

Thursday, April 8, 1948

JTA Daily News Bulletin

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LAST MINUTE NEWS

FIRST PALESTINE TRUCE MEETING LASTS TWO HOURS; ARAB INSISTS ON UNILATERAL TALKS

LAKE SUCCESS, April 7. (JTA) -- The first Arab-Jewish meeting on a Palestine truce arranged by the U.N. Security Council lasted more than two hours today, with Moshe Shertok and Jamal Husseini facing each other for only a few minutes. Separate discussions were conducted by Dr. Alfonso Lopez, president of the Council, with Shertok and Husseini, after the Arab representative insisted on unilateral talks before joining in round-table negotiations.

Strict secrecy on today's deliberations was imposed by Dr. Lopez on both parties. In the few minutes that Shertok and Husseini joined with him, Dr. Lopez made it clear to them that the Security Council is interested in reaching an agreement with the least possible delay. He advised them to be ready to meet with him again tomorrow or the following day. (See earlier report on the truce negotiations on page 1.)

The U.N. Palestine Commission today decided to call the attention of the Security Council to the critical food situation developing in Palestine. In a special report to the Council, the Commission will emphasize the situation likely to arise in Palestine after May 15.

Today's decision was prompted by a letter which the Commission received from the British Government stating that the British will not make arrangements for the export of vital food commodities unless they receive advance payment for the amount involved in such stockpiling. The letter was in reply to a Commission request that the Palestine Government stockpile food supplies up to June 30.

The Security Council today failed to take any action on a U.S.-supported proposal to reconsider the application of Transjordan for U.N. membership. During the discussions, Soviet delegate Gromyko said he would favor the admission of Transjordan if the Russian-sponsored proposal for the admission of the Mongolian People's Republic were approved.

EGANAH CAPTURES TWO IMPORTANT ARAB STRONGHOLDS; FREE ROAD FOR CONVOYS TO JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM, April 7. (JTA) -- Eganah forces late today captured the two important Arab strongholds near Nablus and Beit Weizelstein, located between Gaza and Beisan. The captured are of paramount strategic importance to Jewish convoys traveling on the coastal plain to Jerusalem, since they assure them of safe passage.

Arab forces repulsed their attack on Mishmar HaSadeh shortly before nightfall today, firing heavy gas shells from the surrounding hills, but their shells failed to reach the settlement, falling instead in the nearby fields. All women and children in the settlement are being kept in strong, underground concrete shelters, while the men remain at their fighting posts. No Arabs have succeeded in penetrating within 500 yards of the colony.

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U.N. OPENS PALESTINE TRUCE NEGOTIATIONS WITH JEWISH AND ARAB REPRESENTATIVES

NEW YORK, April 7. (JTA) -- Negotiations for reaching an Arab-Jewish truce in Palestine in accordance with the decision of the U.N. Security Council were initiated today under the leadership of Dr. Alfonso Lopez, president of the Council. Moshe Shertok represented the Jewish Agency at the truce meeting and Jamal Husseini attended on behalf of the Arab Higher Committee. U.N. Secy.-Gen. Trygve Lie was also present.

Prior to discussing truce conditions, members of the Security Council met with U.S. delegate Warren Austin who emphasized the importance of securing British cooperation in bringing about the truce, especially since Sir Alan Cunningham, the Palestine High Commissioner, had taken the initiative several days ago in calling upon the Jews and the Arabs to arrange a cease-fire.

Soviet delegate Andrei Gromyko was again absent today from the informal meeting of the Security Council, but the Ukrainian delegate, Vassily Darassanko, attended. This was taken as an indication that Moscow is still aloof to the reversal of the U.N. partition decision, but is interested in watching closely America's diplomatic maneuvers to induce the other members of the Council to agree to its trusteeship plan for Palestine.

Effective Truce Seen As Basis for Trusteeship Negotiations

At the meeting of the Council members, Austin sought to establish the reaction of each member to the trusteeship plan, but Dr. Lopez pointed out that prior to considering trusteeship, the members must consider ways and means of implementing their resolution for reaching a truce in Palestine. He emphasized that the Jews and the Arabs appear to be very far apart on truce conditions.

