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BERMUDA CONFERENCE CONSIDERS PLAN TO ESTABLISH REFUGEE "CLEARING HOUSE"

HAMILTON, Bermuda, April 23. (JTA)-- A plan to establish a refugee "clearing house" somewhere outside of Europe, to which refugees from Nazi persecution may be transported from neutral countries on the Continent now harboring them and from which they may be gradually transplanted to permanent havens, is under consideration by the Anglo-American conference here, it was learned today.

Authors of the plan, which so far has been sketched only in the broadest outlines, are Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, who are believed to have formulated it during the British statesman's recent visit to Washington. The Eden-Welles proposal, which is in the nature of an "immediate help" measure, would enable the neutral countries now sheltering refugees to admit more of them as the first exiles were shipped to the "clearing house," thus assuring a constant flow of Nazi victims from Europe.

Among the possible sites of the "clearing house" are the Cyrenaican peninsula in eastern Libya, the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean east of Madagascar, Madagascar itself, the British colony of Kenya in East Africa, and Jamaica in the Caribbean. In deciding on the location of the temporary haven, it is believed the conferees will keep in mind considerations which demand that any clearing house be at the shortest possible distance from the "vacuums." North Africa, a "clearing house" site originally suggested, will probably be excluded by the American delegation out of military considerations.

On the subject of transportation, one of the most important considerations, American and British spokesmen are emphatically agreed that there are no possibilities at present for diverting any Allied shipping for use in transporting refugees. The conferees, however, are exploring the possibilities of enlisting the shipping of neutrals. (Diplomatic circles in Washington have pointed out that neutral Sweden has 150,000 tons of shipping available for the rescue of refugees or their relief inside Europe. Ships may also be obtained from Portugal, Spain and Turkey.)

Proposals of Jewish Organizations Discussed; British Suggest New Body

It was understood, meanwhile, that proposals by a joint committee representing Jewish organizations in the United States, suggesting that Germany be asked through neutral powers to release Jews or to exchange them for German nationals held by the Allies, were not considered within the scope of the present conference on the grounds that military considerations were involved. The proposals, however, are being discussed.

As the conference drew to the end of its first week, there appeared to be only one major disagreement between the three-man American and British delegations. This is a difference on the question of to whom their respective governments will entrust the administration of any rescue plan which might be adopted by the conferees. A British spokesman has indicated that the British delegation favors creati

of a new body to replace the Intergovernmental Refugee Committee, formed at Evian, France, in 1938 and originally consisting of 32 governments.

The British think the committee ought to be scrapped because of its ineffectiveness, the limitations of its mandate, its loss of prestige and the fact that France is no longer a member. The American delegation, on the other hand, while conceding the inadequacy of the committee and its defects, and agreeing to the necessity of changes, thinks the committee should be continued with a broadened mandate that would revitalize it.

Bermuda Parley Rejects Three Major Jewish Demands

HAMILTON, Bermuda, April 23.(JTA)-- The suggestion that Jews in Nazi-held territories be exchanged for German war prisoners has been definitely rejected by the participants at the Bermuda Conference, it was indicated here today.

The delegates also rejected the suggestion advanced in petitions of Jewish organizations that they recommend the sending of food and medicaments to the ghettos in Nazi-occupied countries on the same basis as this is being done for the starving population in Axis-held Greece.

It became certain today that the conference will not discuss the possibilities of negotiating with Germany for an orderly evacuation of Jews from Nazi-held countries. Delegates to the parley refused to make any comment on the reported decisions.

Congressman Celler Criticizes Bermuda Conference; Wants Action

WASHINGTON, April 23.(JTA)-- Sharp criticism of the Bermuda Conference was voiced here today in a statement issued by Congressman Emanuel Celler of New York, in which he charged the Anglo-American parley on refugees with assuming "the usual pattern of diplomatic lack of candor and a plentitude of verbiage."

"Agencies long familiar with the distress of the persecuted abroad like the Quakers and the Joint Distribution Committee are barred," he said, criticizing the fact that the conference is being held in Bermuda, which is inaccessible except by air. "Their valuable practical suggestions will be unavailed of. All deliberations and conclusions will be according to plan and schedule of the State Department and the British Foreign Office. The delegates will be moved across the chess board by the diplomats."

Emphasizing that "time is of the essence" and that thousands of Jews are being killed by the Nazis daily, Congressman Celler deplored the fact that the Bermuda Conference is of an exploratory nature only. "Much water," he said, "will go over the dam before a final report of findings is made. This report will only bind Britain and the United States. Then neutral countries will be contacted, singly or at another conference. More precious time gone and more complications, more diplomatic tight-rope walking."

