

Thursday, March 11, 1948

JTA Daily News Bulletin

PUBLISHED BY THE JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY

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

LAST MINUTE NEWS

CZECH CRISIS LEADS U.N. PALESTINE COMMISSION HEAD TO SEEK CLARIFICATION OF HIS STATUS

LAKE SUCCESS, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- An attempt to clarify the position of Dr. Eliahu Liscicky, chairman of the U.N. Palestine Commission, in view of the new political situation in Czechoslovakia which precipitated a crisis in the Czech delegation here, was made today at a conference between Liscicky and U.N. Secretary-General Trygve Lie.

Dr. Liscicky, who has been in the Czechoslovak diplomatic service for many years, was--like the other members of the Palestine Commission--appointed by his government. However, he is paid by the United Nations out of its Palestine fund. Lie, it is believed that he is legally subject to recall from the Commission by the Czech Government. It is felt here however, that Liscicky is anxious to continue with the Commission.

The Palestine Commission today received a memorandum from its Panamanian representative, Eduardo Morgan, for the immediate formation of Provisional Councils of Government in Palestine. The Commission will debate the plan with a view to incorporating it in the next monthly progress report to the Security Council.

Formal approval of the draft statute for the City of Jerusalem and the appointment of a governor for the city were deferred by the Trusteeship Council this afternoon to its next meeting, which will be in April.

MOTION TO REJECT GOVT. BILL FOR TERMINATION OF PALESTINE MANDATE DEFEATED IN COMMONS

LONDON, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- A motion introduced by Laborite "rebels" urging the rejection of the Government Bill for the termination of the Palestine Mandate on May 15, was defeated in the House of Commons tonight by a vote of 240 to 30. (See earlier cable on page 2.)

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AGREEMENT REACHED ON JEWISH CABINET; RATIFICATION OF HAGANAH-IRGUN PACT POSTPONED

JERUSALEM, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- Full agreement on the composition of the Provisional Jewish Government was reached here after midnight at a joint meeting of leaders of the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Council which lasted several hours.

The agreement provides the formation of a 13-member Cabinet to include four members of the Jewish Labor Party (Mapai); two members of the United Labor Party, which is comprised of Hashomer Hatzair and L'Achdut Avodah; two General Zionists; one Mizrahi, one Agudist, one Revisionist, one Mizrahi laborite and one representative of the Aliyah Hadashah.

The meeting did not ratify the pact between the Haganah and the Irgun which was reached by representatives of both groups after prolonged negotiations. The ratification was postponed for a day at the request of Isaac Gruenbaum, member of the Jewish Agency executive.

The Hashomer Hatzair and the L'Achdut Avodah today delivered an ultimatum declaring that they will not enter the Jewish Cabinet if the Haganah-Irgun pact is ratified. Ratification is, nevertheless, expected within a day or two since the majority of the Jewish Agency executive and of the Jewish National Council favor unity among the Jewish resistance forces.

An announcement by the Palestine authorities that postal service will be suspended for the Jewish areas in the country because of the "physical impossibility" to maintain such a service, was severely criticized today by the Jewish Agency as a unilateral and vindictive measure. "The Agency will endeavor to establish its own postal service, it was indicated. The Palestine Postmaster General "explained" his announcement, declaring that "Jews are stealing postal vans," making postal operations difficult.

Dr. J.L. Magnes, head of the Ihud group which favors Arab-Jewish conciliation, today denied reports from Cairo that representatives of his group have approached the ex-Mufti of Palestine regarding the possibility of a compromise in Palestine.

"I am wholeheartedly for this, but neither I nor any member of the Ihud in Jerusalem or Cairo negotiated with the Arab executive," Dr. Magnes said. At the same time the Ihud issued a call today to Jews and Arabs in Palestine to lay down their arms. "Only through a true understanding can we build up the whole Holy Land," the declaration said.