The question of an effective truce as the basis for negotiations for trusteeship assumed paramount importance as the meeting proceeded. However, few of the delegates had any concrete proposals to offer. The Ukrainian delegate abstained entirely from participating in the discussions.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the French delegation issued a statement outlining the following three problems which the Security Council must solve before voting on the U.S. trusteeship plan: 1. Designation of the trustee states which are willing to assume military responsibility for the plan; 2. Securing Arab-Jewish agreement on the question of Jewish immigration in order to avoid the "tragic consequences" of immigration after the expiration of the mandate; 3. Creation of an interim police force in Palestine to serve during the transition period until the U.N. Governor would assume control.

The French statement said that the Council members must exert every effort to overcome these problems in order to clear the way for acceptance of the trusteeship proposal at the special Palestine session of the U.N. General Assembly which opens on April 16.

WISH PLANES BOMB ARABS IN FIERCE BATTLES AT SYRIAN FRONTIER AND NEAR JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM, April 7. (JTA) -- Jewish planes today bombed Arab concentrations two raging battles which developed near the Syrian frontier and around the Arab village of Castel, outside Jerusalem, which the Haganah has held since Saturday.

A large Arab force which crossed the Syrian border during the night and blew bridges leading to the Jewish settlement of Lahavoth Habashan, in northeastern Palestine, was bombed by Jewish planes after the Arabs had thrown continuous waves of well-armed guerrillas against the colony. The planes dropped 25-pound bombs on heavy gun emplacements, including artillery. Although the Jewish settlers were surrounded and cut off from immediate outside aid early in the engagement, they succeeded in launching a counter-offensive against the attackers that drove a wedge into the enemy's lines.

The Jews were forced, however, to retreat inside their defense perimeter when the Arabs brought up strong reinforcements using heavy mortars and American machineguns. Jewish fighters from neighboring colonies, who crossed several miles of swamp land around Lake Huleh to get to the settlement, attacked the raiders' flank, but were unable to break through the Arab lines.

They reported that heavy artillery, allegedly manned by Germans, was brought into play in an attempt to soften the Jews' defense ring. Members of the colony, using a small wireless transmitter, their only available means of communication with the rest of Palestine, reported to Haganah headquarters that the force of the Arab attack was mounting in ferocity. Later reports said they were still beating back the increasing waves of attackers.

In the Castel engagement, Haganah planes dropped four 25-pounders on Iraqi troops who had launched a fierce assault on the Jewish-held Arab village, which is a strategic point along the road leading to Jerusalem and whose seizure by the Haganah reportedly led to yesterday's break-through of Jewish food trucks to Jerusalem. The attack, in which 1,000 Arabs from neighboring villages joined the Iraqi guerrillas under Abdul Jabr el Shamari, began last night and resulted in heavy loss of life to the Arabs.

Not a single inch of ground was gained by the raiders, but it is apparent that they are determined to recapture the village at all costs. Late reports said that Jewish reinforcements from the surrounding area had launched an offensive on the guerrillas' rear, but results of this development were not immediately known. One unconfirmed report indicated that the Arabs had captured the adjoining Arab village of Suba.

British troops today surrounded the Jewish colony of El Yishuv, south of Haifa, and were reported to have threatened to shell the settlement unless the Jews surrendered their arms. At the same time, reports from Mishmar Haemek said that Arabs were continuing their attack on the colony, which has been in progress for the last four days.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT URGES ARAB STATES TO CHECK INVASION OF PALESTINE BY GUERRILLAS

LONDON, April 7. (JTA) -- Britain has made representations to all the Arab states except Yemen within the last few days, urging them not to permit Arab guerrillas to invade Palestine, Reuters reported here today quoting authoritative sources.

WEIZMANN POSTPONES HIS DEPARTURE FROM UNITED STATES; DELAYED BY U.N. DEVELOPMENTS

NEW YORK, April 7. (JTA) -- Dr. Chaim Weizmann, who was scheduled to leave the United States today for England on the Queen Mary, decided at the last minute to postpone his departure. The decision was taken in view of important developments which are expected here in connection with the special session of the U.N. General Assembly.

