

VOL. VIII. NO. 164

Wednesday, June 25, 1941.

STATE DEPT. GETS PLEA TO AID TRAPPED BALTIC JEWS; NO ACTION PLANNED NOW

WASHINGTON, June 24 (JTA)-- A delegation of rabbis today appealed to the State Department for aid in saving thousands of Jews trapped in the Baltic states by the Nazi invasion and were told that conditions were too chaotic at present to make any promises.

The delegation, which included Rabbi Elieser Silver, Rabbi Aaron Kisler and Michael G. Tress, saw Undersecretary Breckenridge Long and said those in imminent danger included hundreds of rabbis, rabbinical students and others to whom visas could be issued without quota restrictions.

They expressed fear that massacres of Jews might have already begun. They pointed out that many of the Jews-trapped in Lithuania were refugees from Germany. The same group has visited the State Department at intervals for several months, each time pointing out the precarious position of the Jews in the Baltic area.

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Thousands Evacuate to Soviet Interior

ZURICH, June 24 (JTA)-- Tens of thousands of Jews were among the huge crowds of civilians moving today by wagon and on foot from the Soviet-Nazi war zone, which is inhabited by at least two million Jews, into the interior to seek safety from Nazi air-raids and artillery bombardment, it was reported here today.

The Soviet authorities encouraged these victims to move into the interior. Moving through woods and vast fields, the crowds of civilian refugees did not block the roads for the army, as was the case in France and in Belgium, where the roads are narrow. The exodus was especially great from Wilno, Bialistok, Grodno, Wolkowsk, Pinsk, Kowel, Rovno, Luck, Dubno, Wladimir-Volynsk, Lwow, Tarnopol and Stanislawow--towns of Soviet-occupied Poland thickly populated with Jews. It is assumed here that a similar exodus is taking place from the Bessarabian cities of Kishinev, Jassy and other sections of Bessarabia where the German-Rumanian armies are waging a fierce battle against the Red Army, seeking to reach the important Soviet port of Odessa.

Of the first three Soviet Polish towns reported captured by the Germans, Lomza is the most important from the Jewish viewpoint. Before the war 15,000 Jews lived there. Their number was almost doubled during the September, 1939, campaign through arrival of refugees from Nazi-occupied Poland. A number later left for the interior of Russia, but the majority remained in Lomza and surroundings. The town has a 106-year-old yeshiva, many talmud torahs and other Jewish institutions.

The Jewish community of Brest-Litovsk dates back to the 14th century. It is assumed that most civilians were evacuated before the outbreak of hostilities since the city is fortified. At one time Brest was inhabited by 42,000 Jews and under Polish rule always had a Jewish vice-mayor. Kolno had only a few hundred Jews. It was not immediately learned whether they succeeded in escaping to the interior.

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ALLIED FORCES LIBERATE 5,000 JEWS IN DAMASCUS; TRADE RENEWAL PLANNED

JERUSALEM, June 24. (JTA)-- The Allied forces entering Damascus found a once wealthy Jewish community of 15,000 reduced to 5,000, it was reported today.

Most of the Jews are small traders and peddlars in the surrounding Arab villages. The community is headed by the recently-nominated Elias Mizrahi and the local Beth Din, composed of two "chachamin" (sages). The community has a few schools and Talmud Torahs, with about 1,000 pupils, administered by the Alliance Israelite.

The Jewish community was represented in the Syrian Parliament by Joseph Laniado until recently when Parliament was dissolved by the Vichy authorities. There was also a Jewish municipal councillor. The community's decline started at the beginning of the century when thousands emigrated to the United States, Lebanon and Palestine.

The most quoted Talmudic authority today is Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai, who said: "Happy be he who will see the downfall of Tadmur." Tadmur is now Palmyra, whose airdrome has been occupied by the Allied forces. Tadmur, which is believed to have been built by King Solomon as a pala garden city, is repeatedly mentioned in the Bible. In ancient times it was an important trade and military road junction. Now it has one of Syria's largest airdromes. The town has only one resident Jewish family.

Meanwhile, the Palestine Government's economic adviser, Geoffrey Walsh, has been appointed military brigadier commissioner to Syria to assist in the economic situation in Syria and coordinate trade between Syria and Palestine.

The new American consul-general, Pinkerton, has arrived here.

VICHY ISSUES NUMEROUS CLAUSUS FOR COLLEGES, PROFESSIONS

VICHY, June 24. (JTA)-- The Government today issued a decree restricting the proportion of Jews in universities to three per cent and in liberal professions to two per cent. Exemptions were provided for members of Jewish families long settled in France and priority rights for children of front-fighters.

The decree is part of an anti-Jewish legislative program announced by Xavier Valat, Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, on June 13.

Pierre Mendes-France, Finance Undersecretary in the Blum government, who was sentenced to three years' imprisonment by the Vichy authorities on a charge of "desertion behind the lines," has escaped from a hospital where he was held under guard, it was announced.

4 REFUGEES LOST IN SUBMARINE SINKING OF PORTUGUESE SHIP

LISBON, June 24. (JTA)-- Two refugee tragedies were revealed today following the sinking of the Portuguese steamship Genda by an "unidentified" submarine. Passengers still missing, for whom little hope is held out, include Mrs. Anna Gutman, 28; her daughter, Annette, 10; Mrs. Yocheveth Sadkowsky and her son, Henri, 15, Polish Jewish refugees from Belgium.

Mrs. Gutman left her husband in Shanghai and arrived here in December, seeking her daughter, who had remained in Warsaw. The daughter was finally brought out in a transport and reunited with her mother here. They were on their way to Shanghai when the sinking occurred. Abraham Sadkowsky, 49, was rescued, in serious condition from injuries and shock over the loss of his wife and son. Only a day before they sailed, Sadkowsky learned that his two other sons had arrived at the Sosua settlement in the Dominican Republic.

