

Tuesday, March 19, 1946

JTA

Daily News Bulletin

PUBLISHED BY THE JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY

106 EAST 41st STREET, NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

THREE JEWS TESTIFY IN SYRIA BEFORE ANGLO-AMERICAN COMMITTEE; PRESENT NON-ZIONIST VIEWS

DAMASCUS, March 18. (JTA) -- Amid reports that a high Syrian Government official met with Jewish community leaders last week and instructed them as to what they might and might not say, three Jewish representatives testified here before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine.

Each made a hasty one-minute speech, the substance of which was that "We are Syrians, like every other Syrian. We enjoy full freedom. We are prosperous and well treated. We have no relationship whatsoever with the Zionist movement."

Chairman Joseph Hutcheson remarked admiringly: "You Syrians certainly are brief. Thank you. Is there anything else you would like to say?" The three Jewish spokesmen--David Totah, Sabri Kignado and Dr. David Pinto--shook their heads negatively and, obviously relieved, hurried back to their seats.

It is quite apparent that Jewish leaders here are so fearful of the position of the Jews and so frightened regarding reactions to anything they might say or do, that they are unwilling even to be seen in the presence of members of the inquiry committee or representatives of the press.

Jewish Community in Damascus Is Disintegrating; Only 3,000 Remain

Of the 3,000 Jews in Damascus, about half are so poor that they would starve, if not for the money collected by Damascus Jewish groups from Jews abroad, as well as personal gifts from relatives abroad. Of the other half, 30 percent are peddlers or small merchants, 15 percent are of the middle class and five percent are wealthy.

Practically all of the Jews who live above subsistence level are of the merchant class. There are only six doctors, no lawyers, no industrialists, no engineers and no architects. Prior to World War I, Damascus had a Jewish community of about 30,000, which was one of the most prosperous in the Middle East. Now it is a dying community, fearful of its existence, unprotected and living virtually completely in a single Jewish quarter, which can only be called a ghetto. There are no more than five Jewish families living outside this section.

It is estimated that 90 percent of the Damascus Jews would emigrate to Palestine, if they were permitted to do so. However, one of the hardest things in the world is for a Syrian Jew to obtain a passport. It is necessary to specify race and religion in all official documents. Visas for business trips to Palestine cannot be obtained. The authorities investigate any connection local Jews may have in Palestine.

Economically, the Damascus Jews are being ground between the stones of Arab nationalism and general anti-foreignism. A violent press campaign has been launched

3/19/46

inst the Jews. A typical headline appearing in the newspaper "Eastern Times" states "Arabs Will Resist Jews' Attempt to Force Way into Palestine."

The situation of the Jews, from the point of view of education is equally unfortunate. The famed Jewish school here, founded by the Alliance Israelite of France, which was attended by 1,300 students between five and sixteen years of age, was closed down by the authorities when the French were ousted as the rulers of Syria. As a result there is no general Jewish school, except for the Maimonides School, which is a Talmud Torah attended by about 300. The other students are either forced to attend a private school, or no school, if they cannot afford tuition.

Arab Students Demonstrate Outside Committee Hearings

As the committee conducted its two-hour hearings, 300 students demonstrated outside, chanting: "Palestine for the Arabs." Among those heard in opposition to Zionist claims were Moslem and Christian spiritual leaders, representatives of cultural, political, women's and press organizations, and a chamber of commerce spokesman.

The latter, George Asfar, charged that the Zionists were "dumping" goods in the Near East, which were made without regard to loss or profit, because the Zionists are backed by foreign capital. Other speakers charged that Zionism was dangerous because it combines economic, political and cultural motives for political ends.

Yubrau Chamieh, speaking for political and cultural groups, asserted that Jews could go to England or America. Sheikh Mutapha Zarka, professor of Moslem law at the Syrian University, declared that Palestine is a Moslem country, and Jews should not be admitted. Representatives of the press also stressed the "dangers" of Zionism.

Hutcheson expressed surprise that the press in Syria was so completely united, observing that "in Texas when we have three papers, we always have different views." That is not so here," the press spokesmen replied in chorus.

A memorandum from the Syrian Government supporting claims of Palestine Arabs, was presented to the committee. The memorandum declared that Syrians make common cause with the Palestine Arabs in opposing with all their powers what it described as the danger of Zionism. It expressed the hope that the democratic powers would enable Palestine to enjoy complete independence on an equal footing with other Arab countries.

