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ARABS LAUNCH MAJOR ATTACK ON JEWISH POSITIONS IN LATRUN AREA; CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES

TEL AVIV, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- Arab troops in the Latrun area today launched an attack against the Jewish-held heights overlooking the strategic Jerusalem-Haifa highway. Casualties were inflicted on both sides after the Jews recaptured positions lost in an earlier withdrawal. This is the first major battle in the area since the beginning of the second truce.

The enemy raid was carried out by Arab Legion infantry units supported by armored vehicles. Previously the strategic "Burma Road" was subjected to intensive Arab artillery shelling in an attempt to disrupt Israeli communications. Jerusalem-bound traffic along the vital link continued despite the barrage. Israeli batteries retaliated by shelling the Ramallah-Latrun road, closing it to Arab traffic.

Twenty-six Sternists today broke out of an Israeli jail near Tel Aviv. A large force of military police was put on their trail and all but one of the extremists was recaptured by tonight.

An Israeli spokesman revealed today that an investigation has been ordered into Arab charges that Israeli fighters yesterday shot down an Arab plane, killing two British correspondents. The spokesman denied that Israeli representative to the United States Eliahu Epstein told newsmen in Washington that he approved internationalization of Jerusalem.

A Revisionist Party member of the State Council last night announced during the course of a debate on the emergency defense regulations against terrorism that his party would support the government on this matter "because of the necessity for strengthening the state of Israel for total mobilization." The Council thereupon unanimously approved the emergency measures, which are already in effect.

Irgun-Sponsored Political Party Asks Immediate Elections

The Irgun-sponsored Freedom Movement today demanded that general elections be held immediately and criticized the Provisional Government for assuming "dictatorial powers" by issuing new emergency regulations and continuing the emergency regulations of the former Mandatory Power. The Freedom Movement announced that it would "continue to wage a public battle against a regime of military courts and concentration camps."

The Mizrahi World Conference meeting here decided today to form a united religious party in order to support the Orthodox platform in the forthcoming elections. The Mizrahi executive was empowered to negotiate with the other religious parties in Israel towards this end.

U.S. WILL NOT TIE ADMISSION OF ISRAEL TO THAT OF TRANSJORDAN, SPOKESMAN SAYS

PARIS, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- The United States delegation here did not discuss Secretary of State George C. Marshall's statement urging the admission of Israel and Transjordan at its daily delegation meeting, a spokesman revealed today. He side-stepped all questions about American support for Israel's application being contingent upon the Jewish state's acceptance of the Bernadotte proposals.

He indicated, however, that while Transjordan and Israel were linked in Secretary Marshall's statement the United States would maintain its longstanding opposition to "package deals." To underscore this position, the spokesman said, the U.S. delegation is considering a resolution to remind the Assembly that the International Court of Justice has ruled against applying conditions of reciprocity to the admission of new members to the U.N.

In an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Guatemalan delegate Jose Garcia Granados declared that regardless of what decision emerged from the Assembly debate on Palestine, Israel will have to maintain a strong defense force for a long time. If they are "very substantially amended," Granados said, the Bernadotte proposals could provide a basis for a settlement.

In particular, the Guatemalan delegate said, he feels that exchanging part of the Negev for Western Galilee would make Israel a more compact and more easily defended state than was envisaged in the original U.N. partition decision. He added that he will fight all attempts to amputate all of the Negev from Israel. He also said that he believes that Israel ought to agree to establishing Haifa as a free port and Lydda as a free airport.

Syria Says U.N. Assembly Can Discuss but Not Act on Palestine

The U.N. General Assembly today formally approved its General (steering) Committee's recommendation that the Palestine question be placed on the agenda. At the same time, Syria's Faris el Khouri placed a stumbling block in the path of early Assembly action on Bernadotte's proposals.

Scoring a legal victory without a single delegate rising to challenge him, the Arab spokesman insisted that the Assembly could only discuss Bernadotte's plan but could not recommend any action on it because the Security Council has "seized" the question. El Khouri quoted a provision of the U.N. Charter which forbids the Assembly from intervening in a case on which the Council is acting, except at the request of the Council.

