executive, Chairman David Ben Gurion of the Jerusalem Executive, Treasurer Eliezer Kaplan, and Geneva representative Nahum Goldmann.

United Parleys Urged by Zionist Group

TEL AVIV, May 3. (JTA) -- The second annual conference of the Palestine Group B General Zionists decided today to initiate negotiations immediately with the Group A and with the Jewish State Party seeking unification.

The resolution was adopted after the 200 delegates had heard speakers, including Joshua Suprasski, Emil Shmorak, Menachem M. Ussishkin and David Yellin, urge a fight against defeatism and call for unity in the Zionist ranks.

Another resolution declared that the present Jewish Agency Executive was to a great extent responsible for Zionist political failures and therefore a change of members and of system was necessary. The conference protested against the Palestine land restriction ordinance.

A resolution was adopted calling for maintenance of 100 per cent Jewish labor in all enterprises, prohibition of strikes and lockouts, establishment of neutral labor exchanges and compulsory arbitration of labor disputes.

Palestine Population Tops 1,500,000

JERUSALEM, May 3. (JTA) -- Palestine's estimated population, not including troops, passed the million and a half mark for the first time in 1939, according to the Bulletin of Statistics published by the Palestine Government.

As of Dec. 31 last, there were an estimated 1,501,698 inhabitants in the Holy Land, the bulletin reveals. Of this number, 927,439 were Moslems, 445,150 Jews, 116,959 Christians and 12,150 of other religions.

HUNGARY SUFFERS SHORTAGE OF PROFESSIONALS AS ANTI-SEMITIC LAWS ARE PRESSED

(Editor's note: This is the first of three articles by a special correspondent giving a comprehensive survey of the effects of Hungary's anti-Jewish legislation.)

BUDAPEST, April 11. (JTA - By Air Mail) -- Hungary is perhaps the only non-belligerent, non-totalitarian country in the world today where there is a shortage rather than a surplus of doctors, chemists, architects, engineers, and other professional workers.

The Budapest evening papers, of April 10, for example, announce that the services of no fewer than 152 medical assistants are urgently required by the Országos Társadalombiztosító Intézet, the Government-controlled General Health and Accident Insurance Institute.

The explanation for this shortage of doctors and professionals is neither a national emergency nor an epidemic, nor even a boom; it is simply the result of Hungary's anti-Jewish legislation.

From 3,000 to 5,000 Jewish professionals, technicians and clerks have been removed from their jobs in the last year, but only 1,000 to 2,000 Gentiles have been found to take their places. Logically, of course, the problem could be solved by permitting the re-employment of some of the Jews already dismissed. But racism is not a logical philosophy, and the Hungarian public authorities refuse to allow Jews to retain their jobs or to return to work, even where there are no Gentiles available to replace them.

Only in isolated cases, where it is vital that Jews continue to be employed, have the authorities relaxed their zeal. One example of such non-enforcement is the Municipal Hospital of Ujpest, a suburb of the capital, where every staff physician is a Jew. None has yet been required to leave, however, because of the difficulty in finding Gentile physicians to replace them. The latter, profiting from the artificial scarcity, are now receiving higher fees and salaries than they were ever able to obtain before, and naturally are reluctant to work at the Ujpest Hospital for less than they are able to get elsewhere.

The "six per cent" law of May, 1939, which superseded former Premier Bela Imredy's "20 per cent" law of the year before, provides that the number of Jews engaged in professional and technical work be reduced by January 1, 1943, to six per cent -- the proportion of Jews to the population of Hungary. The same law also requires that the proportion of Jews engaged in independent commerce and industry be reduced, by the same date, to 12 per cent or, in special cases, 15 per cent, where the surplus is made up of Jewish veterans of the World War.

Though the law specifically allows three and a half years for the carrying out of its provisions, the public authorities in actual practice have been so anxious to deprive Jews of their livelihoods that the six per cent provision has already been reached or exceeded in all but one professional classification. That one exception is the Royal Hungarian Opera, where it was found that not enough "Aryans" were available to carry out the season's program without the help of an illegally high percentage of Jews. In all other professions, however, the percentage of Jews has been brought down to six per cent or under.

Journalism, one of the professions in which Jews were formerly predominant in Budapest, has perhaps been the hardest hit of all. Today, less than a year after the passage of the "six per cent" law, more than half of Budapest's 22 newspapers employ no Jews at all. Eight employ only one Jew each. Only the Pester Lloyd, semi-official German-language newspaper, and the liberal Esti Kurir continue employing any number of Jews, and even they may not employ as many Jews as before.

Az Est, a popular, Jewish-owned "boulevard" newspaper of a year ago, was forced to fire all 40 of its reporters and editors and to replace its Jewish executives with Gentiles. Later it was forced to suspend publication, and only recently has reappeared under the name of Pest without a single Jew on its payroll.

Law, another profession in which Jews were formerly predominant, has not yet been completely "Aryanized." But though well over six per cent of Budapest's lawyers are still Jewish, the Jews have been forced to limit their activities more or less to those of solicitors. Budapest citizens, whatever their race or opinions, no longer find it convenient to retain Jewish attorneys, even though it is still legally permitted. For it has become axiomatic in the past year that if your lawyer is a Jew you lose your case, regardless of its merits.

Even in commercial enterprises, where a 12 to 15 per cent limit is allowed by law, Jews are being ruthlessly replaced without regard for either the percentage provision or the clause which gives employment until January 1, 1943, to bring the proportion of Jews in their employ down to the legal limit.

