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BRITAIN WEIGHS CHANCE OF NAZI PUSH THROUGH SYRIA, DETERMINED TO HOLD NEAR EAST POSITION

LONDON, May 8. (JTA) -- Britain today strengthened her determination to hold her position in the Mediterranean basin as London speculated on the possibility that the Vichy Government had granted Germany passage of troops through Syria for an attack on Suez through Palestine.

Discussing Germany's new agreement with the Britain government, in which the concessions made by Vichy were not mentioned, a commentator on the British radio, Robert Montgomery said "it may well be" that the pact "covers the use of Syria as a stepping stone to Suez and Iraq."

It is known that Germany had been seeking a path through Syria from French High Commissioner Henri Dentz. Otto von Hantig, chief Nazi agent in the Near East, recently stressed the value of Syria to Germany as "a bridge to India" in a lecture before the World Economic Study Society in Leipzig.

With the belief prevailing that Turkey will remain firm against passage of Nazi forces, The Times declares. "We are strong enough to prevent any serious landings in Syria or Lebanon."

Official British dispatches from Cairo quoted the British authorities in Palestine as reporting that the country has "never been so quiet." British military authorities in Cairo said the British aim was the maintenance of communications along the triangle formed by Haifa, Mosul and Palestine.

Nazi parachutists may attempt to capture Haifa, the Evening Standard said in an article on the possible outcome of the Iraq conflict.

The article pointed out that even if Hitler succeeded in seizing the Iraq oil field they would be useless to him without the refinery at Haifa. If the Iraq attempt fails the Nazis will then bomb Haifa in an attempt to make the Iraq oil useless to the British by destroying the refinery, the article said.

Palestine's confidence was strengthened by Prime Minister Winston Churchill's announcement in Commons yesterday that the strength of imperial forces in the Middle East had now reached a half million and his expression of Britain's determination to hold her positions in this area.

"I notice a tendency in some quarters, especially abroad, to talk about the Middle East as if we could afford to lose our positions there and yet carry on the war to victory

on the oceans and in the air," Churchill stated.

"The loss of the Nile valley and the Suez Canal, of our position in the Mediterranean and of Malta would be among the heaviest blows we could sustain. We are determined to fight for them with all the resources of the British Empire and have every reason to believe that we shall be successful."

Meanwhile, the German propaganda machine continues spreading propaganda aimed at splitting Palestine's resistance. The German news agency today gave wide circulation to a report, datelined Beirut, quoting the Palestine administration as assuring the Arabs that British were determined to meet their demands and were willing to restrict Jewish influence in the Holy Land. The British are also circulating a rumor that the Government will revoke the Balfour Declaration, the Nazi report declared.

The German agency also reported a new appeal to the Arabs of Palestine by the Iraqi Government to join the Iraqi army as volunteers. It added that the Iraqi General Staff had ordered establishment of a special legion of Arab volunteers from neighboring countries to participate in guerrilla activities against the British on the Transjordan frontier.

Tel Aviv Strengthens Air Raid Precautions

JERUSALEM, May 8. (JTA) -- The Government has approved a grant of £21,000 to build additional shelters and finance other air-raid precautionary measures in Tel Aviv, Mayor Israel Rokach announced today at a special meeting of the Municipal Council.

Calling on all available young men to join A.R.P. services, the Mayor revealed that 50 municipal employees had already joined and 45 more were expected to do so. It is intended to train another 2,000 men for Tel Aviv A.R.P. services. Seventy-eight members of the Jewish Medical Association are already serving, it was announced by J.L. Rokach, president of the association.

Yesterday's meeting of the Palestine Zionist General Council, which was mainly devoted to clarification of the Near East situation, heard Moshe Shertok report on the Jewish Agency's incessant efforts to increase the Jewish community's participation in Palestine's defense and the general war effort. The session approved the Agency's call for enlistment and the budget of the Zionist Executive. Menachem M. Ussishkin, presiding, eulogized Adolf Boehm, Austrian Zionist writer, who died recently in Vienna.

Meanwhile, Henrietta Szold informed the executive committee of the Vaad Leumi (Jewish National Council) of her decision to use Hadassah's \$25,000 birthday gift to her for a girls' farm school.

REGULAR PRAYERS FOR BRITISH VICTORY ORDERED

LONDON, May 8. (JTA) -- Chief Rabbi J. H. Hertz today ordered that a supplication for the success of the British forces and the safety of the civilian population, as well as memorial prayer for the war fallen and civilian war victims, be included in the regular sabbath and festival services, to be read following the prayer for the King.

JEWS BARRED FROM DUTCH EXCHANGES

STOCKHOLM, May 8. (JTA) -- German Commissioner Arthur Seyss-Inquart has issued a decree barring Jews from entering stock exchanges in Rotterdam and The Hague, it was reported here today. Jews may remain members of stock exchanges, but their interests must be represented by "Aryans."

WORKMEN'S CIRCLE ASSETS \$8,000,000, MEMBERSHIP 72,000

CHICAGO, May 8. (JTA) -- The 41st annual convention of the Workmen's Circle heard reports pointing out that the organization now has 72,000 members, with 80 new branches organized, has assets aggregating \$8,000,000 and paid \$650,000 in sick benefits in the past two years. The organization's sanitorium, maintained at an annual cost of \$100,000 received 80 new patients in 1940.

