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JEWS OF LYON HOLD FIRST OPEN MEETING; DISCUSS RELIEF AND RESTORATION PROBLEMS

LYON, Sept. 8 - Delayed. (JTA) -- The Jews of liberated Lyon, which now has the largest Jewish population in France after Paris, today held their first open, legal meeting since the commencement of Nazi persecutions in France, and tonight celebrated their new freedom at special synagogue services.

Some 50 men and women, composing the Lyon United Jewish Defense Committee, assembled at a meeting, attended by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondent, to discuss the present Jewish situation here and the various problems facing them in the future course of their work. Illustrating the difficulties under which they worked in the past few years was the fact that many of these committee members had never before met each other.

It was obviously difficult for them to accustom themselves to the new situation, and most of the speakers pointed out how hard it was to act again as free men, to walk the streets without apprehension and to reveal their right names and religion without fear. Following the speeches it was easy to see the difficult psychological problem faced by many of them in thinking in terms of open actions instead of the secret work of the past, under penalty of death if discovered.

Many speakers expressed the fear that the complete unity which had developed under persecution, in which all parties and factions sank their differences to work together, would now be lost. Perhaps the most moving scene occurred when a delegate from Villeurbanne, a working-class suburb, made a plea for continued unity, reminding the meeting of the sufferings the Jews here had undergone and evoked the names of slaughtered comrades. He recounted how the Gestapo had killed an aged Jewish woman of 100, and with tears in his eyes, pleaded that the unity achieved at such cost must not be lost.

"The Jewish tragedy in France is just beginning," he said. "Lyon has been free only a few days, but already children are coming to the committee and asking: 'Where are our parents? Where is my brother? Where is my home?' What shall we tell them. What shall we do with them?"

Commissions Established to Return Jewish Life to Normalcy

The meeting decided to establish four commissions: first, to continue social work, including relief and social services, job placement and other necessary measures; second, to gather information concerning the number of Jews deported and executed, attempt to arrange reunion of families, and secure other information concerning missing Jews; third, to handle legal questions, such as the repossession of confiscated property, the status of foreign Jews, of whom there are a great many here; and fourth, to deal with questions of children, such as the care of a great number whose parents were deported, arrange for the return of those sent into Switzerland for

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safety and gather those placed in homes in the countryside, convents and other places of refuge.

The chairman of the committee, Simon Bornstein, a former leader of the Jewish Socialist Bund in Paris, warned the meeting of the grave financial situation, pointing out that hundreds of Jews coming out of hiding are flooding the committee with appeals for help. He disclosed that during the period of underground activity the committee financially aided 600 families regularly, while in the week that the city has been freed, this figure has risen by thousands with more coming in daily.

Although the Lyon Jewish community numbered about 500 families before the war, the Jewish population increased tremendously after the French capitulation in June, 1940. Thousands of refugees from occupied France, Belgium and Holland flooded the area. It is estimated roughly that there are about 25,000 Jews now in Lyon and the vicinity, but it will be impossible to get any exact figure for several weeks.

Jews Seek to Secure Valid Identity Papers; Problem of Scattered Children

Among the legal questions now occupying the committee is first, the question of obtaining valid papers for the majority of the Jews here. Ironically enough one of the committee members was arrested on the first day the city was liberated for carrying false papers, but was released when it was established that he was a Jew who had been compelled to conceal his identity.

The second question is the status of the foreign Jews. They are considerably alarmed at present by an order issued by the local authorities requiring all nationals and natives of enemy countries to register with the police, owing to the bitter experience they had with previous registrations. The committee representatives are presently discussing this situation with Senator Justin Godart, acting mayor of Lyon.

The community is greatly preoccupied, also, with the question of the thousands of children scattered in French homes in the countryside, in convents and other refuges. Many of these are orphans, and the parents of others have been missing since they were deported. They also want to arrange for the speedy return of the children smuggled into Switzerland.

During the discussion on this problem, one speaker, referring to the fact that an American Jewish correspondent was present, appealed to American Jewry to "make another great gesture and open their arms to thousands of Jewish children in France whose parents have been slain by the Nazis. We hope that America's 4,000,000 Jews will take these victims of Hitler to their bosoms," he added. However, when a subsequent speaker rejected this suggestion and declared that "we will work and provide for the future of these children in France," he was greeted by cheers and applause.