The New York Congressman urged the Bermuda Conference "to examine the MacDonnell White Paper" in seeking areas for asylum. "The fact that the question of food for Nazi victims will not be considered at the Conference is a tragedy in itself," he declared. He expressed the opinion that the needs of one oppressed group differ from another or a third and the urgencies of rescue differ in degree if not in kind. "The delegates," he said, "have already expressed themselves as dedicated to saving only those refugees now in neutral countries. These victims are already saved. We are not so much interested in them; we are interested in getting more hapless out of Hitler's clutches. There need not be any conference to save those already saved."

ALGIERS COUNCIL-GENERAL EMBARRASSED BY GEN. GIRAUD'S ABOGATION OF CREMIEUX DECREE

WASHINGTON, April 23.(JTA)-- An embarrassing situation resulting from Gen. Giraud's abrogation of the Cremieux Decree developed last Monday in the Council-General of Algiers, which was holding its first session since the landing of the Allied troops, it was reported by the Fighting French delegation here today.

When the roll was called, one of the deputies identified only as the elected representative of Belaiche, arose and declared that he was present only because the Council-General had been formally convoked and he was a duly elected member of the body. "But," he added, "I realize that, in view of the abrogation of the Cremieux Decree, I shall no longer be qualified to exercise my functions, because I am a Jew."

The President of the Council, embarrassed by the statement of the Jewish deputy, informed the elected representative of Belaiche that his statement would be "noted" and that the situation would be "studied."

SWEDISH POLICE RAID NAZI OFFICE; DISCOVER LIST OF 1,648 MARKED JEWS

STOCKHOLM, April 23.(JTA)-- The Swedish police, when raiding the headquarters of a pro-Nazi organization here, discovered a list containing the names of 1,648 prominent Swedish Jews marked by the Nazis as "dangerous anti-Nazi elements," it is revealed today. Chief Rabbi Ehrenpreis and a number of well-known Jewish refugees from Germany are included in the list.

Conducting further inquiries, the police authorities established that a copy of the list had been sent to Berlin some time ago by the leaders of the Nazi organization. The Swedish press was ordered by the authorities not to mention discovery of this list, but the news spread quickly throughout Stockholm creating a painful impression in Swedish democratic circles.

FINLAND GRANTING CITIZENSHIP TO MOST JEWISH REFUGEES, INTERIOR MINISTER SAYS

STOCKHOLM, April 23.(JTA)-- Eight out of every twelve refugee Jews in Finland who have applied for Finnish citizenship have been naturalized, it was stated by Minister of the Interior Ehrnrooth, speaking in Parliament during a discussion of the position of the Jews in the country.

Ehrnrooth added that the attitude of the Finnish Government is that the principles of international law ought to apply to Jews as well as to other refugees, but since Finland is at war, there are some "hostile elements" among the refugees who, the government feels, must be kept under control. The authorities, however, do not think that these suspected Jewish refugees "should be treated more severely than the security of the country and other relevant circumstances require," Ehrnrooth said.

PROF. JACQUES MARITAIN DENOUNCES GIRAUD'S ABOGATION OF CREMIEUX LAW

NEW YORK, April 23.(JTA)-- The Ecole Libre des Hautes Etudes, a French institution of higher learning in the United States, issued a statement today criticizing as "unjust," "profoundly regrettable" and "contrary to all the traditions of French law" the deprivation of citizenship of 100,000 French Jews in Algeria. Professor Jacques Maritain, noted French author and philosopher, formerly of the Catholic Institute of Paris, signed the statement as president of the Ecole Libre.

Without naming General Henri Giraud, and pointing out that the Ecole Libre "remains outside of political vicissitudes," the declaration analyzed Giraud's

abrogation last month of the Cremieux decree of 1870 by virtue of which the Jewish population in Algeria has held citizenship. It pointed out that the Jews affected by Giraud's action "are French because they are the sons of Frenchmen." Giraud is high commissioner of French North Africa, under Anglo-American military jurisdiction.

The text of the statement of the Ecole Libre des Hautes Etudes follows:

"The Ecole Libre des Hautes Etudes is an institution of higher learning and of disinterested research which, by its very aims, remains outside of political vicissitudes. Yet, precisely because it endeavors to perpetuate the traditions of French culture, of the French spirit, and particularly of French law, the Ecole Libre has felt it its duty to give an impartial and objective opinion on a question which is currently dividing public opinion; that of the abrogation of the Cremieux law in Algeria. The Ecole Libre believes that the following statements are of a nature to enlighten the public mind.

"I. It is a profoundly regrettable contradiction that a law of the French Republic should have been 'abrogated' at the very same moment when Algeria solemnly proclaimed its return to the laws of the Republic.

"II. This abrogation is unjust in itself and is contrary to all the traditions of French law, because:

"a.) It penalizes retroactively persons who are in no wise guilty of any offense, and thus infringes upon the principle of non-retroaction of laws which in all civilized countries is the very safeguard of acquired rights.