LD SAMUEL OFFERS PLAN FOR PALESTINE ADMINISTRATION UNDER UNITED NATIONS TRUSTEESHIP

LONDON, April 7. (JTA) -- A plan for the settlement of the Palestine problem under an international trusteeship system was outlined today in the House of Lords by Lord Herbert Samuel, leader of the Liberal Party and first High Commissioner for Palestine. He spoke during a debate on the government bill which provides for the termination of the British Mandate over Palestine on May 15. A second reading of the bill was adopted in principle following the debate.

Lord Samuel suggested that the administration of Palestine should be transferred to the U.N. Trusteeship Council which would appoint a commission to administer the country, following which an Arab Council and a Jewish Council would be set up which would either be elected or imposed on the respective communities wherever they might be resident, and not on a geographical basis.

Each council would pass and administer laws relating to education and other communal affairs and provision would also be made for adequate revenue to be under their control. The U.N. Commission, Lord Samuel proposed, should consult with the two councils on all important matters before taking action. If desired, there could also be a third council to represent the Christian communities.

Jewish Immigration Would Be Permitted As Recommended by UNSCOP

The present system of local government in towns and districts would continue, under the plan suggested by Lord Samuel. Jewish immigration would be permitted as recommended in the UNSCOP majority report which urged the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews. Palestine would retain the closest political and economic relations with neighboring states. The two councils would gradually agree until they eventually formed one central assembly, he added.

Lord Samuel asserted that the first condition of any settlement must be the abandonment of terrorism. The British Government must show a greater spirit of cooperation with the United Nations in the period of transition, he emphasized.

Lord Salisbury, leader of the opposition, declared that he was shocked by the government's "apparent frantic desire" to underline the fact that it was washing its hands entirely of Palestine. The British people, he said, was fed up with Palestine, "but we in Parliament are responsible people. We are members of the U.N. and cannot entirely absolve ourselves of responsibility which such membership involves.

"We shall no longer have any special responsibility in Palestine, but we shall continue to have the same responsibility as other U.N. members. It is in the interests of general peace that chaos should be avoided in that country. Civil war in Palestine might easily flare up into something very much wider," he declared.

Lord Listowel, Minister of State for the Colonies, reiterated the government's determination that British troops be withdrawn by August 1. "Nothing yet has happened or can happen in the future at Lake Success which will modify this time limit," he said, adding that British troops would not be available after May 15 to support any policy to which the agreement of both Arabs and Jews had not been obtained.

The Archbishop of York, Dr. Cyril Garbett, said Britain had a right to appeal to the United States to do everything in its power to see that a governor was appointed for Jerusalem and a force sent out--if necessary, a force of Americans--to save Jerusalem from destruction.

JEWISH ACTIONS COMMITTEE SUSPENDS ACTIVITIES OF PRAGUE JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

PRAGUE, April 7. (JTA) -- The Jewish Actions Committee today suspended the activities of the 32-member Representative Committee of the Prague Jewish Community, as well as the activities of the eight-man "Select Committee" of the Community. The Representative Committee was elected by the Jews of Prague on secret ballots. The Actions Committee expects to appoint a new group to lead the Community within the next few days.

Meanwhile, Dr. Karel Stein, chairman of the Prague Jewish Community, and Dr. Janus Rezek, secretary-general of the Community and vice-Chief Rabbi in the city, have been retained in their present posts by the Actions Committee. Both men are Zionists.

COMMUNISTS FAIL IN ATTEMPT TO BREAK UP ELECTION MEETING OF ZIONISTS IN VIENNA

VIENNA, April 7. (JTA) -- Communist groups here today unsuccessfully tried to break up a meeting arranged by the Zionist Federation which was called in connection with Sunday's elections for the Vienna Jewish Community. Minor incidents between opposing groups were also reported.

Approximately 7,000 of the 9,000 adult Austrian Jews in this city will go to the polls on Sunday. Four major lists of candidates will be on the ballots. Informed circles here today predicted a change in the present leadership of the community.

Meanwhile, American authorities in Austria announced today that they have turned over to the International Refugee Organization five Jewish refugee camps near Salzburg where 7,600 displaced Jews have been sheltered for some time.

A spokesman for the Vienna Jewish community declared today that the 160 Austrian Jews who returned here recently from Palestine are disappointed with present-day conditions in the country. He said most of them are seeking to emigrate.