U.N. COMMITTEE GETS ASSIGNMENT TO DRAFT INTERNATIONAL PACT OUTLAWING GENOCIDE

PARIS, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- The question of United Nations action on genocide was today referred to the General Assembly's Legal Committee where an international treaty or convention outlawing the mass murder of a people will be drafted.

A petition bearing the signatures of 23,000,000 persons from 23 different nations and demanding the enactment of an international convention to outlaw genocide will shortly be presented to Assembly president Herbert V. Evatt, of Australia, it was learned here today. Although a discussion of the genocide convention is already on the Assembly agenda, it is certain to face strong opposition within the Assembly's Legal Committee where an attempt will be made to postpone consideration of the issue.

ADMISSION OF ISRAEL TO STERLING BLOC NOT CONSIDERED "AT PRESENT" BY BRITAIN

LONDON, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- A United Nations decision on Palestine should be applied and supported with "vigor," Lord Herbert Samuel declared last night during the course of a foreign policy debate in the House of Lords. The first British High Commissioner for Palestine said he hoped that the Bernadotte plan for Palestine would be carried out with some minor amendments.

Lord Henderson, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, announced that readmission of Israel to the sterling bloc "could not be considered at present." He also said that the most fitting tribute to Count Bernadotte would be acceptance of his proposals as the basis for peace in Palestine.

British Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie today appealed to the British people not to permit the use of Bernadotte's murder as a pretext for anti-Semitism. In a letter to the London Times, Rabbi Brodie reminded the British of the recent treatment afforded the Jews by the Nazis and declared that the "fatal temptation" of condemning an entire community for the crime of an individual has been responsible for "some of the greatest tragedies" in history.

DR. SILVER LISTS FOUR REASONS WHY ISRAEL CANNOT AFFORD TO SURRENDER NEGEV

NEW YORK, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver last night listed four major reasons why the state of Israel cannot surrender the Negev to the Arabs as recommended by the late U.N. mediator Count Folke Bernadotte. In a statement to the press the chairman of the American section of the Jewish Agency declared that the enemies of Israel are attempting to use the assassination of Bernadotte to cripple the Jewish state.

The first reason which Rabbi Silver advanced for the impossibility of Israel's agreeing to the loss of the Negev was that by so doing the Jewish state would be drastically reducing its agricultural land reserve and thereby reducing its capacity to absorb immigration. "In this way," he pointed out, "the persistent objective of the enemies of Israel, which has ever been to prevent or severely limit Jewish immigration into Palestine, would be achieved."

In surrendering the southern area, the Jews would be also giving up all access to the mineral deposits of the Dead Sea, he stated. "These minerals, Rabbi Silver added, constitute perhaps the only reserve of valuable minerals available to Israel and the 'basis of a varied and highly skilled chemical industry.' Loss of the area would also deprive Israel of the possible use of a port at Akaba on the Red Sea and the likely possibility of oil deposits. The latter is "perhaps the real reason why it is now proposed to take this territory away from Israel and hand it over to a puppet of Britain," he asserted.

Turning to the proposed internationalization of Jerusalem, Rabbi Silver said that the Jews originally agreed to such a proposal on the assumption that the Arabs would respect U.N. control of the city and not molest its 90,000 Jewish inhabitants. However, subsequent developments have proved that the Arabs do not intend to permit the U.N. to maintain Jerusalem as an international city, he stated.

"It is inconceivable that the Jews of Jerusalem and Israel will ever again consent to leave Jerusalem in the midst of a hostile Arab sea, unconnected with Israel, and with no greater security for their lives and property than would be involved in the nominal 'control' of the United Nations," he declared.

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ILSE KOCH'S CASE CLOSED, SECRETARY OF ARMY SAYS; COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE IS FINAL

WASHINGTON, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- The decision of the European Command to commute the life sentence of Ilse Koch to four years is considered final by the Army Department and cannot now be increased, Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall said in a letter to Senator Raymond Baldwin of Connecticut, today. Frau Koch was convicted of charges of torturing prisoners at the Buchenwald death camp, being responsible for the death of many and of having some executed in order to obtain human skins for lampshades, book covers and other objects.

