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2,500 ITALIAN JEWS PERISHED UNDER NAZI TERROR; JEWS HIDING IN CATACOMBS

LONDON, Dec. 17. (JTA) -- The London press today reports from the Swiss-Italian frontier that 2,500 of the Jews arrested by the German authorities in Italy "have died suddenly."

While no details as to how these Jews perished are given, the newspapers here carry a report stating that the German round-up of Jews in Italy is being conducted with violence which can be compared only with the worse raids on Jews in Berlin. Many Jews in Rome are afraid to sleep in their homes and are hiding in the ancient catacombs of the city.

The London Times today carries an account given by a young Dutchman who succeeded in escaping from the Mauthausen camp in Austria to which Jews from Holland were deported by the Nazis. The eye-witness, now seriously ill in a neutral country, testified before representatives of the Dutch Government-in-Exile that forty young Jews from Amsterdam were used in poison gas experiments which the German military authorities were conducting at the camp. They all died after undergoing various gas tests for two successive days.

A demand that the Allies carry out reprisals against Germans now for atrocities committed against Jews was voiced here today by Emanuel Szerer, Jewish member of the Polish National Council. "If we talk about post-war reprisals, surely reprisals can be carried out now," he said, addressing a meeting arranged by the Federation of Polish Jews. "Immediate reprisals, or at least the threat of immediate reprisals, can result in forcing Germany to cease the anti-Jewish crimes," he stated.

Mr. Szerer warned that "it is a fatal error to assume that there are no Jews left in occupied Poland." He said that it is easier to count the number of those who are still alive, than of those who perished, and demanded that food should be sent to the Jews in the ghettos through the Red Cross.

GERMANS DEPORT LAST JEWS FROM DANISH CONCENTRATION CAMP; DESTINATION UNKNOWN

STOCKHOLM, Dec. 16. (JTA) -- The last group of Danish Jews interned by the German authorities in the Horslerod camp in Denmark were deported yesterday to an unknown destination, it is reported today in the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter.

The group, which included children of three and five, was placed on a train. The deportees were given permission to take along with them food for four days. Persons married to Jews were also included in the transport.

Dr. Joseph Davidsohn, prominent Danish Jew who lectured in the universities of Aarhus and Copenhagen, was found dead in the Gloskogen forest, the Dagens Nyheter also reports. The body of his wife was also discovered in the woods. It is believed that the two bodies had been lying in the forest for about two months. Both Dr. Davidsohn and his wife were members of the board of directors of a Danish insurance company. It is obvious that they tried to escape deportation by hiding in the woods in the hope of eventually reaching Sweden, the newspaper states.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO INITIATE DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH GERMANY

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16. (JTA) -- Direct negotiations with the Germans for the release of Jews and other persecuted peoples can be undertaken by the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees under a new mandate now awaiting approval by 49 United Nations and neutrals.

This is an authoritative interpretation given here today of the text made public last week by Assistant Secretary of State Breckenridge Long and Chairman Sol Bloom of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives. Ordinarily, warring nations only approach one another through neutral intermediaries.

Whether the Germans will deal with an international body that includes their enemies is another question. According to the best opinion available here, they will probably refuse. But at least an attempt will be made.

The Intergovernmental Committee has been working quietly since the Evian Conference of 1938. At the Anglo-American meeting on refugees at Bermuda, last Spring, it was decided to strengthen the committee by extending its work to "all countries from which refugees come as a result of the war in Europe or in which they may find refuge." That is understood to include Germany, it was learned today.

The proposed mandate was a secret until last week, when the State Department obtained permission from the countries involved to publish Long's previously confidential testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee. The Committee is still considering the Baldwin-Rogers bill to create a U. S. Government commission for the rescue of Jews. Now that the new scope of the Intergovernmental Committee has been disclosed, most members of the House group believe that a new body is unnecessary.

Russia Invited to Join Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees

The Intergovernmental Committee contains 32 countries, including the United States, Britain, Switzerland, Sweden and Argentina. Another 17, including - it is believed - the Soviet Union, Spain and Turkey, have been invited to join. Negotiations with these governments are still in progress.

When all the most important countries have consented, it is expected that nine branch offices of the committee will be set up in areas nearest the source of refugees. It is felt that a branch office of the committee is not needed here at this time. Myron J. Taylor, President Roosevelt's special envoy to the Vatican, is our representative on the committee but spends most of his time in this country. The committee sits at London, where Ambassador John Winant usually substitutes for Taylor.

This country's relations with the Intergovernmental Committee are handled through a separate unit of the State Department's Visa Division. According to Long's testimony, George Louis Brandt, his executive assistant; Robert Borden Reams of the State Department's European Division and Howard K. Travers, Chief of the Visa Division, form a council which confers with him almost every day on refugee problems.

ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES CLOSE N.Z.O. NEWSPAPER FOR ADVOCATING JEWISH ARMY IDEA

LONDON, Dec. 16. (JTA) -- The organ of the New Zionist Organization in Argentina, La Idea Sionista, has been banned by the Argentine authorities, it was reported in the London press today. La Idea Sionista, it was pointed out, urged the Jews in Argentina to support the idea of the formation of a Jewish army to fight side by side with the Allies.

INTERIM COMMITTEE OF AMERICAN JEWISH CONFERENCE ADOPTS 1944 BUDGET

NEW YORK, Dec. 16. (JTA) -- The Interim Committee of the American Jewish Conference, at an all-day session yesterday adopted a budget of \$148,500 for its administrative work for 1944, it was announced here today. The sum includes the cost of arranging a second general assembly of the Conference which is to be convoked during 1944 in accordance with a decision adopted at the September session of the American Jewish Conference at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel here.

