

VOL. IX. NO. 201

Monday, August 31, 1942

TWENTY JEWISH HOSTAGES SHOT BY NAZIS IN WARSAW GHETTO IN REPRISAL FOR HUNGER RIOTS

JERUSALEM, Aug. 30. (JTA)-- Twenty leading Jews in the Warsaw ghetto were executed recently by the Nazis in reprisal for hunger riots during which crowds of starving Jews demonstrated in the ghetto streets, according to reliable information received here today.

The information was received by Theodore Meisels, whose 60-year-old father, Dr. Jacob Meisels, was among the victims executed. A descendant of a famous rabbinical family, Dr. Meisels embraced the Christian religion after he was graduated from the medical college of Vienna University. During World War I he attained the rank of General as organizer of the medical services of the Austrian army. Mobilized by the Nazis at the beginning of the present war as a doctor without military rank, and sent to the Polish front, Dr. Meisels informed his superior officers that he preferred to return to Judaism and to share the fate of all other Jews, whereupon he was discharged and sent to the Warsaw ghetto.

Dr. Meisels had been asked several times by influential Italian friends to leave the ghetto and come to Italy. He refused, however, to leave the ghetto, where he continued to practice helping Jewish institutions in combatting infectious diseases arising from starvation and giving medical aid to the needy Jewish population.

3,000 GHETTO JEWS ORDERED TO CLEAR DEBRIS FROM BOMBED WARSAW BUILDINGS

ZURICH, Aug. 30. (JTA)-- More than 3,000 Jews have been ordered from the Warsaw ghetto to clear the debris resulting from the destruction of dozens of buildings during the recent bombing of Warsaw by Russian planes, it was announced today over the Nazi radio in Cracow.

The Nazi broadcast also announced the execution in Prague of Alexander Bessmertny, brother-in-law of the late Dr. Leon Brauns, president of the World ORT who died in unoccupied France. Bessmertny, a Russian-born Jew who had been living in Prague since 1934, working for the liberal press there until the Nazi occupation of the Czech capital, was charged with "high treason," the Nazi announcer said.

In reporting the details of the bombing of Warsaw from the air, the Cracow radio estimated that about eighty persons were killed. No bombs fell within the ghetto confines.

JEWS IN TRANSNISTRIA ORDERED TO GIVE FASCIST SALUTE; PROMINENT JEW ARRESTED

ZURICH, Aug. 30. (JTA)-- Bernard Fuchs, foremost Jewish industrialist in Rumania, has been arrested and deported together with his family to a concentration camp in Transnistria by order of Marshal Antonescu, the Bucharest radio reported today.

The broadcast also revealed that the Jews in Transnistria have been ordered to give the Fascist salute, by raising their right hand, whenever they greet each other. The order forcing the Jews to adopt the salute of the enemy was issued by Prof. Alexianu, governor of Transnistria.

VICHY DENATURALIZES MORE JEWS; SWISS CATHOLIC ORGAN SCORES FRENCH ANTI-JEWISH PERSECUTION

BERNE, Aug. 30. (JTA)-- An additional 170 persons, mostly Jews, have been deprived of their French citizenship under a decree published in the Vichy Journal Officiel, the Paris radio announced today. Most of those affected by the order are naturalized French citizens and are now liable to deportation to their countries of origin, the Nazi broadcaster pointed out.

The official organ of the Catholic Church in Switzerland, "Schweizerische Kirchen Zeitung," today bitterly assailed the persecution of Jews in France. Reviewing the arrests and deportations that have taken place during the last few weeks, the Catholic paper states that these persecutions continue despite protests by Cardinals, archbishops and other Catholic leaders. Those clergymen are now discussing the subject from their pulpits on Sunday, since the radio and press have been ordered to ignore their protests, the paper adds.

Meanwhile, local and federal Swiss police officials met in Lausanne yesterday to discuss the problems resulting from the large influx into Switzerland of refugees from Nazi-held countries. In an official statement issued at the conclusion of the conference, Dr. Edward von Steiger, chief of the Department of Justice and Police, said that "anyone who has taken refuge with us will not be thrown back over the frontier except in cases where individually aggravating circumstances warrant. But there is an urgent necessity to find a mean between political necessity and humanitarian considerations. We must also consider the duties and interests of the State."

