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J E W S C O M M I T S U I C I D E I N B U D A P E S T F O L L O W I N G G E R M A N O C C U P A T I O N O F H U N G A R Y

SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE, March 21. (JTA) -- Suicides of Jewish refugees from Poland who had found haven in Hungary are reported today in a brief message which reached here from Budapest despite the strict censorship introduced by the German military authorities following their occupation of the country.

The message also reveals that a number of Jewish leaders are among the 652 prominent Hungarians arrested yesterday and today in Budapest by the Gestapo. It estimates that 150,000 Jewish, Polish, Serbian and other refugees are now threatened with deportation from Hungary, or with concentration camps under Gestapo supervision.

Hungarian Jews are Trapped, Swiss Press Says

ZURICH, March 21. (JTA) -- Panic is spreading among the 900,000 Jews of Hungary following the German occupation of the country yesterday and the arrest by the Gestapo of leading anti-Nazis and Jews in Budapest today, the Swiss press reports.

The Jews in Hungary are trapped, Swiss newspapers point out. Emphasizing that Hungary was the only Axis country where Jews had been living in comparative freedom, though under severe anti-Jewish restrictions, the articles express fears that the Jews in Hungary face persecution and annihilation by German occupational authorities. They predict that extreme anti-Semitic elements in Hungary, with the aid of the Germans, will replace those officials who have been advocating a moderate Jewish policy.

With the Russian Army driving for Carpatho-Russia, which is now a part of Hungary, it is expected that the tens of thousands of Jews in that section will be the first to be deported by the German authorities "to unknown destinations." Other Jews to suffer will be the many thousands of "stateless" persons who were either Rumanian or Czechoslovak citizens prior to Hungary's annexation of Transylvania and Carpatho-Russia. The number of these Jews is estimated here to exceed 300,000.

Hungary has, during the last few months, admitted Jews from Poland and Slovakia who crossed the Hungarian frontier illegally. Several thousand of these Jews have been permitted to live in Budapest while others have been interned and supported by Jewish community funds. Jewish organizations in Switzerland now fear that these Jews will again fall into the hands of the Gestapo.

Fear was also expressed by leaders of Jewish organizations as to the possible fate of Jewish community leaders in Budapest against whom the extremist press has been constantly agitating. The Jewish community in Budapest is today the only Jewish community in Axis Europe which is still permitted to function. It has been taking care of all the Jewish needs and institutions.

Situation of Jews in Rumania Also Expected to Become Serious

With the situation of the Jews in Hungary suddenly becoming precarious, Jewish groups in Switzerland were also watching developments in Rumania. It is believed here that with the advance of the Russian Army onto Rumanian soil, the Germans will also occupy Rumania in order to protect the Ploesti oil wells which are one of the

chief sources of oil for the German military machine. At present the Russian Army is only about 250 miles from Ploesti.

German military occupation of Rumania, Jewish leaders stated today, will not only put an end to the negotiations for the evacuation of Jews from Rumanian territory to Palestine, but will expose the 250,000 Jews there to the same treatment as Jews in occupied Poland, and to pogroms by the Rumanian Iron Guard reminiscent of the early days of Rumania's entrance into the war.

On the other hand, it was pointed out in the Swiss press today that with the re-occupation by the Russian Army of Mohilev-Podolsk and other Ukrainian towns bordering on the Dniester River, the Jews who were deported by the Antonescu Government from Transylvania and Bessarabia to Transnistria have escaped the grim prospect of terror and extermination by the Gestapo and Iron Guard,

Jewish Leaders in England Urge Government Action to Rescue Jews from Hungary

LONDON, March 21. (JTA) -- Alarmed over the situation in Hungary where more than 900,000 Jews are threatened by the Gestapo, the Board of Deputies of British Jews today held an emergency meeting and decided to approach the British Government with plans for immediate action to save as many Jews as possible from Hungary.