The education committee reported that the Workmen's Circle maintains 152 schools throughout the country with 60 per cent of the pupils coming from homes of American-born Jews. It denied that Bible instruction had been excluded from these schools, pointing out that a Bible course was given in the higher classes.

Israel Mereminsky of the Palestine Histadruth declared in an address yesterday that Palestine's collectives and "krutzoth" were Socialist islands, close to the ideals of the Workmen's Circle. He asserted that the Palestine Jewish community was not halting a moment in its rebuilding activities.

RABBI ISRAEL NAMED CO-CHAIRMAN OF CLERGY GROUP FOR ARMED FORCES

NEW YORK, May 8. (JTA) -- The United Service Organizations for National Defense today announced acceptance of a co-chairmanship of its Clergy Advisory Board by Rabbi Edward L. Israel of Baltimore, president of the Synagogue Council of America.

Rabbi Israel appointed the following to serve with him. Rabbi Samuel Goldenson, Dr. Louis Finkelstein, and Rabbi Leo Jung, New York, Rabbis Louis L. Mann and Solomon Goldman, Chicago, Henry Berkowitz, Portland; Jacob Kohn, Los Angeles, H. Raphael Gold, Dallas, and J. B. Soloveitchik, of Boston.

Eighteen Jewish chaplains have been called to active duty by the War and Navy Departments, reflecting the increasing number of Jewish men who are entering the defense forces of the nation, Chairman David de Sola Pool of the Jewish Welfare Board's Committee on Religious Activities announced today. In addition, Dr. Pool said, two rabbis have received their commissions in the Chaplains' Corps and are now awaiting assignments, and the committee has endorsed fifteen other candidates for chaplaincies.

At the same time Louis Kraft, J.W.B. executive director, announced the Board has sent 19 additional field directors into communities adjacent to the major cantonments to care for the "off-post" recreational, religious and social needs of Jewish soldiers in conjunction with local JWB Army and Navy committees.

RABBIS PETITION BRITAIN FOR JEWISH ARMY

PHILADELPHIA, May 8. (JTA) -- The 41st annual convention of the Rabbinical Assembly of America, which closed yesterday, decided to petition the British Ambassador "to permit the organization of a Jewish Palestinian army" and to redouble its efforts "to assist the Jewish community of Palestine morally, spiritually and materially."

Rabbi Leon S. Lang, Philadelphia, was reelected president and Dr. Louis M. Levitzky Newark, vice-president. Newly-elected officers are Rabbi Harry Schwartz, Hempstead, L.I., treasurer, Rabbi Lewis B. Grossman, Mt. Vernon, N.Y., recording secretary, and Rabbi Maxwell Farber, Philadelphia, corresponding secretary.

AID FOR STRANDED POLISH JEWISH REFUGEES MAPPED AT LONDON PARLEY

LONDON, May 8. (JTA) -- A special conference of representatives of Jewish organizations yesterday discussed plans for speeding up emigration of Polish Jewish refugees stranded in various parts of the world, meeting their travel expenses and assisting their financial position.

The conference approved efforts of Ignacy Schwartzbart, Jewish member of the Polish National Council, to obtain from the exiled Polish Government assurance of equality of Jewish refugees.

Schwartzbart reported receipt of a cable from Teheran stating that 38 refugees, possessing Palestine certificates, were stranded in Iran (Persia), unable to obtain transit visas for India and facing expiration of their Iranian visas. Schwartzbart said he had taken steps in different channels in response to their appeal for aid.

Reviewing the situation of Polish Jewish refugees, Schwartzbart said 1,600 were presently in Japan, several thousand in France, 600 in Portugal, 600 in Rumania, where there was danger that they would be interned in concentration camps, and smaller groups in other countries.

On the occasion of Polish National Day, Schwartzbart, has sent a message to Acting Premier Sosnowski expressing "Polish Jewry's unshaken belief that the day of victory and justice for Poland will also be the day of full freedom and justice for the Jews."

21 JEWS EXECUTED IN NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMP

LONDON, May 8. (JTA) -- Twenty-one Jews in the Buchenwald concentration camp were executed last Nov. 10 in reprisal for "the Semitic British warmongers' insolence," following the Royal Air Force raid on Munich on Nov. 9 during the celebration of the anniversary of the Nazi "beerhall putsch," it was revealed today for the first time by a refugee who was in Buchenwald at the time and subsequently escaped from Germany.

NAZIS HOLD SYNAGOGUES HERE OUTNUMBER CHURCHES

ZURICH, May 8. (JTA) -- Admitting that a wave of anti-Nazism was spreading in the United States, a German broadcast today said this was not surprising, making the ridiculous claim that there were only 480 Catholic churches in New York in comparison with more than 1,000 synagogues.

REFUGEES HONOR U.S. CONSUL IN SWEDEN

STOCKHOLM, April 10. (JTA-By Mail) -- American Consul Julius Huttner in Gotesborg has been honored by Jewish refugees on his 60th birthday by presentation of hand-lettered parchment address. The presentation was made by Rabbi Kahlberg and Dr. Hans Taub.

RECEPTION FOR BARONESS GUNZBOURG

NEW YORK, May 8. (JTA) -- The American Committee of OSE gave a reception at the Hotel Pierre for Baroness Pierre de Gunzbourg, chairman of the OSE Children's Aid Committee in France, on Tuesday. Speakers were Dr. A. J. Rongy, chairman of the American Committee; Dr. Bernhard Kahn and Maxa Nordau.