JEWISH REGION IN USSR CONTRIBUTES MILLIONS TO DEFENSE FUND AND WAR LOAN

MOSCOW, Aug. 30. (JTA)-- The Jewish autonomous region of Biro-Bidjan has underwritten twenty million roubles of the Soviet State Loan of 1942 and contributed 7,000,000 roubles in cash to the Soviet Defense Fund, obligating itself to contribute an additional 11,000,000 roubles to the same fund, it was announced here today.

In addition to giving financial aid to the Soviet war effort, the Jews in Biro-Bidjan are engaged in preparing combat reserves for the Red Army and in large-scale agricultural work. The harvest this year in Biro-Bidjan is expected to be the richest in the history of the Jewish region, the announcement said.

While training fighters for the defense of Russia, the administration of the Jewish region is also training new cadres in all fields of Jewish culture. Sixty-eight pupils have just graduated from the music-and-ballet school maintained in Biro-Bidjan by government funds. Among the graduates are the eight-year old pianist Sonia Grossman, the nine-year old pianist Basia Lifshits and other prodigies.

JEWISH WOMEN FIGHTING WITH SERBIAN GUERRILLAS, NAZI RADIO ASSERTS

BERNE, Aug. 30. (JTA)-- Jewish women are fighting in the ranks of the Yugoslav guerrillas who continue to harass the Axis occupation forces in Serbia, it was alleged today in a Nazi broadcast from Belgrade.

A number of Jewish women wearing soldiers' uniforms are among prisoners captured by the German occupation forces, the Belgrade broadcaster stated. He also claimed that many Jews who specialized in raiding concentration camps where Jewish prisoners were held have also been seized.

NAZIS LEFT NO JEW IN OCCUPIED BYELORUSSIA; MINSK, VITEBSK REPORTED "JUDENREIN"

MOSCOW, Aug. 30. (JTA)-- A report that the cities of Minsk and Vitebsk in Nazi-held Byelorussia, which had large Jewish populations, are now "completely judenrein" and that not a single Jew is left in all Byelorussia was brought here today by two Russian guerrillas who have been operating in the rear of the Nazi armies there.

"We have been in many cities and villages in Byelorussia, including Minsk and Vitebsk, but no where did we see any Jews," one of the partisans reaching here today told the correspondent of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "I believe that there are none left in the whole of occupied Byelorussia," he added.

The Nazis have announced that anybody who reports a hidden Jew will be rewarded "for distinguished service in action," the two guerrilla fighters reported, declaring that they read the announcement with their own eyes. From their hiding place on a neighboring hill, the two partisans also witnessed the massacre by the Nazis of 984 Jews in a valley near the town of Delshitz, in Byelorussia. "The adults, men as well as women, were killed by machine guns, while the children were simply thrown into a huge grave and buried alive," one of the eye-witnesses stated.

A Soviet liaison officer who returned today to Moscow from a region in Nazi-occupied central Russia where guerrilla units are still operating under orders delivered to them by Russian paratroopers, reported that hundreds of Jews are fighting in the ranks of the guerrillas, in the rear of the Nazi armies. "I, myself, am a Jew," he said, "and I was pleasantly surprised to see the large number of Jews in the guerrilla units." He related a number of cases disclosing how Jewish men and women guerrilla commanders succeeded in securing explosives and in blowing up German military trains, motor cars, bridges and warehouses.

JEWISH FUGITIVES IN SLOVAKIA SEIZED IN MOUNTAIN RETREAT, DEPORTED TO POLAND

ZURICH, Aug. 30. (JTA)-- The tragic story of how 200 Slovak Jews who had been hiding in caves in the Tatra Mountains near Lomnica in a desperate effort to escape deportation to Polish ghettos, were seized by the Slovak police authorities and shipped to Poland, is reported here today.

The Jews, who formerly lived in the townships of Poprac, Keszmark and adjoining villages, fled to two large caves some months ago bringing with them whatever furniture they could carry as well as twelve holy scrolls, the report disclosed. In their mountain retreat the Jews established primitive synagogues where many of them spent their days praying and studying the Talmud.