Attending the meeting were representatives of other Jewish organizations interested in the work of rescuing Jews, as well as Chief Rabbi Dr. Hertz and Jewish members of the Polish National Council and the Czechoslovakian State Council. Jewish leaders from Palestine who are in London and delegates of the National Committee for Rescue of Jews from Nazi Terror also attended.

LATIN-AMERICAN ARABS ASKS WESTERN HEMISPHERE GOVERNMENTS TO BACK STAND ON PALESTINE

BUENOS AIRES, March 21. (JTA) -- Spokesmen for the "Pan-Arab Congress of America," which claims to represent the approximately 300,000 Arabs living in Latin-America, have sent a memorandum to the foreign ministries of all Western Hemisphere countries asking support for the Arab position on Palestine, it was learned here today.

The memorandum was drafted at a meeting here last week of 20 representatives of the Arab communities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Colombia called to discuss the projected pan-Arab congress in Cairo and intensified political activity by Argentine Zionists. The Arab note, it is understood, makes the following points:

- 1) The Palestine problem is exclusively an Arab question and must be solved by Arab nations only;
- 2) Arabs reject foreign intervention in their affairs;
- 3) The Arabs have never recognized the project for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine and reject Zionist demands;
- 4) Unlimited Jewish immigration would reduce Palestine Arabs to a minority status;
- 5) Arab groups object to the formation of Jewish defense groups in Palestine, and deny the necessity for any such organizations;
- 6) The Pan-Arab Congress of America urges the creation of an independent Arab national government in Palestine and Transjordan.

The Arab "Congress" was formed here in April of 1941 as a result of a meeting of delegates from the Arab communities in the countries mentioned above. Its aims are described as "defense of the rights of Arabs in this continent and throughout the world."

3/22/44

DIRECTOR OF WAR REFUGEE BOARD SUBMITS REPORT ON HIS ACTIVITIES TO CABINET MEMBERS

WASHINGTON, March 21. (JTA) -- The first report on the activities of the War Refugee Board in rescuing persecuted people from Nazi countries was made today by John W. Pehle, executive director of the Board.

Pehle's report was given at a meeting attended by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr. This was the first session of the Board since the initial meeting held four days after its establishment by President Roosevelt on January 22.

FREE IMMIGRATION OF JEWS INTO PALESTINE DEMANDED BY 20,000 AT MADISON SQUARE RALLY

NEW YORK, March 21. (JTA) -- More than 20,000 people crowded into Madison Square Garden, today adopted a resolution demanding the immediate abolition of the British White Paper and calling for "the opening wide of the gates of Palestine to Jewish immigration and settlement, to the end that the Jews may reconstitute Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth."

The resolution also greeted "with satisfaction and gratitude" the statement of President Roosevelt that the American Government has never given its approval to the White Paper, and that when future decisions are reached, full justice will be done to those who seek a Jewish National Home. "We trust that the President will use his good offices and the high authority of his position to the end that this full justice which he so earnestly desires may speedily be achieved," the resolution stated. It also urged passage "at the earliest moment consistent with the exigencies of the war effort" of the Palestine resolutions now pending in both Houses of Congress.

The resolution expressed confidence in Prime Minister Churchill's "loyal adherence to the principles of the Balfour Declaration," and appealed to the Prime Minister to give early effect to his words of 1939 by bringing about the abrogation of the White Paper. "All men of good will, Christians and Jews alike, whose spiritual traditions spring from those sources which nourish everything which the Western World holds sacred and dear, unite in looking upon the restoration of Palestine to the Jewish people as a vital and indispensable element in the restoration of righteousness to humanity," the resolution said.

Held under the auspices of the American Zionist Emergency Council, the meeting was addressed by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, Senator Robert F. Wagner, Senator Robert A. Taft, Senator Alben B. Barkley, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, Dorothy Thompson and Matthew Woll, vice-president of the American Federation of Labor.

