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IMPORTANCE OF PALESTINE IN EXPECTED NEAR EAST BATTLE DISCUSSED IN WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20. (JTA)-- The importance of Palestine in the defense of the Suez Canal was emphasized in political circles here today in connection with the expected Nazi drive toward the Suez from Libya and a possible German thrust into Turkey.

The ebb and flow of war in the Libyan desert, according to information reaching here, indicates that if the Germans can achieve superiority in air and mechanized land units for an appreciable period of time, they may be able to seriously threaten the British naval base at Alexandria and the Suez Canal. In that case, it is emphasized here, the role of Palestine will become even more important than hitherto since the Allied forces would be thrown back on Palestine which guards the Suez Canal. Information received in Washington leads many here to believe that it is not impossible that the Germans may attempt a sea and air attack against Egypt in conjunction with renewed pressure from Libya.

Anticipating that the decisive battle which will change the map of the world and alter the boundaries of nations will be fought in the Near East, some quarters in Washington advance the opinion that the United Nations must under all circumstances secure the full-hearted support of the local population there. The Jews in Palestine must be permitted to arm and the Arabs must be won over to the British side, they urge.

Reports reaching Washington state that Nazi propaganda among the Arabs in Palestine and Syria is increasing daily, reaching the remotest Arab settlements. This propaganda is being conducted not only through broadcasts in Arabic from Axis radio stations but also through whispering campaigns conducted by pro-Axis Arabs in public places and through the spreading of leaflets by Axis agents working apparently under smuggled instructions from the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem who is now in Hitler's employ.

(The New York Times today in a cable from its correspondent in Syria reports that serious German offensives are awaited in the Near East, the armed forces of the United Nations are poorly equipped and they hope for more aircraft, tanks and munitions from England and the United States.)

NAZIS TRANSPORT QUALIFIED JEWISH WORKERS FROM OCCUPIED UKRAINE INTO GERMAN INTERIOR

ZURICH, Feb. 20. (JTA)-- Nazi authorities in the occupied Ukraine are now registering Jewish artisans and qualified workers with a view of transporting them to factories in the German interior, as a result of the acute shortage of labor there, it was reported here today.

The report states that the first group of 200 Jewish workers from Poltava and Kremenchug has already been sent to Vienna and assigned to factories there. They will not be permitted to maintain any contact even with local Jews.

JEWISH WORKERS ARRESTED IN LODZ FOR STRIKING AGAINST INSUFFICIENT BREAD RATIONS

LONDON, Feb. 20. (JTA)-- Sixty-five Jewish weavers were arrested by the Nazi administration in Lodz and sent to a concentration camp as punishment for their participation in a strike against insufficient bread rations, Polish Government circles reported here today.

Reports reaching the Polish Government here from occupied Poland state that there are now 150,000 Jews crowded into the Lodz ghetto. "The Jewish ghetto in Lodz, in addition to being the largest in the world, next to the ghetto in Warsaw, is also the worst as far as the food situation is concerned," one report informs. Another report says that while the death rate among Jews in the Lodz ghetto shows the same increase as in other ghettos in Poland, the birth rate there is the lowest in the country. In the course of three months there were only eight children born in the Lodz ghetto, the report reveals.

Jews Forbidden to Wear Sidecurls; 102,000 Jews in Warsaw at Forced Labor

In the Cracow district, according to one report, an order was issued by the Nazis forbidding Jews to wear sidecurls. Jews violating this order are to be punished by heavy fines and imprisonment. The Jewish Community of Bochnia, near Cracow, was compelled by the local Nazi authorities to publish this order at its own expense.

There were 102,000 Jews working at forced labor in Warsaw at the end of 1941, the information from occupied Poland reveals. They included Jewish men and women aged from 16 to 60. In addition some 15,000 Jewish boys under sixteen years of age were employed at forced labor in Warsaw. There are about 1,800 non-Jewish residents in the Warsaw ghetto including 1,540 Catholics. For the latter there is one Catholic church which the Nazis allow to be opened on Sundays for one hour only.

