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BRITISH CABINET APPROVES RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL; WILL ANNOUNCE DECISION IN PARLIAMENT

LONDON, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- Formal approval of British recognition of the state of Israel was given today by the Cabinet following a meeting at which Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin presented a report on the current Middle East situation, it was indicated by a government source. The decision will be announced in Parliament by Bevin, the same source said.

Circles close to the Foreign Office indicated that Britain may recognize only the Government of Israel and not the state, under the pretext that the frontiers of the state "have not yet been established."

The Board of Deputies of British Jews yesterday adopted a resolution calling on the British Government to grant immediate recognition to Israel. The resolution stated that the retention of Jerusalem and the Negev by Israel is indispensable to the security and economic welfare of the Jewish state.

FRANCE GRANTS RECOGNITION TO ISRAEL; SAYS RECOGNITION DOES NOT PRE-JUDGE BORDERS

PARIS, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- The French Government today granted de facto recognition to Israel, an official communique announced. The announcement declared that France made its decision following the satisfactory conclusion of an exchange of views between the two governments.

"This decision does not pre-judge the definite demarcation, with United Nations approval, of territory on which the Government of Israel will exercise its authority," the announcement said.

Maurice Fischer, Israeli representative here, commenting on the French Government's action, declared: "I am happy that France took the lead among Western European countries in the matter of recognition. The sympathy of the French people for Israel has been expressed often since the creation of the Jewish state and it is a great satisfaction that the government officially recognizes the object of this sympathy. Accepting, us despite friendship with the Arabs and the numerous Moslem citizens of France shows that the government thinks that the existence of Israel is a factor for peace and progress in the Middle East."

ITALY REPORTED TO HAVE RECOGNIZED ISRAEL; GOVERNMENT PREPARES OFFICIAL STATEMENT

ROME, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- A report that the Italian Government has formally recognized Israel was published today in the newspaper "Il Giornale della Sera." The Foreign Ministry refused to confirm or deny the report, but said that an official statement is being prepared.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman indicated here during the week-end that Italy is prepared to recognize the state of Israel as soon as recognition is extended by Britain and France. Meanwhile, it has extended diplomatic recognition to the Israeli consul in Rome, who last November was authorized to engage in consular activities which have consisted chiefly of issuing visas. He was also permitted to fly the Israeli flag over his office.

ISRAEL TO VOTE TODAY IN FIRST NATIONAL ELECTIONS; CAMPAIGN REACHES HIGH PEAK

TEL AVIV, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- All factories and business establishments in Israel will be closed tomorrow from 8 A.M. to midnight to permit all residents to go to the polls in the Jewish state's first national elections. The government has proclaimed election day a national holiday.

Electioneering in Tel Aviv and other centers of Israel hit peak heights today during the last 24 hours before balloting. The government has forbidden all political rallies or electioneering tomorrow. Israel's 21 parties poured out of their meeting halls and into the streets where stationary amplifiers and sound trucks vied with each other in blaring forth slogans and admonishments.

The main street of this city, like the central square of every town in the country, was the scene of numerous meetings with one party following another to the microphones according to a pre-arranged schedule. The crowds listened patiently and almost no disorder was reported. Police and ambulances stationed in Mograbi Square, the traffic hub of Tel Aviv, stood by with nothing to do. The major contenders in the propaganda fight are the Mapai and the Freedom Movement, both of which have flooded Tel Aviv with posters.

Reports from Jerusalem stated that huge crowds gathered in Zion Square to hear political speakers, while police stood by on emergency duty as loudspeakers sounded throughout the day and evening and pamphlets were showered down on the throng from the roof tops. Last-minute distribution of identify cards continued even as motor caravans filled with shouting men and women toured the city under police escort to urge the voters to cast their ballots for one or another of the parties. Walls, shopwindows and automobiles were plastered with political posters.

Cabinet Will Make No Decision on Rhodes Talks Until After Elections

Addressing an election meeting, Premier David Ben Gurion stressed Israel's peaceful intentions toward its neighbors and expressed the hope that the Jewish state could develop good relations with the surrounding Arab countries. He insisted that "not one drop of blood will be shed" by the Jews to aid the creation of a Palestine Arab state, adding that Israel will not interfere in Arab internal politics.

No final decision will be reached by the Israeli Cabinet on the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations on Rhodes prior to the elections, it was learned here today following a report on the parley by Moshe Shertok, Israeli Foreign Minister, to the Cabinet last night.

Speaking at a conference in Tel Aviv yesterday, Col. Moshe Dayan, Israeli military commander of Jerusalem, declared that Israel will never agree to the internationalization of the new city of Jerusalem. He added that negotiations on Jerusalem with the Arabs is difficult because the latter do not feel that they have lost the war. He insisted that the only way to secure Jerusalem for Israel was to link it with the remainder of the territory of the Jewish state by establishing a chain of settlements.