Shertok To Testify This Week; Arabs In Palestine Split

JERUSALEM, March 18. (JTA) -- Moshe Shertok, head of the political department of the Jewish Agency, will testify here before the Anglo-American Inquiry Committee on Thursday or Friday, when committee members who are now in Syria and other neighboring Arab countries return. He will be followed by Musa El Alami, who will testify for the Arabs.

A delegation of Arab groups which are opposed to the Arab Higher Committee today visited Bartley Crum, American member of the committee, and presented their views to him during a lengthy talk.

The relations between various Arab groups in Palestine have recently deteriorated to such a point that the existence of the Higher Arab Committee is considered to be in danger. This, in turn, will affect the position of the Palestine Arabs at the Arab League.

FIRST VISA APPLICATIONS FOR DISPLACED AND GERMAN JEWS FILED WITH U.S. CONSULATE

FRANKFURT, March 18. (JTA) -- The HIAS today began filing applications with the U.S. consulate here for visas for displaced Jews, available under President Truman's directives. At the same time, it began issuing corporate affidavits, of which it will provide 4,500.

The first affidavit was issued to Rabbi Leopold Neuhaus of Frankfurt, and his wife. Both are survivors of Theresienstadt, and Rabbi Neuhaus is believed to be the only remaining rabbi in Germany. Their son is the rabbi of a New York City congregation.

All applicants must now wait until they are called up by the consulate for further action on their applications. It is hoped that the first transport of immigrants will leave for the United States in the first week of May.

The JDC office announced today that Cecelia Davidson, an immigration expert attached to the JDC, National Refugee Service and the National Council of Jewish Women, is recovering in an army hospital at Marburg from injuries suffered in an automobile accident last week. Sylvia Neulander of the Jewish Agency, who was injured at the same time, has already been discharged from the hospital.

JEWISH LEADERS IN ITALY MEET WITH GOVERNMENT ON REPARATIONS FOR PROPERTY

ROME, March 18. (JTA) -- Although government employees dismissed from their jobs because of the anti-Jewish laws have been reinstated and received compensation for the time lost, negotiations are still proceeding with regard to employees of private enterprises.

There is no legislation requiring employers to reinstate persons dismissed under the racial laws, but the Union of Jewish Communities in Italy has been discussing with the Government means of recompensing such employees. Up to now, no agreement has been reached.

As far as property is concerned, all real estate, business enterprises, and other immovable property confiscated from Jews have been returned to the original owners. Nothing has been done, as yet, concerning the return of personal possessions, and the Union of Jewish Communities is also meeting with the Government on this matter.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT APPOINTS ADVISER ON JEWISH AFFAIRS TO MILITARY IN GERMANY

LONDON, March 18. (JTA) -- The appointment of Lieut. Col. Robert B. Solomon, one-time president of the British Jewish National Fund, as adviser on Jewish affairs to the British element of the Allied Control Commission in Germany was announced today in the House of Commons.

John B. Hynd, the cabinet member responsible for occupation matters, said that the appointment of Col. Solomon followed consultation with the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Solomon, who has been active in Zionist affairs, will leave for Germany early in April.

DUTCH COLLABORATIONISTS SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR BETRAYING JEWS TO NAZIS

AMSTERDAM, March 18. (JTA) -- Two Dutchmen, F.M. Mayer and N.P. Bartelman, were sentenced to death today in the Amsterdam Special Court for betraying many Jews to the Nazis. A third defendant, H.W.J. Tomlov, was sentenced to life imprisonment.

THIRTY GERMANS ARRESTED IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA FOR FAILURE TO WEAR YELLOW ARMBANDS

PRAGUE, March 18. (JTA) -- Thirty Germans were arrested at Carlsbad today for failure to wear yellow armbands as identifying badges, Czech police authorities have announced.

The Germans who formerly mocked Jews attempting to hide the yellow Star of David, with which the Nazis marked them, are using all sorts of devices to hide or detract attention from the armbands, which they now must wear. Germans are forbidden by law from entering restaurants and cafes and are receiving reduced food rations. Their ration cards are marked "Deutsche." In some cities they are forbidden to walk on the sidewalks.

TRANSPORT OF J.D.C. MEDICAL SUPPLIES ARRIVES IN RUMANIA; PART GOES TO HUNGARY

BUCHAREST, March 18. (JTA) -- The greatest part of a transport of 245 cases of medical supplies received here by the Joint Distribution Committee has been sent to Hungary where many Jews are seriously ill, particularly with tuberculosis, the organization revealed here today.

A consignment of 20 freight cars of matzoths and other Passover supplies from America destined for Hungarian and other Balkan Jews has been sidetracked at Istanbul because of a shortage of rail facilities. The JDC at Bucharest is attempting to have the shipment routed through Rumania.