Senators Baldwin, Charles W. Tobey of New Hampshire, Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts, and Congressman Emanuel Celler of New York, last week wrote Secretary Royall asking him to explain why General Lucius D. Clay, Commanding General of the European Command, had signed the commutation order. Royall also told the members of Congress that while he had not personally seen the record in the Koch and 12 similar cases, he was "convinced that all of the convictions and sentences therein were carefully considered by the European Command and that the result represents their best judgment--a judgment which in other matters I have found exceedingly sound, and certainly not erring on the side of softness toward German criminals."

Meanwhile, the possibility of a Congressional investigation of the commutation mounted here today as the wave of protests against the easement of sentence by Gen. Clay grew in intensity. Sen. Homer Ferguson of Michigan, chairman of the Senate Investigations Sub-Committee, yesterday stated that there was a definite possibility of a Senatorial investigation if the Army does not provide a satisfactory explanation of the action.

The Army yesterday released a message from Gen. Clay explaining the reasons for the commutation. The reason for the reduction of sentence--under which Frau Koch will be free in October, 1949--he said, was because "evidence of her participation" in the atrocities and murders committed at Buchenwald, which was once commanded by her late husband, did not warrant so severe a punishment. "There is no convincing evidence that she selected inmates for extermination in order to secure tattooed skin or that she possessed any articles made of human skin," Gen. Clay added.

Commutation Protested by Members of Court which Sentenced Koch

Among the new protests are those of Gen. Emil C. Kell, commandant of Scott Field, who was president of the eight-man military court which originally sentenced Frau Koch. Gen. Kiel, who said he was "surprised" and "rather shocked" at the commutation, revealed that Col. Edward Walker, another member of the court, felt the same way.

Lt. Col. Othmar Eichmann, former chief of the Evidence and Investigation Center of the U.S. War Crimes Commission, who collected and translated the evidence against Ilse Koch, said he was "speechless" with amazement at the action. William D. Denson and Robert Kunzig, chief and deputy chief prosecutor, respectively, at the Koch trial, have protested the commutation as a "travesty on justice."

In an article written for the Overseas News Agency Denson takes issue with the European Command's statement that there is no reason to believe that she selected prisoners for execution in order to obtain their tattooed skins or that she did not have any objects made of human skin in her possession. Denson said that a lampshade, a brief case and a pair of gloves made of human skin were found in her room and a witness testified to seeing a book cover in her possession that was made of the tattooed skin of a prisoner who vanished shortly after she carefully noted down his number.

GESTAPO OFFICIAL POSING AS JEW IS RECOGNIZED; SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT

MUNICH, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- Erich Hohn, who served as a Gestapo official during the war, was sentenced today to three years imprisonment by the Bamberg court after he was exposed by members of a refugee group of which he had succeeded in becoming a vice-chairman.

One of the founders of the Gestapo organization in Reichenberg, Hohn changed his name after the war to "Julius Israel Holm" and posed as a Jew and a former concentration camp victim. Recently, just prior to discovery of his identity, he was elected vice-chairman of Bamberg branch of the Association of Former Persecutees of the Nazi Regime.

RUMANIAN WAR CRIMINAL WHO DIRECTED MURDER OF OVER 70 JEWS GETS LIFE IMPRISONMENT

BUCHAREST, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- Vladimir Russu, a war criminal who was found guilty of murdering more than 70 Jews during the Nazi regime in the old Jewish town of Sadagura, was sentenced today to life imprisonment.

In 1941, following the retreat of the Russians from Bukovina, Russu--taking advantage of the temporary dislocation and lack of military protection in Sadagura--set himself up as police chief. Shortly thereafter, with the aid of several Rumanian fascists, he ordered the town's Jewish population to proceed to a nearby forest. After digging their own graves, the Jews were shot, with only two succeeding in escaping.