Menachem Beigin, leader of the Freedom Party, asserted at ceremonies marking the opening of a Heruth settlement--named "Ramat Raziel"--that "we can now replace a policy of fighting for a policy of colonization. We can change our policy since the state of Israel is already firmly established," he added.

Located near Jerusalem in the Judean hills, Ramat Raziel is manned chiefly by Americans who arrived in Israel aboard the ill-fated S.S. Altalena. A number of French chelutzim who joined the disbanded Irgun Zvai Leumi when they arrived in Palestine are also among the settlers.

U.N. SPOKESMAN SAYS "ALL IS WELL" AT ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN ARMISTICE NEGOTIATIONS

LONDON, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- A United Nations official spokesman today announced in Rhodes that "all is well and the immediate difficulties have been solved" with regard to the Israeli-Egyptian armistice talks taking place on the Greek island, Reuters reported.

The spokesman declared that U.N. mediator Dr. Ralph J. Bunche had met with serious difficulties during his talks with the Egyptian and Israeli delegations, but that the situation improved following a meeting between Bunche and the Egyptians today. The meeting took place after an all-night conference between Dr. Bunche and the Israeli delegation which started at 11 o'clock last night and concluded at 5 o'clock this morning.

BRITISH GOVT. DEFENDS SENDING TROOPS TO AQABA; SAYS IT DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH U.N. ORDERS

LONDON, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- The British Government's dispatch of troops to the Transjordan port of Aqaba was "wise and necessary," Christopher Mayhew, Foreign Under-Secretary, declared today in Commons.

Replying to questions posed by several M.P.'s, Mayhew again stated that the action was taken after consultation with Transjordan. He added that the decision to send troops did not conflict with any U.N. Security Council resolutions aimed at localizing and settling the Palestine war.

MARK ETHRIDGE, U.S. MEMBER OF PALESTINE CONCILIATION COMMISSION, CONFERS WITH ACHESON

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- Mark F. Ethridge, newly-appointed American member of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, expects to proceed directly to Jerusalem to join the French and Turkish members of the Commission within ten days, it was reported here today. The French and Turkish members were scheduled to arrive in Jerusalem today.

Ethridge, whose appointment was disclosed by the White House over the weekend, conferred today with Secretary of State Dean Acheson. An editor in Louisville, Ky., Ethridge succeeds Joseph B. Keenan who resigned for personal reasons.

British Ambassador Sir Oliver Franks had "a brief talk about Palestine" with Secretary of State Dean Acheson today, but refused any further comment on his visit. He was accompanied by Thomas E. Bromley, British Embassy officer concerned with Palestine affairs.

U.N. CONCILIATION COMMISSION MEMBERS EXPECTED IN JERUSALEM; ACCOMMODATIONS PREPARED

JERUSALEM, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- The arrival of the French and Turkish members of the United Nations Palestine Conciliation Commission was expected here tonight. They will be accompanied by some 20 staff members while the remaining 60 members of the staff are expected to arrive later.

Special passes will be required for persons attempting to enter the King David Hotel during the time the members of the Commission reside there, it was learned today. The building will be heavily guarded, as will be the former British Government House in which the Commission offices will be located. Arab and Jewish workmen are proceeding at top speed with repairing both the interior and the exterior of the building.

FIRST 1,500 JEWS TO LEAVE CYPRUS SINCE BRITISH RELEASE ORDER SAIL ABOARD ISRAELI SHIP

FAMAGUSTA, Cyprus, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- The 4,500-ton Israeli steamer Galila today entered this port and began taking on 1,500 immigrants for the 12-hour trip to Haifa. This group of refugees, which includes 110 infants, is the first to be removed following Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin's announcement that Britain will release the 11,000 Jews detained on Cyprus.

British troops assisted the Jews in bearding the vessel and in loading their baggage into the holds. A holiday atmosphere pervaded the entire operation, with the Jews demonstrating no resentment toward their former jailers. In the camps every tent and Nissen hut is jammed with home-made boxes and suitcases in which freshly washed and patched clothing and other personal possessions have been packed in anticipation of the entry into Israel, goal of a voyage which in some cases began two years ago.

"OPERATION CYPRUS" GIVEN FIRST PRIORITY BY \$250,000,000 UNITED JEWISH APPEAL

NEW YORK, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- "Operation Cyprus," involving the transfer to Israel in the coming weeks of 11,000 Jewish refugees interned in British camps on the Mediterranean island, will be the first major task undertaken by the \$250,000,000 United Jewish Appeal in 1949, it was announced today by William Rosenwald, Herman L. Welsman and Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, national chairmen of the U.J.A.