LIBERAL RABBIS' PARLEY GETS CALL FOR "BOLD OFFENSIVE" FOR JUDAISM

ATLANTIC CITY, June 24. (JTA)-- The 52nd annual meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis opened tonight with a call by its president, Rabbi Emil W. Leipsiger of New Orleans, to support President Roosevelt's leadership in the world crisis and to launch a "bold offensive" for Judaism.

Declaring that "we shall not allow our people to yield to the panic and blue funk of race suicide and assimilation," Rabbi Leipsiger told more than 200 Liberal rabbis from all parts of the country that "if Israel is to die....there is the way of the martyr of ancient Roman tyranny who died at the stake with the Scroll of the Law wrapped about him."

Rabbi Leipsiger's specific recommendations included (1) acceptance of support of lay organizations for the Synagogue Council of America, (2) increased support for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, (3) raising of funds for the World Union for Progressive Judaism in London, (4) a resolution of "whole-hearted loyalty and cooperation" with President Roosevelt's program of aiding the democracies, (5) appointment of a commission of five rabbis to study "the impact of liberal religious influences" on post-war problems, unless the Liberal rabbis receive representation in the American Jewish Committee's Institute on Peace and Post-War Problems, (6) study of plans for "a new adventure in the search of Jewish unity" as a result of the "practical breakup" of the General Jewish Council.

The retiring president forecast election of Rabbi James G. Heller of Cincinnati as his successor.

The "bold offensive," Rabbi Leipsiger said, should be aimed "to carry forward our historic God consciousness and to make ethical monotheism be for every son of Israel a constant reminder of his world duty, of his obligation to be at home in the great unfolding quest for all-embracing righteousness and enduring peace; and to share in that quest frankly and consciously as Jews."

Urging support of President Roosevelt, he said "such a leader we follow without fear, with perfect confidence," He declared that the President "has mustered manpower with understanding and sympathy and with a minimum of official pressure."

Discussing the necessity for Jewish unity, he asserted: "It would be madness in the crisis of world affairs for the Jews of America to fail to present a united front in the great day of peace. We shall not have that unity then if we do not reach out to it now and make it effective in the atmosphere of American life which has been subtly tainted by Nazi influences."

Referring to the fear that Palestine may fall under Nazi domination, Rabbi Leipsiger recalled that "the Holy Land, though nearing the brink of catastrophe, is still the haven of thousands of the dispossessed of many lands, still the symbol of the creative spirit of the Jewish pioneer."

OFFICER SENTENCED IN DUNERA CASE

LONDON, June 24. (JTA)-- The court martial trying army officers on charges arising from robbery and mistreatment of refugees transported to Australia on the S.S. Dunera last July today sentenced Sergeant-Major Charles Albert Bowles to 12 months' imprisonment and dismissal from the service. Sergeant Arthur Helliwell was severely reprimanded.

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BRITAIN REOPENS NEGOTIATIONS FOR CREATION OF JEWISH ARMY

NEW YORK, June 24. (JTA)-- Negotiations for creation of a Jewish army have been reopened between the Zionists and the British Government and "definite progress" for arming Palestine's Jews has been made, the Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs declared in a statement today. The statement follows:

"Immediately prior to the outbreak of the war, Dr. Weizmann, in a letter to the British Prime Minister, expressed to the British Government the keen desire of Jews everywhere to play a full part in the impending struggle and to provide Jewish manpower, technical ability and resources to fight on the side of the democracies. This was followed by a specific offer to raise a Jewish army to be recruited in Palestine and elsewhere for service in the war. This offer met with a favorable reception in high military quarters in Great Britain, but was opposed by those elements in the Chamberlain Government, including in particular the Colonial Secretary, which had been responsible for the White Paper policy and favored appeasement of the Arabs.

"A change came about with the appointment of Mr. Winston Churchill as Prime Minister and negotiations for the establishment of a Jewish force were again undertaken and had reached an advance stage when the Nazi occupation of Yugoslavia and Greece created new political difficulties and brought about postponement in the final implementation of the plan.

"Today the war has come to the boundaries of Palestine, and it is a bitter reflection that had our offer of a Jewish force been accepted at the beginning of the war, there might today have been a strong additional bulwark in the defense of the national home. Be that as it may, the matter has again been reopened with the British Government and definite progress for arming the Jews in Palestine for self-defense has been made. Thus the number of Jewish supernumary police, entitled to bear arms, in Palestine has been doubled and today totals nearly 80,000.

"Every effort is being made and will be made to see that the necessary equipment is provided for these forces and to promote the larger scheme for a Jewish army.

"At the same time, the Emergency Committee wishes to emphasize that action can be effective only if it is coordinated and directed by a single responsible body in possession of all the facts and recognized as representing the unified will of the Jewish people. Independent agitation, including the calling of mass meetings unauthorized by any representative Zionist body, such as is now being fostered by the pseudo-Revisionist group, Friends of a Jewish Palestine, which is neither in any sense representative nor conversant with all aspects of the situation, is useless and may be damaging to the development of any responsible effort."

GENERAL COUNCIL SETS UP COMMITTEE TO COORDINATE DEFENSE ACTIVITIES

NEW YORK, June 24. (JTA)-- Creation of a special committee to coordinate the defense activities of its constituent agencies was announced today by the General Jewish Council through its newly-appointed secretary, Isaiah Minkoff. This committee will be charged with bringing about a closer integration of the defense activities of the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith and Jewish Labor Committee, the member agencies.

The first meeting of the committee was held last Tuesday to outline the general program to be followed. In addition to its above stated purpose, the committee will cooperate with pro-democratic agencies devoted to maintenance of the American way of life, it was stated.