WAR CRIMINAL RESPONSIBLE FOR MASS MURDER IN POLISH TOWN SENTENCED TO DEATH

WARSAW, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- George Paul Schmidt, one of the leaders of the extermination program in Czenstochowa, who was found guilty of participating in the mass murder of hundreds of Jews there, was sentenced to death today by a war crimes court.

A group of 58 war criminals has been repatriated from the Soviet Union to Poland and is expected to stand trial shortly. They were originally arrested by Soviet authorities in the Russian occupation zone of Germany.

WARTIME GESTAPO OFFICIAL ARRESTED BY AUSTRIAN POLICE; POLAND SEEKS HIS EXTRADITION

VIENNA, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- Helmuth Kienast, wartime Gestapo official who has been accused by survivors of the Linz concentration camp of brutality towards camp inmates, was arrested today by Austrian police officials in Innsbruck, in the French zone. The Polish Government previously demanded that Kienast be extradited to Poland where he is wanted as a war criminal.

ORT VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM WILL ENABLE HANDICAPPED DP'S TO EARN LIVELIHOOD

NEW YORK, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- The ORT's vocational retraining program for displaced Jews in Germany will insure that handicapped and disabled trainees will be able to earn a livelihood after they are resettled in the United States, Israel or elsewhere, it was reported here today by the World ORT Union.

Special rehabilitation centers for handicapped Jews have been established by the ORT in cooperation with the International Refugee Organization, the Joint Distribution Committee, the Jewish Agency and the Central Committee of Liberated Jews. Jewish invalids who receive ORT training will be granted allowances by the Bavarian Provincial Government in order to ease the financial burden imposed on them during their period of training.

JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN LOWER SILESIA RAISE 10,000,000 ZLOTYS TO BUILD THEATRE

WARSAW, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- A total of 10,000,000 zlotys has been raised among the Jewish communities in Lower Silesia for the erection of a Jewish theatre in Wroclaw. The sum was contributed by Jews living in Walzbich, Richbach, Wroclaw and Lignitz.

ARGENTINE PAPERS URGE ACTION AGAINST ANTI-SEMITIC GROUP; VICE-PRESIDENT RECEIVES TOFF

BUEENOS AIRES, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- Several newspapers today demanded police action against an organization calling itself the "Argentine League for the Rights of Non-Jewish Man," whose members have been distributing leaflets defamatory of Dr. Chaim Weizmann. The League has also urged the expulsion from Argentina of Moses Toff, Israeli Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who is now in this country. Toff is described by the League as a "traitor."

The address of the organization is identical with that of the "National Socialist Revolutionary Movement" which distributes pamphlets with an imprinted swastika. The Movement is an anti-government party.

Argentine Vice-President Hortensio Quijano today received Mr. Toff. The Israeli official refused to comment on a report published in La Razon yesterday which stated that high Argentine officials doubt that any action will be taken towards recognition of Israel until after "the U.N. has acted on the problem raised by the assassination of Count Bernadotte."

CASE OF JEWISH WOMAN WHO REFUSES TO WORK ON SABBATH BROUGHT BEFORE PENNSYLVANIA COURT

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- The Pennsylvania Superior Court will consider the case of a Jewish woman who, because she refused to work on the Sabbath, was denied State Unemployment Compensation Board benefits. She rejected a position offered her by the Board because it required working on Saturday.

Leo Pfeffer, assistant national director of the American Jewish Congress, has asked the court to reverse the Board's decision on the grounds that it was within the woman's right to refuse to work on Saturday, "since working on the Jewish Sabbath is in violation of her religious observance." Sabbath observance, Pfeffer argued, whether it be on Saturday or Sunday, is a basic tenet of religious freedom.

FIVE PROTESTANT MINISTERS RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDY AT HEBREW UNION COLLEGE

NEW YORK, Sept. 24. (JTA) -- Five Protestant ministers have been awarded fellowships for graduate studies at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati during the school year beginning October 23, it was announced here by Dr. Nelson Glueck, president of the College-Institute.

The Graduate Christian Fellowship Program is designed to help Christian clergymen prepare themselves to teach Bible and Semitic languages in their theological seminaries and colleges and to give them a clear and accurate understanding of Judaism.