A joint operation of the Joint Distribution Committee and the United Palestine Appeal--both of which are constituent agencies of the U.J.A.--"Operation Cyprus" has been set in motion, following the decision of the British Government to release the Jewish refugees as soon as transportation for them is provided by the Jewish authorities.

Transportation of the 11,000 Jews detained on Cyprus to Israel will be completed within two or three weeks, the Joint Distribution Committee said here today. The J.D.C. office revealed that arrangements have already been completed with the Messed Shipping Agency of Israel to provide adequate shipping facilities to bring the Cyprus Jews from the port of Famagusta to Haifa.

JEWISH AGENCY CALLS FOR CESSATION OF STREET COLLECTIONS FOR ISRAEL IN U.S.

NEW YORK, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, chairman of the American section of the Jewish Agency, today announced a decision of that body calling for the cessation of all street collections having to do with Israel, with the exception of the long-established, traditional annual flag and flower days of the Jewish National Fund.

In making public this unanimous action, Dr. Silver stated that letters are going forward to the various organizations which have been sponsoring such street collections, urging that they cooperate in putting the Jewish Agency's decision into effect. Dr. Silver also urged all friends of Israel to refrain from contributing to these soliciting funds on the streets.

JEWISH NATIONAL FUND PLANS \$320,000,000 LAND PURCHASE UNDER FIVE-YEAR PLAN

JERUSALEM, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- Joseph Waitz, chief of the settlement department of the Jewish National Fund, today announced that 4,000,000 dunams of land must be purchased at an approximate cost of \$320,000,000 under the J.N.F.'s current five-year plan. He added that it is also planned to establish 75,000 farms with a family of about five persons on each unit.

DISPLACED JEWS IN ITALY FEAR THEY MAY BE CONFINED TO GHETTOS UNDER I.R.O. PACT

ROME, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- A new agreement concerning the status of Jewish displaced persons camps in Italy, which was reached here by the Italian Government and the International Refugee Organization, was today criticized in Jewish circles.

Jewish DP leaders expressed fear that the refugee centers might, under the new agreement, be turned into ghettos and the "liberty and movements of displaced Jews in this country might be seriously restricted." The Jewish leaders charged that the agreement was inspired by the I.R.O., and voiced the belief that the pact would confine displaced Jews to given areas.

Meanwhile, the Italian steamer S.S. Abacia sailed from Genoa today carrying 187 Israel-bound Czechoslovak Jews and 84 DP's who have been living in Italy.

MURDERER OF JEWISH SECRETARY OF BAVARIAN PRIME MINISTER GETS FIVE-YEAR JAIL TERM

MUNICH, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- Paul Wiese was sentenced to five years imprisonment here for murdering Felix Fechenbach, a Jew who served as secretary to the Bavarian Prime Minister, Kurt Eisner, in the early 1930's. Wiese shot Fechenbach in 1933.

Johan Boehm, formerly secretary of the Gestapo in Nuremberg, was sentenced to three years service in a labor camp for plundering Jewish property during the war, following the deportation of the Jewish community of Nuremberg to the Theresienstadt concentration camp. The sentence was imposed by a denazification court in Nuremberg.

POLISH COURTS IMPOSE DEATH SENTENCES ON GERMANS WHO TORTURED AND EXECUTED JEWS

WARSAW, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- Ludwig Hessler, a former Gestapo official, was hanged here for cruelties he practiced against inmates of the Jewish concentration camp in Prokocim. Piotr Felishak, a Pole who became a German citizen during the occupation of Poland, was sentenced to death for executing prisoners in the Jewish concentration camp in Sonnenburg.

In Poznan, the court imposed the death sentence on Fryderyk Neuman, director of the Jewish slave labor camps in the province of Poznan during the war, who was found guilty of inflicting inhuman cruelties on the laborers under his supervision. Witnesses testified that Neuman forced 250 sick Jews in the Krsyshevnik concentration camp into a barracks house where they perished from starvation.

Eugeniush Matviejchuk, a Ukrainian who was found guilty of participating in the liquidation of the ghetto in the Polish town of Kamien-Koshirski, was sentenced today to eight years imprisonment.

PARLIAMENT TAKES UP DESECRATION OF JEWISH CEMETERIES IN BRITISH ZONE OF GERMANY

LONDON, Jan. 24. (JTA) -- The question of desecration of Jewish cemeteries in the British zone of Germany was raised in Parliament today. Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs Christopher Mayhew said, in reply to a question, that eight cases of desecrated Jewish cemeteries in the British zone have definitely been established.

Investigations conducted by British officials, Mayhew stated, led to the apprehension of six culprits responsible for the vandalism. With one exception, all of these vandals were children, he added, who have been using the burial grounds as play areas. The sixth person responsible for the damage was a stonemason who stole grave-stones from the cemeteries and who was fined "100 tombstones" for his deed, the Under-Secretary said.