Friendly peasants in the neighborhood supplied the cave-dwellers with food and shielded them from the police bands that scour the mountains hunting fugitive Jews. Eventually, however, a raiding party discovered the Jews' hiding place and the peasants who had aided the fugitives were arrested, according to the report, for their failure to inform the police of the hidden community. The Jews were immediately loaded into freight cars bound for Poland.

Another report reaching here today from Bratislava discloses that a registration of the few thousand Jews still remaining in Slovakia has been ordered. It was indicated that the new registration was a prelude to further anti-Jewish legislation.

JEWISH GUNNER AMONG SOVIET HEROES DECORATED FOR SAVING RUSSIAN FREIGHTER BOMBED BY NAZIS

NEW YORK, Aug. 30. (JTA)-- A young Soviet Jewish gunner who manned his anti-aircraft gun while Nazi dive bombers attacked his vessel and other crew members were fighting a fire in the ship's hold which threatened to reach the stores of ammunition being carried to Russia was lauded yesterday by the captain of the Russian freighter in an interview at the Hotel Commodore.

Capt. Ivan Afanasiev, his first mate Constantin Petrovsky and first class seaman Boris Akazenok related how their vessel, part of a convoy bound for Russia with American armaments, was struck by a 1,000-pound bomb which started a fire in the hold where the munitions were stored. While the members of the crew who had escaped injury when the bomb fell, together with three stewardesses, fought the fire, Sioma Shtengart, 22, stayed at his gun on the upper deck continuing to pour ack-ack fire into the Nazi raiders. Eventually the blaze was brought under control and the ship rejoined the convoy. The Jewish gunner as well as Capt. Afanasiev, First Mate Petrovsky and seaman Akazenok received the Order of Lenin for their heroism. Shtengart, Capt. Afanasiev disclosed, is now at the front in Russia continuing to fight off Nazi bombers.

JEWISH COORDINATING COMMITTEE APPROVES OF ROOSEVELT'S COMMITTEE ON JOB DISCRIMINATION

NEW YORK, Aug. 30. (JTA)-- Approval of the work of the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice and expression of the hope that the Committee will do an even more effective job in its association with the War Manpower Commission were conveyed in a telegram yesterday to President Roosevelt from Claude A. Benjamin, chairman of the Coordinating Committee of Jewish Organizations Dealing with Employment Discrimination in War Industries. Representing 44 national and local Jewish organizations, the Coordinating Committee was created to further the purposes of Executive Order 8802 which prohibits discrimination in war industries and establishes the Fair Employment Practice Committee.

In his telegram, Mr. Benjamin informed the President that the Coordinating Committee "looks upon Executive Order 8802 as a wise and statesmanlike contribution toward the realization in practice of a fundamental principle of American democracy and toward the fullest possible utilization of manpower in producing for Victory." After stating that the Coordinating Committee has "been impressed with the forthright and fair manner in which the President's Committee has exercised its mandate," the telegram concluded with the hope that "the association of the Fair Employment Practice Committee with the War Manpower Commission will strengthen the Committee's authority and will increase its facilities for carrying out its work."

Among the organizations participating in the Coordinating Committee are the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Jewish Labor Committee, National Council of Jewish Women, and local organizations throughout the country concerned with employment problems of Jews.

ATTORNEY GENERAL BIDDLE RECEIVES REPORT ON ANTI-SEMITIC PROPAGANDISTS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30. (JTA)-- Three anti-Semitic propagandists are still at large of the 28 persons indicted here a month ago for sedition, according to a report received today by Attorney General Francis Biddle. They are H. Victor Broenstrup, William R. Lyman Jr., and Edward James Smythe.

Broenstrup was a lawyer for William Dudley Pelley, who was recently sentenced to 15 years in federal prison on another sedition charge at Indianapolis, and who has pleaded not guilty to this one. Lyman headed the National Workers League in Detroit and once declared himself in favor of hanging all the Jews in the United States. Smythe was the leader of the Protestant War Veterans, an anti-Catholic as well as an anti-Semitic organization.