LONDON TIMES SEES LITTLE HOPE FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE DESPITE PRESENT INQUIRY

LONDON, March 18. (JTA) -- There is little prospect for peace in Palestine "unless there is a great change of heart on one or both sides," the London Times' special correspondent in Jerusalem writes today, reviewing the testimony before the Anglo-American inquiry committee.

Any conceivable solution, he says, will probably be unacceptable to one or both sides, and result in the emergence of irreconcilable groups, which will attempt to upset the solution, and force a modification in their favor. The correspondent expresses doubts whether the present is the time to propose a solution which may have to be imposed by force.

BULGARIAN JEWS MARK THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF EXTERMINATION OF MACEDONIAN JEWRY

SOFIA, March 18. (JTA) -- Services marking the third anniversary of the extermination of the Jews of Macedonia were held here today in the city's central synagogue.

Chief Rabbi Daniel Zion eulogized the victims, and other speakers emphasized that the Fatherland Front political coalition was responsible for the recent elimination of anti-Semitic manifestations.

Kiril Lazaroff, Communist deputy in the Bulgarian parliament, speaking in behalf of his party, mourned the martyred Jews and expressed joy that the Jews of Bulgaria had escaped a similar fate. Lazaroff admitted that the present property restoration laws had a number of loopholes, but asserted that the parliament would promulgate a new law to satisfy all claims.

JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION HONORS FIFTY GRADUATES WHO SERVED AS CHAPLAINS IN WAR

NEW YORK, March 18. (JTA) -- Fifty chaplains, all graduates of the Jewish Institute of Religion, were honored here last night by the Institute at a Founder's dinner at the Hotel Biltmore. The chaplains, who served in World War II, numbered more than one-third of the school's graduates. The ceremony also marked the birthday of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, founder of the Institute.

Lauding the work of the chaplains, Dr. Wise pointed out that the function of the rabbi of today was basically to unify Jewish life. Rabbi Morton M. Berman of Chicago, formerly with the Sixth Marine Division in the Pacific, spoke as the representative of the 50 chaplains. Messages of tribute to the chaplains were received from Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, Chief of Army Staff Dwight D. Eisenhower, and General of the Armies Henry Arnold, as well as from many civic and religious leaders.

B. Z. GOLDBERG FETTERED IN MOSCOW BY JEWISH ANTI-FASCIST COMMITTEE; RECEIVED BY KALININ

MOSCOW, March 18. (JTA) -- The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee here arranged a banquet in favor of B.Z. Goldberg, chairman of the American Committee of Jewish Writers and Artists, who is now visiting the Soviet Union. Mr. Goldberg was received last week by President Michael Kalinin.

Several hundred Jewish officers of the Red Army and all leading Jewish writers in Moscow attended the affair which was addressed by Prof. Solomon Mikhoels and Itzik Manger, leaders of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Other speakers included Major General M. Katz, Prof. I. Dobrushin, David Bergelson and others.

BILL TO CHECK DISCRIMINATION INTRODUCED IN MANITOBA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

MONTREAL, March 18. (JTA) -- An act to prevent discrimination because of ethnic origin or adherence or non-adherence to a religious belief has been introduced in the Manitoba Provincial Legislature by S.J. Farmer, leader of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, the official Socialist opposition.

The bill covers discrimination in respect to hotel accommodation, housing, etc., the prohibition of certain signs, notices and advertisements, as well as forbidding employers to request information concerning ethnic origin and religious belief. Violation of the provisions of the act would be punishable by fines and imprisonment.

SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA URGES PASSAGE OF BILL BARRING DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOLS

NEW YORK, March 18. (JTA) -- In the light of the numerous complaints of discriminatory and prejudicial practices in the institutions of higher learning and professional schools of this state, the Synagogue Council of America, representing all the religious branches of the Jewish community, today released a communication directed by its executive board to the Governor and leaders in both houses of the Legislature, urging the prompt action on the Austin-Mahoney Bill now pending before the Legislature, which is intended to augment the functional powers and duties of the State Commission Against Discrimination in the field of education.

The Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League today appealed to the leaders of all progressive religious and political groups in the community to follow the example of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise in supporting, by legal action, the principle involved in the court proceedings instituted some months ago by the League's General Counsel, Julius L. Goldstein, to end the tax-exempt status of racially and religiously discriminatory public educational institutions.

THE CONTENTS OF THIS BULLETIN ARE NOT FOR PUBLICATION WITHOUT SPECIAL AUTHORIZATION