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NAZIS DROWNED THOUSANDS OF JEWS IN OIL WELLS IN RUSSIA; OTHERS KILLED IN MINES

KUIBYSHEV, July 20.(JTA)-- Thousands of Jews were drowned in the oil wells around the city of Maikop in the Caucasus before the Nazis were forced to retreat from the area this past winter, it is disclosed in a report of the official government Commission to Investigate Nazi Atrocities, released here.

The report, which is based on various eye-witness accounts of civilians who either succeeded in fleeing from Nazi-occupied territory or who managed to survive until the Red Army recaptured the towns in which they were living, quotes Miriam Wardamacka, a Jewish teacher from Riga, who had been evacuated to the Caucasus from Latvia.

Miss Waramacka states that thousands of Jewish refugees from western Galicia and western White Russia, who had been sent to the Caucasus, were executed by the German troops in Maikop. Among the Jews found in the oil wells by the Russian forces, she said, were the noted professor of Riga University, Dr. Menachem Rubin, and Isaac Gurian, a member of the staff of the Riga daily "Savodnia."

In the town of Shachty, which is a few miles north-east of Rostov, the advancing Red Army found the corpses of 30,000 Jews who had been drowned in flooded coal mines by the fleeing Nazis, the commission's report states. A signed statement received by the commission reveals the fate of a typical Jewish family in the town - that of Boris Margolin, who had been employed as an engineer in one of the mines.

Margolin remained in the town after its occupation hiding among the workers, according to the statement. When the Gestapo learned that he was still in the town, they visited his house every day, threatening the family with reprisals unless they would disclose his whereabouts. When Margolin learned that his family was in danger, he returned to his house and shortly afterwards the Gestapo arrived. One of the agents, named Warmund, pounced on Margolin. Hearing the noise, some workers rushed to the house. The Gestapo started shooting at random, killing the entire Margolin family, including Margolin's 70-year old mother. This was the signal for the wholesale slaughter of the Jews in Shachty.

A similar report released by the commission tells of the German massacre of a Jewish family in the Vorishilovograd district. The text as made public here reads:

"In a locality named Kamensk, near Voroshilovgrad, some ten Gestapo men entered the house of the inhabitant Bernholtz, where they found his wife, two daughters and his 16-year old son Isaac. The Gestapo agents asked them to disclose the whereabouts of the father, which were unknown to the family as he had joined the partisans. The sister Esther and Rachel Bernholtz were beaten with whips until blood was streaming from their wounds. The boy was also whipped and one of his ears torn off. The wife of Bernholtz was also badly manhandled. The son was ordered to beat his mother. He refused and attacked one of the Gestapo men, whereupon he was beaten till he fell unconscious. When two neighbor women came to the Bernholtz house two hours later they found Mrs. Bernholtz and her two daughters dead."

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CONGRESSMAN ROGERS DEMANDS UNITED NATIONS AGENCY TO SAVE JEWS IN EUROPE

NEW YORK, July 20.(JTA)-- Creation of a United Nations agency to "assist in getting the Jewish people out of Europe at once" was demanded tonight by Congressman Will Rogers Jr., addressing the opening session of the six-day Emergency Conference to Save the Jews of Europe, at the Hotel Commodore here.

The conference, which will be in session through Sunday night, has been arranged by the Committee for a Jewish Army and the Sponsoring Committee of the Proclamation on the Moral Rights of Stateless and Palestinian Jews. Its sponsors announce that "it will concentrate its efforts upon formulating a workable plan of rescue for the Jewish people in Nazi Germany and occupied Europe."

"There has been too much talk about this tragic situation," Congressman Rogers said. "When this war began there were 7,000,000 Jews in Europe. Now there are about 4,000,000 left. This is a problem which cannot be solved through the exercise of vocal cords alone and routine protests. It is essential that out of this Emergency Conference should come some organization recognized by the United Nations, to assist in getting the Jewish people out of Europe at once. Certainly there are enough open spaces and unpopulated areas to accommodate 4,000,000 tortured human beings. Palestine is the logical place. It is nearer and over land instead of over water. Moreover, they should be allowed a National state because it is the best answer to the "slanders" of anti-semitism and the best solution of the stateless Jew. Finally there should be set up a National Committee recognized by the United Nations."