The U.N. Palestine Commission's advance party received the press yesterday at the group's two-story headquarters near the King David Hotel here. Pablo Ascarate, head of the advance party, said the group's mission is designed to secure a continuity of services when the Mandate ends. He added that contact between the U.N. party and the Palestine Government and the Jewish Agency had already been made and that the U.N. representatives had begun to study various aspects of the Palestine problem.

AGAH REPULSES SYRIAN-IRAQI ATTACK ON SETTLEMENT NEAR JERUSALEM; 3 BRITONS CAPTURED

JERUSALEM, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- A fierce battle between Hagana and Syrian-Iraqi forces using machineguns and mortars and fortified by armored cars developed today four miles north of Jerusalem along the road to Nablus. The Arabs were dispersed and three British police deserters who fought on their side from an armored car were captured.

The battle broke out when the three deserters took up a position near Neve Jacob and opened fire on the settlement. Several minutes later they were joined by Syrians in three armored cars and by a large unit of infantry composed of Syrian and Iraqi guerrillas. The Hagana, using hand grenades, drove a wedge between the armored cars and the infantry.

Meanwhile, the settlers notified British Army headquarters in Jerusalem of the attack and a large body of troops was dispatched to the scene. The attackers fled, but the British deserters were apprehended and brought to Jerusalem.

At least four Iraqi raiders were killed and three seriously wounded in another clash in northern Palestine when a Hagana force engaged an Iraqi band preparing to attack Yechiam. The Iraqi were attacked from three sides and were compelled to retreat even after reinforcements were brought in by bus.

Hagana intelligence announced today that British policemen have abandoned all police stations along the Palestine-Transjordan frontier, virtually exposing the entire area to unrestricted Arab infiltration.

An official British announcement revealed today that more than 300 military and police personnel have deserted the British Army and police force in Palestine during the past two years, of whom only 77 have been apprehended.

The Palestine Government today issued a communique on its investigation of the Palestine Post bombing. The announcement said that the government failed "to establish the identity of the individuals responsible for the bombing." It added that "after the closest examination," the authorities were incapable of supporting the suspicion of the Jewish Agency that "British police personnel were concerned in the outrage."

PALESTINE ISSUE DEBATED IN BRITISH PARLIAMENT; MINISTER SAYS U.N. CAN ENFORCE PARTITION

LONDON, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- British Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech-Jones today told the House of Commons that legally the United Nations had the authority to enforce the Palestine partition decision of the General Assembly and to send troops to Palestine even if a threat to the peace had not been established.

He made this statement in opening the debate in Commons on the second reading of a government bill providing for the termination of the Palestine Mandate on May 15. Richard Butler, chief opposition speaker, announced that the opposition intends to vote for the bill. Sir Richard Acland, one of the 14 Labor members who signed a motion to reject the bill, said his group will vote against it because the bill "undermines the authority of the United Nations." Another Laborite group introduced a motion to reject the bill, on the ground that it fails to provide for the independence of Jewish and Arab states in Palestine.

Earlier today, a private meeting of the Labor Party approved the government's policy in Palestine by a large majority. It was, therefore, expected that the vote against the bill would be small, since the opposition also supports the government on this question. In defending the bill, the Colonial Secretary said that the British people "will not tolerate any new commitment in Palestine after our bitter and tragic experience."

3/11/48

DECISIVE ACTION TO PARTITION PALESTINE IS STILL POSSIBLE, U.N. SECRETARY-GENERAL SAYS

LAKE SUCCESS, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- Decisive action to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states is still possible at this late date, U.N. Secretary-General Trygve Lie told a press conference here today.

Commenting on the legal opinion issued yesterday by his staff as a U.N. working paper describing the Palestine Commission as having full power to implement partition without the authority of the Security Council, Lie said that this was primarily a Commission document. He declined to state his own views on the report to the newsmen until he had an opportunity to do so at the Security Council, he said.

The Palestine Commission today began work on a plan for setting up Provisional Councils of Government in Palestine. The plan was submitted by Eduardo Morgan, Panamanian member of the Commission.