The lack of medical supplies in the Jewish ghettos in Poland is causing a sharp increase in deaths which could under normal circumstances be prevented, one of the reports received here emphasizes. The report informs that during the last three months of 1941 about 450 patients died in the Jewish hospital in Warsaw chiefly because of lack of medicines. The same hospital housed 2,757 Jewish patients at the end of 1941. The mortality was even greater in the children's hospital where of the 741 patients confined during the last quarter of 1941 about 24 percent are reported to have died.

EXTENSION OF FOOD RATIONING IN PALESTINE DISCUSSED WITH HIGH COMMISSIONER

JERUSALEM, Feb. 20. (JTA)-- Extension and intensification of the food rationing system to all Palestine communities was discussed today at a conference between Sir Harold MacMichael, the High Commissioner for Palestine and representatives of the three Palestine communities - the Jews, the Arabs and the British. The Jewish population was represented at the hearings by Dr. Judah Magnes, the Arabs by Amin Bey and Abdul Hedi and the British by the Anglican Bishop of Palestine. It is expected that the Palestine government will shortly place all basic commodities under a rationing system and will fix prices of most of them.

NUMBER OF JEWS AMONG U.S. SAILORS AND MARINES HELD BY JAPANESE

NEW YORK, Feb. 20. (JTA)-- A number of Jewish officers and enlisted men from several Eastern states are included in the list of 2,209 sailors, marines and civilians whom the Navy revealed yesterday are in the hands of the Japanese. Among those captured at Guam when that island was overwhelmed by the Japanese invaders was Lieutenant Mack Leonard Gottlieb, a physician from New York City, whose father, Leon Gottlieb, is a member of the editorial staff of the Jewish Daily Forward.

GERMANS CONDEMN AGED POLISH RABBI TO DEATH AS LEADER OF ANTI-NAZI SABOTEURS

LONDON, Feb. 20. (JTA)-- Chaim Moise Arbez, 72-year-old Rabbi of Bychawek in Eastern Poland, has been condemned to death by a German military court on the charge that he was leading a band of anti-Nazi saboteurs, it was learned today by Polish circles here.

The venerable rabbi, according to the reports received by the Polish sources, was found guilty of organizing resistance to the German authorities and of possessing fire arms in violation of a Nazi regulation that all arms be surrendered. Gestapo agents testifying at the trial stated that "Rabbi Arbez was the leader of a group of Jewish and Polish workers who went about the countryside burning haystacks and killing cattle requisitioned by the Germans."

The Rabbi was captured last Saturday in a forest where the Nazis said he was hiding with ten Jews and six Poles. Two of these were also taken, but most of the group escaped. At the court proceedings the Nazi prosecution officials produced a long list of acts of sabotage which they ascribed to the Rabbi and his followers. Called upon to testify, the aged leader would neither admit nor deny the Nazi allegations. All efforts to make him speak were unavailing. Among the Rabbi's companions who succeeded in eluding capture was his son-in-law, who is also an orthodox Jew.

YUGOSLAV JEWS MOVED TO NEW CAMP TO THWART THEIR BEING FREED BY GUERRILLAS

ANKARA, Feb. 20. (JTA)-- Fearing further raids by Serbian guerrilla units attempting to liberate Jewish prisoners confined in special Jewish concentration camps, the Nazi authorities in Yugoslavia have ordered the transfer of 12,000 Yugoslavian Jews from various camps to barracks near Parachin, according to reports reaching here today.

The barracks are surrounded with electrified barbed wire in order to prevent the escape of any of the Jewish internees. Cases of Serbian guerrilla fighters attacking concentration camps and liberating the Jews confined there have been reported here during the last few weeks as part of the anti-Nazi activity of the partisan units. The liberated Jews are joining the partisans among whom are many Jewish officers and doctors.