The Interim Committee heard reports from Dr. Abba Hillel Silver on the drive which the Palestine committee of the American Jewish Conference is conducting against the White Paper, and from Rabbi Israel Miller on the activities of the Conference's committee for rescue, relief and rehabilitation.

Dr. Joseph Schwartz, chairman of the European Council of the Joint Distribution Committee, was invited by the Interim Committee to report on JDC relief activities. He dwelt at great length on the work which the JDC is conducting in various parts of the world. The various sessions of the Committee were presided over by Dr. Stephen Wise, Henry Monsky and Dr. Israel Goldstein. Mr. J. S. Pearlstein has been appointed administrative secretary of the Conference, the Committee announced yesterday.

JEWISH PALESTINE CAN BE IMPORTANT BRITISH BASTION, SAYS FORMER COLONIAL OFFICIAL

LONDON, Dec. 16. (JTA) -- A "strong Jewish Palestine" could be an important bastion of imperial defense in the Middle East, it is stated today by James Malcolm, former colonial official, in an article appearing in the Manchester Guardian.

A Jewish national home from which Jews will be barred, as is provided by the White Paper of 1939, would be a "kind of concentration camp," Mr. Malcolm says. The article emphasized the great sentiment for Zionist aspirations which exists in the United States, asserting that President Roosevelt, Wendell Willkie and others have indicated their support.

The political department of the New Zionist Organization in London today announced that the organization is opposed to any Palestine partition schemes and demands that Palestine be given the status of a Jewish dominion on both sides of the Jordan River, included in the British Commonwealth.

RACIAL BIAS IN RADIO BROADCASTS WILL BE BANNED, SENATE COMMITTEE INDICATES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16. (JTA) -- A ban against reflections in radio broadcasts against any race, creed or color will be considered by the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee, chairman Burton K. Wheeler indicated today.

Senator Wheeler said that something might "possibly be worked out" after the first of the year. The Committee today completed hearings on the Wheeler-White bill which proposes revision of the system of licensing radio stations.

GALICIA HAS NO DOCTORS BECAUSE OF ANTI-JEWISH MEASURES, GERMAN PRESS ADMITS

LONDON, Dec. 16. (JTA) -- The Polish Government-in-Exile, quoting German newspapers published in occupied Poland, today reported that certain districts in Galicia are suffering from a lack of doctors due to the fact that Jewish doctors have been forced to cease practicing.

JEWISH INTERNEES IN ITALIAN CAMPS BEING CARED FOR BY NEW ALLIED ORGANIZATION

NEW YORK, Dec. 16. (JTA) -- A special body to deal with interned and displaced persons has been established by the Allied Control Commission in Italy, a report reaching the World Jewish Congress here today states.

The report said that the interment camp at Ferramonte di Tarsio, in southwestern Italy, where there are still 1,600 internees, the majority of them Jews, is among the first places where the newly established body is operating, trying to arrange for food, clothing, welfare, health services and employment for the internees. Officially dissolved as an interment center, the Ferramonte camp is now managed by a special committee selected by the internees, of which Professor Mirski, a Yugoslav Jew, is the head.

About 350 of the Jewish refugees in the camp are Yugoslavian Jews, the report says. Others include Jews from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Austria. Since the occupation by the Allies, the guards on the perimeter of the camp have been withdrawn and the inmates are free to exercise and walk around the countryside. A number of those who had fled to the hills have since returned to the camp due to difficulties in procuring a livelihood. The figure of 1,600 includes those who have thus returned. The military officers have now requested the Red Cross to assume management of this camp, the report concluded.

JEWISH WELFARE BOARD URGES ITS AFFILIATES TO JOIN IN FIGHT AGAINST WHITE PAPER

NEW YORK, Dec. 16. (JTA) -- Asserting that the implementation of the British White Paper of 1939, which would prohibit all new Jewish immigration into Palestine after March 31, 1944, "will have ominous consequences" for Jews everywhere, Frank L. Weil, president of the National Jewish Welfare Board today urged all of the Board's constituent societies to join in the drive to abrogate the document.

In a message addressed to more than 300 Jewish Community Centers, YMHA's, YWHA's and other affiliates of the National Jewish Welfare Board, Mr. Weil recommended that these societies join "officially organized local community efforts" against the White Paper policy. Mr. Weil's message read:

"On March 31, 1944, the British White Paper on Palestine will go into effect. It will suspend all Jewish immigration into Palestine. It is a prospect which will have ominous consequences for the Jewish community in Palestine and for the Jewish people throughout the world. The American Zionist Emergency Council has requested the Jewish Welfare Board to join in the mobilization of American public opinion to the end that the British Government may be prevailed upon to withdraw the White Paper. Emergency Committees are being organized for this purpose throughout the country. We are recommending to our constituent societies that they join in all such officially organized local community efforts."

JEWISH BOOK COUNCIL HONORS SCHNEIDERMAN AND NIGER AT JOINT RECEPTION

NEW YORK, Dec. 16. (JTA) -- Harry Schneiderman, editor of the American Jewish Year Book, and Samuel Niger, well-known Jewish writer, were honored here last night at a reception arranged by the Jewish Book Council of America.

There was a three-fold occasion for the reception. It marked Mr. Schneiderman's 25th year as editor of the Year Book, Mr. Niger's 60th birthday, and the publication of the second annual tri-lingual Jewish Book Annual. In addition to the guests of honor, addresses were delivered by Dr. Solomon Grayzel, editor of the Jewish Publication Society, Dr. Max Weinreich, research director of the Yiddish Scientific Institute, Menahem Ribalow, editor of the Hebrew journal Hadoar, and Dr. Mordecai Soltes, chairman of the Jewish Book Council of America, who presided.