The Commission questioned Sigfried Hoofien, who spoke on behalf of the Jewish Agency, on matters relating to the Palestine Currency Board and sterling balances. Hoofien, who is a director of the Anglo-Palestine Bank in Jerusalem, raised the question of what was to become of Palestine's share of the gold reserves of the sterling area after the termination of the Palestine Mandate.

Hoofien also said that the \$12,000,000 which is to be made available to the Palestine Commission for current expenses on May 15, when the Mandate ends, plus an estimated \$16,000,000 which would come from exports, would not be enough to meet budgetary expenses. He therefore suggested that the Commission should negotiate with the Mandatory Power on defreezing further amounts of sterling.

BRITISH LABORITES AVOID PLACING RESOLUTION ON PALESTINE BEFORE THEIR ANNUAL CONVENTION

LONDON, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- For the first time in the recent history of the British Labor Party not a single local branch of the party has introduced a Palestine resolution for consideration at the party's next annual conference, scheduled to be held at Scarborough beginning May 17, two days after Britain's Palestine Mandate terminates, it was revealed here today with the release of the conference's preliminary agenda.

Peole-Zion, the Jewish group affiliated with the Labor Party, however, has introduced a resolution on Palestine which hails the U.N. General Assembly's partition decision and declares that all member states of the U.N. are obligated to cooperate in its implementation. "Britain, which as the Mandatory Power has been responsible for the administration of the country for nearly three decades and has invoked the authority of the U.N. in this question, has an additional responsibility to ensure that the decision will be upheld," the resolution states.

Among 400 resolutions to be introduced at the conference, at least 12 propose legislation to outlaw anti-Semitism in Britain. The resolutions, expressing alarm over the increase of "fascist activities in many guises in this country," urge that the Home Secretary be granted the power to disband any group advocating racial and religious discrimination.

JEWISH DETAINEES IN KENYA TO RETURN TO PALESTINE BY JULY, BRITISH OFFICIALS SAY

JERUSALEM, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- It was officially reported here today by British authorities that Jewish detainees in Kenya will be returned to Palestine not later than July. The exact date cannot be announced until shipping arrangements are made, it was emphasized.

3/11/48

TOP NAZI OFFICIALS FOUND GUILTY BY U.S. COURT IN MASS EXTERMINATION OF JEWS

NUREMBERG, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- An American war crimes tribunal today acquitted Georg Meieritz, the only woman among 14 high Nazi officials and former generals accused of genocide.

The court brought in verdicts of guilty against eight defendants while five others were found guilty only of membership in the Gestapo, but not of participating in the Nazi program of mass-extinction of Jews and other peoples in occupied territories. The eight were sentenced to prison terms ranging from ten years to life.

JEWISH GROUPS LAUD U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISION BARRING RELIGION FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NEW YORK, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- Speaking in behalf of all major Jewish communal organizations and for a number of local Jewish Community Councils, the National Community Relations Advisory Council today hailed the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court this week which declared as unconstitutional the teaching of sectarian religion in public schools during school hours, or the use of public school buildings for this purpose.

The N.C.R.A.C. and the Synagogue Council of America, coordinating bodies respectively for Jewish secular and religious groups, had argued against the constitutionality of released time practices in a brief which they had filed as "friends of the court." In a joint statement issued here they said that the U.S. Supreme Court decision was "so sweeping as to make it appear that released time, in and of itself, is inconsistent with the Court's opinion." The statement was signed by Rabbi William F. Rosenblum, president of the Synagogue Council, and Henry Epstein, chairman of the N.C.R.A.C.

"All who cherish the American tradition of separation of church and state must feel themselves upheld by the decision of the Supreme Court in the Champaign, Ill., released time case," the statement said. "In that decision, the Court reiterated its earlier interpretation of the First and Fourteenth Amendments, as applied to the use of tax-supported facilities for the furtherance of sectarian religious indoctrination. The First Amendment, it says, has erected a wall between Church and State which must be kept high and impregnable.