PALESTINE GOVERNMENT AGREES TO ADMIT HUNGARIAN, RUMANIAN YOUTHS UNDER 16

TEL AVIV, Feb. 20. (JTA)-- The Palestine government has agreed to admit Rumanian and Hungarian Jewish children under sixteen years of age, despite the fact that their native countries are at war with Britain, it was announced today by Elihu Dobkin, head of the immigration department of the Jewish Agency, addressing a meeting of the Merkez Aliyah, Histadruth immigration aid group here.

A resolution stating that the present immigration schedule was too small to adequately meet the needs of the country and the war effort, was adopted by the Merkez Aliyah. The group also asked the Palestine Government to admit the 769 Rumanian Jewish refugees stranded on board the S.S. Strume in a Turkish port.

The first meeting of the Arbitration Commission, set up under the new labor law that went into effect on January 1, also was held here today. It is attempting to settle the dispute between the Palestine Potash Co. and the transport cooperative.

URUGUAY MODIFIES BAN ON FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOLLOWING JEWISH REPRESENTATIONS

MONTEVIDEO, Feb. 20. (JTA)-- Acting on a plea by local Jewish leaders, the Government of Uruguay has decided to reverse a recent decree and will permit the use of the Jewish language in the radio and the press as well as the languages of nations at war with the Axis powers, it was announced here today.

In making this announcement, a Government spokesman informed the correspondent of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that representations on the part of the Jewish Community in Uruguay were chiefly responsible for the Government's decision to modify the original decree which prohibited foreign-language broadcasts and the publication of foreign-language newspapers. "It would have been unjust to silence the democratic elements in our country in our attempt to stop anti-democratic propaganda," the Government spokesman said. The original ban, which was aimed chiefly at pro-Axis agitation, remains in force for the German, Italian and Japanese languages.

300 JEWISH REFUGEES FROM EUROPE REACH NEW YORK; 400 LANDED IN HAVANA

NEW YORK, Feb. 20. (JTA)-- A group of 300 Jewish refugees from Europe landed today in New York after a three-week voyage from Lisbon through North Africa and the British West Indies.

The steamer which brought the group sailed from Lisbon on January 24, but stopped at the island of Jamaica where she disembarked 150 Polish Jews and at Havana where she landed 400 refugees of other nationalities. The refugees were helped to escape from Europe by the Joint Distribution Committee. It is estimated that another thousand holders of visas to oversea lands will be enabled through the JDC to leave Europe within the next few weeks.

POSITION OF JEWS IN POST-WAR EUROPE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED NOW, PROF. NIEBUHR URGES

NEW YORK, Feb. 20. (JTA)-- The position of the Jews in post-war Europe is "by no means the least of the many problems of post-war reconstruction" with which we must deal now, declares Reinhold Niebuhr, professor at the Union Theological Seminary, in the current issue of The Nation. Stating that the problem of what is to become of the Jews is important because "the very quality of our civilization is involved in the solution," Prof. Niebuhr, in the first of a series of two articles, outlines a program for the solution of the Jewish problem.

Those Jews who wish to become assimilated in the nations in which they live and who wish to preserve their Jewishness as a religion and a culture rather than as a nationality must be allowed to do so, Prof. Niebuhr states. But that in itself will not solve the Jewish question, he maintains, since the Jews are a "nationality" and they must be accorded the right to a "collective survival." Recognition of this right would lead, Prof. Niebuhr writes, to "a more generous acceptance of the Zionist program as correct in principle, however much it may have to be qualified in practice."

M. JUSTMAN, PROMINENT JEWISH JOURNALIST, DIES IN PALESTINE

TEL AVIV, FEB. 20. (JTA)-- Moshe-Bunim Justman, prominent Jewish journalist and one of the editors of the Warsaw Jewish daily "Hajnt," who was known to tens of thousands of Jews in Poland under his pen-name Yeushohn, died here today from a heart attack. He was 54 years old. He left Poland after the outbreak of the war in 1939 shortly before the Nazi occupation.

BECAUSE OF WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY THE NEXT BULLETIN WILL APPEAR ON TUESDAY