A demand that the British White Paper which prohibits new Jewish immigration to Palestine after March 31, "be consigned to the flames," was voiced by Sen. Wagner. "If the tortured Jews of Europe are not to be allowed to go to Palestine, where shall they go?" the Senator asked.

JEWS IN SOUTHERN FRANCE MUST PAY "SOLIDARITY CONTRIBUTION"

LONDON, March 21. (JTA) -- All Jews who live in the Southern area of occupied France must pay a "solidarity contribution" of 360 francs to the "Union Israelite de France," the Vichy radio said last night in a domestic broadcast.

The broadcast stated that the commissariat general for Jewish questions "reminds" all Jews of the payment which is "in accordance with the decree passed on May 11, 1943."

PROTESTANT MINISTERS DEMAND ARREST OF ANTI-SEMITIC HOODLUMS IN BOSTON

BOSTON, March 21. (JTA) -- Representatives of 300 Protestant ministers in Greater Boston called on Police Commissioner Joseph Sullivan today to make arrests if further disturbances similar to the assault on 15 members of a veteran's band by a group of anti-Semitic hoodlums last Friday occur.

Meanwhile, the Anti-Defamation league of B'nai B'rith, New England regional office, commended the Veterans of Foreign Wars, whose Malden (Boston suburb) Post sponsors the band, and the Jewish War Veterans of Malden, for "their determination to investigate the entire affair and its anti-American implications."

Friday's incident occurred at the conclusion of the annual Evacuation Day parade here when a group of anti-Semitic youths spied Seaman Albert Cohen, who was marching with a band from the Malden Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. After passing several derogatory remarks about Cohen and several other Jewish members of the band, the hoodlums attacked them, severely beating several of the Malden youths.

CANADIAN LEAGUE OF NATIONS SOCIETY HITS PALESTINE WHITE PAPER

MONTREAL, March 21. (JTA) -- The executive committee of the Canadian League of Nations Society last night adopted a resolution protesting against the British White Paper on Palestine and expressing the hope that Palestine will be reconstituted as a Jewish National Home "within the British Empire."

LIBERTY SHIP NAMED AFTER LATE CONGRESSMAN EDELSTEIN TO BE LAUNCHED

WASHINGTON, March 21. (JTA) -- A Liberty Ship named after the late Jewish Congressman Michael Edelstein, who died from a heart attack in the House of Representatives after replying to an anti-Semitic address by Rep. John E. Rankin, will be launched on June 4, it was announced here today.

GEORGE Z. MEDALIE RE-ELECTED PRESIDENT OF N.Y. JEWISH FEDERATION FOR FOURTH TERM

NEW YORK, March 21. (JTA) -- The re-election of George Z. Medalie, for his fourth term as president of the Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies of New York City was announced last night following a meeting of the Board of Trustees.

The election of Oscar A. Lewis, as a vice-president and of Victor S. Riesenfeld, as secretary was also announced. Officers who were re-elected are: Mrs. Sidney C. Borg, Monroe Goldwater, Mrs. Arthur Lehman and Walter Rothschild, vice-presidents; Dr. Maurice B. Hexter and Joseph Willen, executive vice-presidents; Percy S. Straus, chairman of the board; Henry Ittleson and Edward Lazansky, associate chairmen of the board; Louis J. Grumbach, treasurer; Richard Goldsmith and Joseph M. May, associate treasurers; Henry March, assistant treasurer; and Jacob M. Frankel, assistant secretary.

HERO OF WARSAW GHETTO BATTLE POSTHUMOUSLY AWARDED HIGHEST POLISH MILITARY DECORATION

LONDON, March 21. (JTA) -- Michal Klepfish, Jewish labor leader who was one of the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto battle last Spring, has been posthumously awarded the "Virtuti Militari Cross," the highest Polish military honor, it was announced here today by the Polish Government-in-Exile. The decoration was conferred upon Klepfish on the recommendation of the leader of the government's underground forces in Poland.