"The Court now has characterized as unconstitutional all arrangements whereby pupils compelled by law to go to school for secular education are released in part from their legal duty upon the condition that they attend the religious classes. The decision is so sweeping as to make it appear that released time, in and of itself, is inconsistent with the Court's opinion."

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in a similar statement expressed the view that the decision "helps to preserve the intent of the First Amendment and safeguards freedom of religion for all Americans," adding that the "integrity of free religion and free public education has been strengthened."

ITALIAN GOVERNMENT BODY APPOINTS ORT REPRESENTATIVE TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING COMMISSION

ROME, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- A representative of the Italian ORT has been appointed a member of the Coordinating Commission for Vocational Training set up by the Labor and Education Ministries, it was announced here today. Chief purpose of this move, it was explained here, is to facilitate the employment of ORT graduates in the country's economy.

ARAB-JEWISH CONCILIATION NOT POSSIBLE AT PRESENT TIME, GOLDIE MEIRSON SAYS

WASHINGTON, Mar. 10. (JTA) - - Mrs. Goldie Meirson, head of the political department of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, ended her five-week American tour here yesterday at a dinner meeting with a group of outstanding Washington newsmen and radio correspondents. Before returning to New York the same evening she unexpectedly appeared at an overflow meeting on Palestine, addressed by Dr. Stephen S. Wise under the auspices of the Washington chapter of the American Jewish Congress, and was given a standing ovation.

She told her dinner audience that attempted conciliation with the Arabs at this time would result only in strengthening their resistance to the U.N. decision on partition, since they regard the lack of firm action by the U.N. as encouragement to proceed with violence. "Conciliation is not possible," she said, "so long as any Arab is allowed to believe that the U.N. has not made up its mind." She said that if the Mufti were removed from the scene, influential Arabs who are now terrorized by him, would come forward and that a basis of negotiation could be established.

She pointed to non-aggression pacts concluded even now between Jewish and Arab villages in Palestine as a sign of the friendly relations between the two peoples. In the course of detailed questioning, including the reasons for the British attitude, Mrs. Meirson pointed out that the British, far from practising the impartiality which they profess regarding implementation of partition, have helped to arm Arab home guards and replenish the Arab war budget by a long-deferred payment of \$1,200,000 to the Moslem Supreme Council.

The decisive factor, she told her listeners during several hours of discussion, is the spirit of the Jewish community and particularly of the young people. She stressed their determination to fight and their need for arms. Only a token international force is desired, she said, since the Jews wish no one else to do their fighting for them. The distinction between maintenance of peace in Palestine and enforcement of partition, raised by the United States at the Security Council, she termed "a legal quibble."

U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS COVER 60% OF HEBREW UNIVERSITY BUDGET, SIR LEON SIMON REPORTS

NEW YORK, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- More than 60 percent of the funds needed to support the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, whose present enrollment exceeds 1,100 students, comes from the United States, Sir Leon Simon, chairman of the University's executive council, declared today at a reception in his honor at University House, maintained by the American Friends of the Hebrew University. Sir Leon is visiting the United States at this time in connection with the current \$1,100,000 drive of the organization.

"The Hebrew University must rely on the Diaspora, particularly on the American men and women who see in it the expression of their highest hopes not only for the upbuilding of Palestine, but for conciliation between Arab and Jew," Sir Leon declared. "The founding of the Hebrew University 30 years ago may well be the planting of another seed from which it is not too much to expect sustenance and nourishment for the culture of Jews everywhere, not only in these burdened days, but for all time," he stated.

SECRETARY FORRESTAL ATTACKED BY BARTLEY CRUM FOR ROLE IN AMERICA'S PALESTINE POLICY

CLEVELAND, Mar. 10. (JTA) -- A severe attack on Secretary of Defense James Forrestal for his anti-Zionist role in formulating America's present Palestine policy was made here today by Bartley C. Crum at a mass meeting sponsored by the Jewish Community Council of Cleveland. More than 5,000 persons attended the gathering.

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