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1,000 REFUGEES FREED FROM ITALIAN CAMPS; TRANSIT DIFFICULTIES HINDER EMIGRATION

ROME, March 26. (JTA) — More than 1,000 persons holding immigration visas for the United States and South America have been released from concentration camps as a result of energetic measures taken by the refugee aid committees in Genoa and Trieste. Because of the scarcity of normal means of communication, it is necessary to proceed by plane from Rome to Lisbon and from there by ship to the countries of destination.

As a result of severe restrictions imposed by Portuguese and Spanish authorities in the issuance of transit visas, an almost impossible situation has arisen, curtailing in great part the emigration of refugees and local Jews from Italy.

Hardest hit are males of German, Polish, Czech and Italian nationality between the ages of 18 and 30. Spanish consulates have instructions from Madrid not to accept their applications for transit visas. Inasmuch as it is essential to transit through Spain to reach Lisbon, which is today the only European port of exit, they are effectively stranded.

Males not in this age group and all females are in a situation only slightly less impossible. This is particularly evident in the cases of those otherwise fortunate enough to have received United States immigration visas after having survived a wait of more than two-and-a-half years.

On the basis of the United States immigration visa, Portuguese consuls accept transit visa applications for transmission to Lisbon, where they are approved or refused. This transmission is usually effected by wire at the request of the applicant, who pays the approximately \$5 in charges. In Lisbon the decision rests with the international police, usually on the criterion of a reserved passage on a given ship leaving Lisbon on a given date. Owing to the large number of refugees in Lisbon waiting their turn to obtain ship passage from Lisbon, this last is particularly difficult to get.

Given that this difficulty has been overcome, however, and the international police are convinced of the applicants bona fide intentions, authorization for the issuance of the Portuguese transit visa is wired to the consulate in Italy. This procedure involves from four to six weeks, often even longer. The price of the transit visa is \$6 normally. The visa is valid one month from date of issuance.

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Applications for transit visas through Spain are accepted only on the basis of a valid Portuguese visa. The procedure is similar to that at the Portuguese consulate, with the application being wired to Madrid for approval. Time required for the reply averages from three to four weeks.

As the trip to Lisbon is usually made by train, a French transit visa is required from the Armistice Commission in Turin. Ten days is needed to effect this formality.

By this time, the one-month validity of the Portuguese visa has elapsed, necessitating another telegram to Lisbon requesting an extension. Usually, the ship upon which the original reservations have been made has left Lisbon by this time. Another reservation on a later sailing ship is attempted through a series of expensive telegrams to Lisbon. If successful, the extension on the Portuguese visa is authorized.

Having arrived at this advanced point with all the transit visas in order, the refugee, who has undergone innumerable hardships, patiently awaiting his turn to receive an immigration visa to the United States, to which he had looked forward as the milestone of hope towards the beginning of a new life in a new country of opportunity, suddenly finds that the four months' validity of the United States visa has also expired; that a renewal will require perhaps fresh affidavits of support from the United States--a matter of months; that, in fact, he must begin the vicious circle all over again with all the odds against him and little hope of salvation.

Italy Seizes Jews' Radios

ROME, March 5. (JTA-By Mail) -- Police action in sequestering radios of Jews in Italy is continuing throughout the country. Exceptions have been made in the cases of "discriminated" Jews and those who have contracted marriage with "Aryans." In some instances radios capable only of local reception have been returned to Jewish owners.

This latest measure affecting Jews is believed to be a part of the recently-announced drive against listeners to "enemy" stations. To date a number of arrests have been made, none of which, however, include Jews.

252 IMMIGRANTS FROM ROMANIA REACH PALESTINE

JERUSALEM, March 26. (JTA) -- A group of 252 Jewish immigrants, all of them from Rumania, arrived at Haifa yesterday. They include 202 children who were brought here under the auspices of the Youth Aliyah.

POLISH GOVERNMENT AIDS REFUGEE WRITERS IN PALESTINE

JERUSALEM, March 26. (JTA) -- The Polish Government has granted, for the duration of the war, £6 monthly for each member of the families of 14 Jewish journalists who are refugees in Palestine. Allowances for 84 Polish rabbis claiming the same rights as Polish Government officials are still pending. Polish Jewish lawyers who demanded allowances have already received them in full.

HERMAN RENAMED HIAS HEAD

NEW YORK, March 26. (JTA) -- Abraham Herman was reelected president of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) at the first meeting of the board of directors following the annual convention, it was announced today.

WEIZMANN FORESEES GREAT ADVANCE IN PALESTINE HOMETLAND AFTER WAR; DEMANDS JEWISH ARMY

NEW YORK, March 26. (JTA) -- Asserting that future plans for Palestine must be "geared to a total solution of the Jewish problem," Dr. Chaim Weizmann predicted tonight that the end of the war would find the world's statesmen far readier to take up the Jewish problem radically, with "every possibility of an advance over our present position comparable to the one which was achieved at the end of the first World War."