So great has been the pressure against the continued employment of Jews that many of Hungary's largest financial organizations have eliminated their Jewish employees altogether. Concerns which no longer employ a single Jew include: Pesti Hazai Elso Takarekpenztar-Egyesulet, a leading savings bank; Foldhitelintezet, Hungary's largest farm loan bank; Futura, the leading Hungarian grain trading and grain-exporting trust; Hangya, a leading producer's cooperative; and Kozponti, a credit cooperative.

Anti-Semitism has also been applied to the Army, although the law of May, 1939, makes no mention of military service. A recent decree of the War Ministry, however, prohibits Jews from attaining even non-commissioned officer's status and excludes them from any branch of the service but the infantry.

But Jews are still required to perform two years' military service, just as they were before the anti-Jewish laws went into effect.

DUBNOW URGES JEWS TO LEARN FROM LAST WAR IN FIGHTING FOR RIGHTS

WILNO, Lithuania, May 3. (JTA) -- The disappointing post-war experiences must be borne in mind by those fighting for reconstitution of Jewish rights, Prof. Simeon Dubnow, famous Jewish historian, told newspapermen in an interview today.

Discussing the problem of future reconstruction of European Jewry, Prof. Dubnow asserted that the Jews must be given back their civil rights as well as their special rights as a national and cultural minority in all those countries where they have been deprived of them. Prof. Dubnow, who recently came here from Riga to make his home, urged that the experiences obtained in 1919 during the Paris and Versailles Peace conferences be utilized.

"What became of the principle of minorities rights as laid down at that time is well known," Prof. Dubnow said. "The Polish Foreign Minister (Josef Beck) was the first to declare later on that Poland was not recognizing minorities rights at all. This bad example influenced certain other states, leading to an anarchic state of affairs as far as protection of minorities was concerned.

The historian explained that almost 90 per cent of Polish Jewry was hopelessly impoverished and must be considered emigrants in the psychological sense.

"It may be assumed that the migration problem will constitute an important world question after the world war," Prof. Dubnow said. "Thus, coordination between the states and interested associations must be effected which will make an end of the present disregard of minorities rights. This problem must be on the working schedule of Jewish representatives to the ultimate peace conference."

Referring to Palestine, Prof. Dubnow said that the Jews "have built Palestine, they are building it and they shall continue to build it and no white books will be able to change anything in this state of affairs." He urged, however, that the efforts to obtain maximum Palestine immigration and colonization should be coupled with continued efforts, in view of the desperate Jewish position in Europe, for migration to other countries.

U.S. ZIONISTS NOT INVOLVED IN BEN SHEMEN ARMS CASE, MacDONALD SAYS

LONDON, May 3. (JTA) -- American Zionists were cleared by Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald in the House of Commons of any connection with the recent case involving eight officials of the American-supported Ben Shemen school in Palestine who were sentenced to terms ranging from three to seven years for possession of arms.

MacDonald's statement was in reply to a question by Capt. Alan Graham, who asked why the sentences had been imposed and the extent to which American Zionists were implicated. MacDonald rejected a suggestion by Tom Williams, Labor M.P., to reduce the sentences of 105 Jews serving three to ten-year terms, pointing out that a number of the offenses had been committed after outbreak of the war. Williams' plea was based on Jewish support of the British war effort.

(Continued on reverse side)

REFUGEE SERVICE REPORTS RISE IN RESETTLEMENT

NEW YORK, May 3. (JTA) -- The National Refugee Service reported today that 1,522 refugees--representing 40 per cent of last year's total--were resettled during the first three months of 1940. The figure for March marked an increase of nearly 100 per cent over the same month last year.

Fifty per cent of the refugees resettled in the three months were directed to 13 regional area committees, where they were redistributed to 250 smaller communities. Two new services were established during the quarter--an Advisory Committee on Housing which assisted 1,315 families to find suitable accommodations and an Agricultural Program, cooperating with the Jewish Agricultural Society, devoted to farm retraining and resettlement.

MRS. ROOSEVELT VOICES APPRECIATION FOR PALESTINE PAINTING

NEW YORK, May 3. (JTA) -- Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, in her syndicated column, "My Day," yesterday expressed appreciation for the painting, "Rebirth of the Holy Land," presented to her and President Roosevelt by Aryeh Leo Peysack, Palestinian painter (reported in JTA News April 26).

"It is a very kind and charming gesture and both of us appreciate his thought," Mrs. Roosevelt wrote. "All these kindly gestures from people of different races are, I think, the result of a feeling that so many of us have been drifting away from a kindness of spirit in these days that those who desire better understanding and peace try to emphasize anything which will draw us together."

FRATERNITY HONORS BACKER AS 'OUTSTANDING ALUMNUS'

NEW YORK, May 3. (JTA) -- George Backer, publisher of the New York Post and a leader in Jewish and civic affairs, has been selected by the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity to receive its trophy as the outstanding alumnus of 1939. The presentation will be made at a gathering Monday night at the Metropolis Club.

FINKELSTEIN'S APPOINTMENT TO SEMINARY POST HAILED

NEW YORK, May 3. (JTA) -- Religious and educational leaders joined today in commending the appointment of Prof. Louis Finkelstein as president of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Among those sending congratulations were Rabbi Max Arzt, the Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Rabbi Samuel Goldenson, Rabbi Leo Jung, Rabbi David de Sola Pool and Father Gerald G. Walsh.

RABBI REJECTS INVITATION OF EXECUTIVE WHO GOT HITLER AWARD

NEW YORK, May 3. (JTA) -- Rabbi J.X. Cohen, president of the New York Board of Jewish Ministers, has declined an invitation of the International Business Machine Corporation to take part in its peace-promotion program on May 13 at the World's Fair because of the action of the president of the corporation, Thomas J. Watson, in accepting the Order of The Eagle from Adolf Hitler, it was announced today.