Endorsement of the proposal for the creation of an agency to assist the Jews of Europe was voiced by Admiral Yates Stirling Jr., who told the 1,500 guests assembled at the opening session that such an agency could take the necessary steps to carry on the necessary negotiations through channels of its own, without violating the fixed policy of unconditional surrender. "Nations at war," Admiral Stirling said, "keep channels open with the enemy for many reasons. For example: the exchange of prisoners and the treatment of internationals in enemy territory. Through such a United Nations Agency the work of rescue could be initiated and carried through to a successful conclusion. The opportunity is open to us today to save a great people from annihilation at the hands of our common enemy. Our pity alone will not save these innocent people whom Hitler has marked for death, nor will remorse afterwards bring back to life the millions who will perish, if we fail them now. We must act - and act quickly."

Other speakers at tonight's session included Count Carlo Sforza, Ted Thackrey, editor of the New York Post and Archbishop Athenagoras, head of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of North and South America.

CLEVELAND JEWISH SOLDIER AWARDED DSC POSTHUMOUSLY FOR GALLANTRY IN TUNISIA

NEW YORK, July 20.(JTA)-- Pfc. Sidney Rapeport, 28, of Cleveland, has been posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross "for extraordinary heroism in wiping out five German machine-gun nests in Tunisia," it is reported today by the Jewish Welfare Board. The action in which the infantryman gave his life took place on May 6, at the culmination of the successful Allied drive in Northern Tunisia.

"The fighting was grim and intensive," the J.W.B. reports, "with hand-to-hand and bayonet combat interspersing heavy machine gun fire. Private Rapeport, his company on the steep slopes of Djebel-Ed-Deba suffering terrific enemy fire, charged with a group of men on one machine gun nest after another. Armed with a carbine, he took the lead in wiping out four of them. Then, his ammunition gone, he took to wielding his carbine as a club, broke it on a Nazi's helmeted skull, but drove on, flinging himself on the crew of a fifth machine gun. It was in this last gallant action, in which he silenced the foe's gun, that he was killed."

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AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN PALESTINE INCREASED GREATLY SINCE WAR

JERUSALEM, July 20.(JTA)-- The tremendous progress made by Jewish farmers in Palestine since the outbreak of the war and especially in the last year, is indicated in a report released here by the Jewish National Fund.

The statistics compiled by the J.N.F. paint a picture of steady increase in the areas under production. The potato crop, the J.N.F. figures show, increased from 2,900 tons in 1939 to 13,900 tons in 1942. The production of other vegetables jumped from 13,300 tons to 21,000 tons in the same period. The report states that two-thirds of Palestine's total milk output, including milk products, 72 percent of the egg production, 75 percent of all vegetables and 80 percent of all potatoes came from settlements on J.N.F. land. The report also points out that Jewish farmers now plant an aggregate of 135,100 dunams with citrus fruit, 18,400 with grapes, 5,200 with olives, 2,800 with bananas and 2,700 with other fruits.

Discussing the possibilities for further agricultural progress, the J.N.F. review hails a new fertilizer based on bacterial action which has recently been placed on the market here by the American Near East Corporation of Tel Aviv. With this new process, which is based on American methods, the process of soil fermentation which normally takes from eight to twelve months can be reduced to 48 hours. Experiments over the past few months indicate that the new fertilizer is practical for use in the production of both fruits and vegetables, the report says.

A report, issued by the agricultural section of the Histadruth, the Palestine Federation of Labor, on the achievements of the labor settlements in the past year states that "labor agriculture during the year under review increased its production to meet the supply requirements of both the civilian market and the army. Despite the shortage of working hands new branches of production were undertaken. In comparison with the expanded output the number of agricultural workers actually decreased, rather than increased, as a result of enlistments in the armed forces. The settlements were successful in overcoming supply shortages this year and, in contrast to 1941, poultry farming expanded. Production was also increased in settlement factories and workshops and new lines of production were embarked upon.

"Earnings were good and the settlements' capital increased as a result of profits made. Debts were paid off in the older settlements and in some cases advance payments were made to the Keren Hayesod (Palestine Foundation Fund) to enable the financing of new settlements in various parts of the country, from the north to the south. On the other hand, mention should be made of larger bank credits extended and of Government loans for certain specific production purposes."

ZIONISTS IN SOUTH AFRICA SPLIT OVER CREATION OF NEW NON-PARTY GROUP

JOHANNESBURG, July 20.(JTA)-- The controversy among Zionists in South Africa precipitated by the formation of an Association of Non-Party Zionists, which seeks to enroll all believers in the Zionist cause who are not affiliated with any group within the movement, continues to rage unabated.

The Mizrahi Organization, the Jewish State Party, the Zionist Laborites publish statements in the local Jewish press attacking the Association for attempting to split the ranks of South African Zionists. The Association adherents reply that their chief aim is unity "which is demanded by the present Jewish tragedy." A record attendance is expected at the forthcoming Zionist Conference here where the issue will be decided.