The world Zionist leader's optimistic prophecy, his first public statement since his arrival last Saturday from London, where he had been engaged in intensive negotiations with the British authorities regarding Palestine, was addressed to a crowd of 2,500 assembled at the Hotel Astor in a reception for Dr. Weizmann arranged by the United Palestine Appeal. Dr. Stephen S. Wise presided.

Dr. Weizmann's speech constituted a message of encouragement to American Zionists who had been disturbed by moving of the war theater towards the Near East. He said that Arab-Jewish cooperation had become an accomplished fact, that opportunities for expansion existed even now and that the war had not abated the energies of the Jews.

Touching on the question of formation of a Jewish army, which he had indicated in an interview earlier was still under negotiation in London, Dr. Weizmann said: "Over and above the forces which we Jews supply as citizens of our respective countries, we want to constitute a volunteer, recognized force--the Jewish military force--for service against the common enemy of mankind. It was our bitter privilege to be singled out by him (Hitler) for the first and the most unrelenting of his hatreds. It should be our privilege to give our answer in the fullest measure wherever he is to be encountered in the field of battle."

"We were the first to suffer the onslaught of the Nazi hordes," he asserted, "and honor demands that as a people, as a race, we take up the challenge side by side with the other threatened peoples. Free French, Free Poles. Free Norwegians have constituted their recognized armies."

With reluctance he spoke of the "obstructive elements" in the Palestine administration, "the restrictions on land sales, the grudging attitude toward Jewish immigration" which, he said, "are not in keeping with the spirit of the time." "It is for England's sake, as much as our own, that we shall continue to press for a fundamental modification of such a situation," he declared. "These restrictions have no place in the present set-up; they have still less place in the plans for the future, which must be geared to a total solution of the Jewish problem."

It was to these plans for the future that Dr. Weizmann devoted his greatest emphasis.

"I believe it is not too much to say that the end of this war--and for me the end of this war is synonymous with the crushing of Nazism and Fascism--will find the world's statesmen far readier to take up the Jewish problem radically than they ever were before. It is not too much to say that there is every possibility of an advance over our present position comparable to the one which was achieved at the end of the first World War."

He also had words of encouragement on the problem of Arab-Jewish relations. Recalling that King Feisal of Iraq had welcomed a Jewish homeland, Dr. Weizmann said:

"What was true in those days is even truer today. The prospects which the Arab people may envisage are brighter than ever before. And these prospects are bound up,

inextricably, with the victory of the democracies...

"The just aspirations of the Arab people will find their fulfillment at the close of this war--to some extent, at least, as the result of the efforts of the Jewish people. If anyone asks whether cooperation between Jews and Arabs is possible, the answer is that this cooperation is already a fact. The question of its extension into the future is a matter of practical statesmanship. The larger view does not merely permit the building of a Jewish homeland in Palestine; it actually calls for it as part of the revival and stabilization of the Near East."

HALIFAX SEES "GENERAL AGREEMENT" ON JEWISH ARMY PLAN

NEW YORK, March 26. (JTA) --- In his first New York press conference as British Ambassador, Lord Halifax said today that there had been "general agreement upon the outlines" of the plan for formation of a Jewish army before he left London on Jan. 24, although the negotiations had not been concluded at that time.

Questions regarding Palestine were among those raised at the conference at the Hotel Waldorf-Astoria, during which Lord Halifax, facing some 60 reporters, reiterated that Britain spurned the idea of a negotiated peace with Hitler--which "would be worth just half of the paper on which it would be written"--and asserted that "we will, if we have to, fight for 20 years; we will win this war, but the sooner you (the U.S.) can help, the shorter the job will be."

It was called to the Ambassador's attention that Dr. Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, had arrived in New York on Saturday after negotiations in London regarding formation of a Jewish army and Lord Halifax was asked what the present status of these negotiations were.

"I know there has been a great deal of discussion about it," the Ambassador said. "There was before I left the Foreign Office. But they weren't concluded when I left England. Therefore, I really don't know more than you know. I know Dr. Weizmann and the British Government had a great deal of discussion about it. I think there was very general agreement about the outlines of what they both wanted to see."

At another point, asked to what extent the Balfour Declaration had been fulfilled, Lord Halifax said:

"That pledge has been fulfilled--I would maintain it has been in the process of being fulfilled completely. And if those who sometimes criticize its non-fulfillment had the experience that those who have had to try and secure the greatest measure of justice in its fulfillment between all those concerned, I think we should have had a good deal less talk about its non-fulfillment."