MURDERER OF JEWISH MEMBER OF FRENCH CABINET DURING WAR ARRESTED IN GERMANY

PARIS, April 7. (JTA) -- Charles Develle, a member of the pro-Nazi Vichy militia during the war who was one of the murderers of the Jewish Minister for Public Education, Jean Zay, has been arrested in Germany, it was reported here today.

Zay, who served in several French Cabinets before the war, was one of the first persons arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment by the Vichy regime. In 1944, three members of the Vichy militia--including Develle--prescribed an order of release to the prison authorities and took Zay with them in an automobile. He was never heard from again.

HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT CONFISCATES REVISIONIST PAMPHLET; EDITOR FACES PROSECUTION

BUDAPEST, April 7. (JTA) -- The Ministry of Interior today confiscated copies of a Zionist-Revisionist pamphlet published in Hungary and entitled "Onward." The pamphlet has been circulated without a government permit. The editor of the publication, a Palestinian named Rosenberg, faces possible prosecution for violation of existing press regulations in the country.

JEWISH COOPERATIVES IN POLAND PLAN TO PRODUCE 8,500,000,000 ZLOTYS WORTH OF GOODS

WARSAW, April 7. (JTA) -- A plan calling for the production of eight-and-a-half billion zlotys worth of consumer goods this year by the Federation of Jewish Cooperatives in Poland was made public today. The Jewish Central Economic Union will be responsible for providing the necessary raw materials to the cooperatives, the announcement said. The Union has already begun to negotiate with government banks to obtain the loans required to finance the cooperatives' program.

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS SUBMITS PROPOSALS ON GENOCIDE TO UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE

LAKE SUCCESS, April 7. (JTA) -- A series of proposals for inclusion in the draft convention on genocide now being prepared by the United Nations was submitted last night to the U.N. Ad Hoc Committee on Genocide by Dr. Robert S. Marcus, acting political director of the World Jewish Congress.

The proposals urge that preventative measures should not be confined to parties to the convention, but should be universal; that all parties should be obliged to take action to prevent acts of genocide before actual destruction of groups commences; that provisions should be made to compel states to extradite to the U.N. persons responsible for crimes of genocide; that provisions for reparation of material damage should be made, and that the convention should prohibit economic and other measures short of outright destruction of life which may ultimately lead to partial or complete destruction of any group.

Dr. Marcus also suggested that the convention should provide for a supervisory body authorized to call the attention of the signatories to the non-compliance of its provisions, to advise member states on action necessary to prevent genocide and to consider petitions by groups and individuals who feel so endangered.

AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY PLAN TO ENROLL 50,000 MEMBERS; SEEK FUNDS

NEW YORK, April 7. (JTA) -- A plan to enroll 50,000 members in the American Friends of the Hebrew University was outlined at a press conference here today by Dr. Israel S. Wechsler, president of the organization, who said that annual membership dues will be set at between \$10. and \$25.

The purpose of building up a mass membership, Dr. Wechsler explained, is to secure at least \$500,000 a year from membership dues for the University, and at the same time to make the institution's activities better known in the United States.

The present budget of the Hebrew University is approximately \$2,000,000 annually, eighty percent of which must be raised in the United States. The American Friends have undertaken to raise \$1,125,000 this year, part of which will probably come from the United Jewish Appeal of Greater New York. However, the national U.J.A. has declined to include the University in its budget this year, Dr. Wechsler said. The University's present enrollment is more than 1,000, with a substantial number of the students from the United States, he reported.

J.D.C. IS BAKING 1,000,000 POUNDS OF PASSOVER MATZOH IN MUNICH AND FRANKFURT FACTORIES

NEW YORK, April 7. (JTA) -- Nearly 1,000,000 pounds of matzoh for the coming Passover holidays are being baked in Munich and Frankfurt factories, with flour shipped from the United States by the Joint Distribution Committee, Rabbi Solomon Shapiro declared today at a press conference prior to his return to Europe where he will resume his duties as J.D.C. director of religious affairs in the U.S. zone of Germany.

Rabbi Shapiro reported that a Rabbinical Council comprising 90 rabbis in 60 DP camps and 32 communities in the U.S. zone of Germany has been set up to coordinate the program of religious activities. Under J.D.C. auspices and with the U.S. Army's permission, he said, the Babylonian Talmud is presently being printed in Heidelberg and will be distributed to religious schools and rabbis shortly.