The meeting asked the Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondent to convey to the Jews of America, Britain and Palestine greetings and gratitude for the financial and moral help given them during their darkest hours. They paid tribute to the activities of the Joint Distribution Committee. All Zionist and Labor groups also asked that their greetings be sent. These included the Right and Left Poale Zion and the Jewish Bund, which greeted the Jewish Labor Committee and the Yiddish newspaper the "Forward".

Jews Played Prominent Role In Resistance Movement in Lyon Region

The full story of the fiendish treatment of the Jews by the Nazis and their Vichy henchmen will not be known for months, but it is known that in addition to hundreds - if not thousands - executed in this district by the Gestapo and the Vichy

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militia, hundreds of others died fighting with French resistance forces against the Nazis. These heroes will be commemorated Monday at memorial services for a young member of the Jewish Socialist Bund, Charles Schultz, who came to Lyon from Paris after his parents and three sisters were deported. Schultz was killed only a week before Lyon was liberated while leading seven comrades in an attempt to halt the advance of 50 Germans in armored vehicles in the Villeurbanne suburb.

Jews played a prominent part in the insurrection in this suburb at that time. In addition Jews fought in units of the French Forces of the Interior. One special company of 115 young Jews participated as a unit of the FFI and helped rout the Vichy militia defending a building on the west bank of the Rhone which was occupied by the Vichy Commissariat for Jewish Affairs. This building, incidentally, is now the headquarters of the Jewish Committee.

It was recalled today that when, in response to an appeal by Cardinal Gerlier, on August 25, the Germans released 700 political prisoners from the Fort Montluc prison, they did not release 80 Jews held there, but immediately exoduted them.

Yesterday, the authorities began the exhumation of two mass graves at the Bron airport, just outside of Lyon, where the Germans buried some of the Montluc prisoners who were killed on the spot after working at repairing damage done by Allied bombers. Today, five of the first victims exhumed were identified as Jews.

XAVIER VALLAT, FIRST VICHY COMMISSAR OF JEWISH AFFAIRS, ARRESTED

LONDON, Sept. 12. (JTA) -- Xavier Vallat, first Commissar of Jewish Affairs of the Vichy Government, and the man who drew up the first anti-Jewish legislation in France, has been arrested, it is reported from Paris today.

The report says that Vallat faces loss of franchise, restrictions on his place of residence and expulsion from any professional group to which he may belong. Similar punishment awaits other members of the Jewish commissariat.

Another report from Paris says that the French League for Human Rights, which battled for Jewish rights all over Europe, has reappeared openly after four years of underground existence. A new president, to replace Victor Basch who was assassinated near Lyon last year, has not yet been chosen.

The Paris radio today said that Charles Maurras, anti-Semitic editor of the Royalist newspaper L'Action Francaise, who was a close collaborator of the Vichy Government, has been arrested in Lyon.

SIMPLE CEREMONY MARKS OPENING SESSION OF NEWLY-ELECTED PALESTINE JEWISH ASSEMBLY

JERUSALEM, Sept. 12. (JTA) -- A simple ceremony of raising the Blue-White flag marked today's opening session of the newly elected Assefath Haniyeharim, the Jewish National Assembly.

Isaac Ben-Zvi, chairman of the Vahd Leumi which is the executive body of the Assembly, reviewed the growth of Jewish economic, political, educational and social welfare activities in the past thirteen years since the last elections to the Assefath Haniyeharim were held.

He estimated that there are now 550,000 Jews in Palestine, and regretted the fact that some groups, especially the Sephardic Jews, boycotted the elections and are, therefore, not represented in the Assembly.

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SOVIET GOVERNMENT INVITES UNRRA MISSION TO RUSSIA TO INVESTIGATE RELIEF NEEDS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 12. (JTA) -- The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration is now preparing to send a mission to Russia in response to a request from the Moscow government for investigation of relief needs there, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned today. The mission will probably consist of about eight persons.

The entire matter of relief in Russia and in countries liberated by the Russian armies will be one of the chief topics of discussion at the Montreal meeting of the UNRRA which opens on Friday. Meanwhile, Director General Herbert H. Lehman is endeavoring to get together the appropriate personnel for such a mission.

What is contemplated for Russian relief in war-devastated areas is an arrangement with the Soviet armies similar to that which now prevails with the Anglo-American armies. Under this arrangement the armies are responsible for food and the most urgent health, clothing and shelter measures in liberated territory for six months. If UNRRA comes in during that time on army invitation, the army furnishes the food. After that initial six months period UNRRA furnishes food.