"b.) It deprives of their citizenship men who are French by birth. For the Cremieux decree was applied at a specific moment; in 1870-71. At that moment all native-born Jews who, within a short space of time, fulfilled the necessary formalities, became French citizens by virtue of the Cremieux decree, thus abandoning their rights under their personal status and submitting to French civil law. Since then, their children have been French, not through application of this law, but because they were born of French parents. The one hundred thousand men who were deprived by Vichy and who are now again deprived of French citizenship did not themselves benefit by the Cremieux decree; it is their fathers and grandfathers who so benefitted. They themselves are French because they are sons of Frenchmen.

"c.) In modern legislative practice, the withdrawal of citizenship rights is a very serious penalty meted out to nationals who have committed the crime of espionage or treason. As a result of the abrogation of the Cremieux law, a whole category of citizens find themselves thus penalized for the sole reason of being Jewish - a sanction which is without precedent except under racist law.

"III. The normal way to remedy the unequal treatment of which Algerian Arabs may be complaining, is progressively to lead to French citizenship those of them who will have proved their sincere desire to become a part of the French community. In the face of the dangerous excitations of German propaganda, it is not by depriving the Jews of their rights that the Moslem population should be protected against this propaganda, but by giving to the Arabs of Algeria the assurance that the day the French people is able to express its will, their legitimate claims will be firmly defended, provided they will have loyally cooperated towards victory over the enemy.

"IV. The exceptional circumstances created by the state of war and by the troubled situation in North Africa forbid the turning of any protest, even legitimate, into an occasion for agitation in Algeria. If the Jews of Algeria, therefore, abstain from such agitation, this does not mean that they recognize the invalidation

of their rights. As for the Frenchmen who are the guests of the free nations, it behooves them to assert the principles of justice involved in a question which concerns part of the national territory, all the while endeavoring to promote the union of all in the struggle against the enemy and evincing every confidence in the United Nations.

"V. It should also be stated that if patriotic duty and concern about victory sometimes demand the temporary acceptance of factual situations in which certain rights are sacrificed, nevertheless, the abrogation of a law of the Republic without the consent of the French people is and remains by nature an act without juridical value. We believe that the French administration in Algeria would fulfill a duty and honor itself by revoking as soon as possible this unjust measure. Moreover, as soon as France has recovered her freedom, the provisional government of France will have the moral obligation to declare null and void the abrogation of the Cremieux law - assuming that this will not have been done in the meantime. And when the sovereignty of the French people is again able to assert itself, we have no doubt that the Jews of Algeria will have their rights corroborated, at the same time as a fair and equitable status will have to be found for the Moslem population.

"VI. Finally, if those who today declare themselves in favor of a measure contrary to law, in the name of expediency, give as their reason the unequal treatment of the Arabs - an argument whose validity we deny, because unequal treatment is not remedied by an even greater injustice - still we feel that such an argument deserves to be discussed and refuted.

"But if an attempt were made to justify the abrogation of the Cremieux law merely as a measure of appeasing the anti-Semitic feelings developed by German propaganda and by the servility of the Vichy regime towards Nazi Germany, such an argument would deserve only to be branded as unworthy of the cause for which the free peoples are fighting. A precedent of this kind would involve the greatest dangers for the future reconstruction of Europe and cannot be accepted by the human conscience. Anti-Semitism is the vehicle of all Nazi poisons, and in no event must any concessions be made to it."

ORT WILL SPEND 250,000 SWISS FRANCS ON TRAINING JEWISH REFUGEES IN SWITZERLAND

GENEVA, April 23.(JTA)-- The sum of 250,000 Swiss francs will be spent by the ORT in Switzerland during 1943 on various projects to aid Jewish refugees, it was announced here today by A. Syngalowski, a member of the executive committee of the World Ort Union.

Mr. Syngalowski reported that the ORT now maintains a number of workshops in Switzerland where clothing and shoes are repaired for 2,500 Jewish refugees. Ninety Jewish refugee boys have been apprenticed to Swiss masters who are paid by the Ort. Six new workshops are being opened by the Ort in camps where the Jewish refugees are held, and two workshops exist in the homes for refugee children. In addition, the Ort is training a number of Jewish refugee children for agricultural work and is supplying material aid to former instructors and students of Ort establishments in Nazi-held countries who are now in Switzerland as refugees.

ANTI-SEMITIC REFERENCES REMOVED FROM ARMY BIBLE

WASHINGTON, April 23.(JTA)-- William R. Arnold, chief of chaplains of the U.S. Army, disclosed today that an allegedly anti-Semitic footnote appearing in a Revised New Testament distributed to Catholic personnel in the armed forces will be eliminated from future editions.