WAR REFUGEE BOARD CONSIDERS PROTECTION OF HUNGARIAN JEWS ITS MAJOR JOB AT PRESENT

WASHINGTON, Sept. 12. (JTA) -- The War Refugee Board considers the protection of the Jews within Hungary its major job, now that the German authorities have refused to allow Hungarian Jews to emigrate to neutral or Allied lands, John W. Pehle, executive director of the W.R.B., today told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

In other sections of Europe, Mr. Pehle said, the work of the War Refugee Board is being done by the advancing Allied armies. Aid to escaping individual Jews continues, but such mass-exodus of Jews as was agreed to by Regent Horthy of Hungary obviously will be impossible, he added.

Consent of the Germans would be necessary to take any large numbers of Jews through Austria to Switzerland or through the Balkans down the Danube, Mr. Pehle continued. Without this, the War Refugee Board can only assist small trickles to come out and apply psychological pressure on the Hungarian people. "The advance of the Russian armies," Pehle said, "is the best psychological weapon we have. The Hungarians do not control the situation, but no mass exterminations could be carried on without their help."

"Everyone here had their fingers crossed on the Horthy offer all the way through," Mr. Pehle disclosed. No one, he said, had really thought that the doors of Hungary would be open, but it had been thought psychologically important to accept the offer. "We didn't want to appear to be giving them the green light to go ahead with their exterminations with the notion that no one cared," Pehle explained.

Slovakian uprisings are not unmixed blessings for the Jews, he said. They take the German mind off extermination, make the Germans use their local forces to handle the situation. But, unfortunately, very often the Germans take hostages, usually Jews.

FORGED POSTAGE STAMPS BEING USED IN SWITZERLAND TO SPREAD ANTI-JEWISH PROPAGANDA

ZURICH, Sept. 12. (JTA) -- Forged English postage stamps are being used to spread anti-Jewish and anti-British propaganda, Swiss philatelists reveal, according to the Basler National Zeitung.

SENATE BILL ASKS MEMORIAL TO COMMEMORATE INTERFAITH PARTICIPATION IN DEFENSE OF U.S.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 12. (JTA) -- Senator Scott W. Lucas today introduced a joint resolution providing for the appointment of a 12-man commission to establish a national memorial commemorating the contributions of members of the various faiths to American military and naval history.

The proposed interfaith memorial, to be located in the District of Columbia, would be the first national memorial symbolizing the participation of members of different religions in the defense of America.

"Construction of such a monument," Sen. Lucas said, "will strike a powerful blow in defense of true Americanism. It will show the world that alien theories which would discriminate between one American and another because of the way he worships God, and which the enemy has attempted to introduce in order to divide and weaken us, have no place in America."

OVER 95 PERCENT OF REFUGEE INDUSTRIES IN CANADA ARE IN WAR WORK, GOVERNMENT REPORTS

OTTAWA, Sept. 12. (JTA) -- More than 95 percent of the industries established in Canada by refugees are now engaged in war work, according to a report issued today by the Dominion government. Many refugees have introduced new techniques and skills to Canadian economy, the report says.

It reveals that 5,000 Canadians are employed by the refugee industries, which have a total annual payroll above \$7,000,000. Most of the plants are unionized. Among the equipment produced by them are shell containers, army boxes, plane parts, gun parts, precision tools and signal flags.

LOS ANGELES JEWISH WELFARE FUND DRIVE NETS OVER \$2,000,000

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 12. (JTA) -- The successful conclusion of the local United Jewish Welfare Fund drive, during which \$2,006,000 was raised, was announced here today by campaign chairman Charles Brown and executive director Leo Gallin. The 1944 total was 70 percent above the \$1,201,000 raised last year.

Passing of the \$2,000,000 goal of the UJWF's drive was marked by the dispatch of a check for \$250,000 to the United Jewish Appeal, which is the major beneficiary of the campaign. In June the UJA received a similar amount from the Los Angeles fund. Co-chairmen of the welfare fund's campaign were Walter F. Wanger, Julian M. Sieroty and Harry A. Mier.

PORTRAIT OF A.C. HORN GIVEN HUNTER COLLEGE; MONSKY MAKES PRESENTATION

NEW YORK, Sept. 12. (JTA) -- A portrait of A. C. Horn, treasurer of the committee which contributed the Roosevelt Memorial House to Hunter College, was presented today to George N. Schuster, president of Hunter by Henry Monsky, president of B'nai B'rith and chairman of the National Hillel Commission. The portrait was the gift of Mr. Horn's close associates, in recognition of his contribution to interfaith activities.