

Plight of Jews in Camps in Germany.

URGENT APPEAL TO POTSDAM CONFERENCE.

London.

The World Jewish Congress last Friday sent an urgent appeal to the Potsdam conference drawing attention to the plight of many thousands of Jews in Germany and asking that immediate steps may be taken to end their misery.

The congress decided on direct appeal to the three leaders after other representations had failed to secure opportunities of redress.

CONDITIONS OF ABJECT MISERY.

On the basis of reports received from several repatriation and repatriation camps, the European division of the congress says that nearly three months after the liberation of Europe thousands of victims of the Nazi terror are still detained as prisoners in "conditions of most abject misery", and that "they are being treated with shameful neglect and indifference" by the military control authorities.

The World Jewish Congress complained that relief organisations had been refused permission to send food parcels to the camps, and that there were no liaison officers.

The European division of the Congress on April 15 wrote to Mr. Churchill asking that a delegation visit the camps. Mr. Churchill, replying on April 25, said the matter was one for the competent military authority and that he was referring it to the War Office with the expression of the hope that the request might be given sympathetic consideration.

A Jewish spokesman stated that deadlock had been reached at the War Office, but the Foreign Office had shown most sympathetic interest throughout.

APPALLING.

Conditions at one camp where there were 1,200 Jewish women were described as appalling. There was not a handkerchief or a toothbrush among the 1,200. Many of the women had only recently recovered from typhus.

According to reports received by the Jewish authorities, there are still 18,000 persons at Belsen, 10,000 in hospital and 6,000 walking about. Between 70 and 80 per cent. are Jewish.

At Lingen, a camp for stateless Jews, people are housed in "indescribably filthy" huts.

Generally, there is a serious lack of doctors, nurses and medical supplies. Cases are quoted of Jews being put in charge of their former victims, and "treating them with neglect and contempt".

The Congress urged that much of the burden as regards the Jews were concerned could be lifted by the appointment of Jewish liaison officers.

BOARD OF DEPUTIES RESOLUTION.

The Board of Deputies has expressed deep concern at the desperate position of the stateless, repatriable and displaced Jews of Germany and Austria. A resolution passed at a recent meeting appealed to the Government to bring before the heads of the Governments meeting in Potsdam the immediate need of enabling survivors of Nazism to be restored to normal conditions of life. Palestine alone offered favourable conditions for their rehabilitation. Prof. Brodetsky said that the Jews of America, Britain and France could do little, despite the large funds that had been mobilised. Until recently Jewish teams had not been admitted to work among the Jews in the camps.

New Settlement for Demobilised Soldiers.

Jerusalem.

A new settlement for demobilised soldiers was established recently at Genossar on the eastern shores of Lake Galilee, on 4,200 dunams of Keren Hagayim land. A pioneer group has now begun setting up foundations and buildings prior to release from the army of soldiers who will settle there.

Palestinian Artist at Albert Hall

London.

The 22-year-old musician, Ivry Ghitlis, of Haifa, who played during the war to British and Allied troops, successfully performed at the Albert Hall before an audience of 6,000, including 100 Palestinian ex-prisoners of war. He played Mendelssohn's concerto, accompanied by the London Symphony Orchestra.

Jerusalem.

Over 1,000 guests celebrated the 10th anniversary of Sha'ar Ha'amakim, a Keren Hayesod settlement at the "gates" of the Valley of Jezreel.

Soviet Citizens in Palestine.

YISHUV AMAZED AT TASS AGENCY ALLEGATIONS.

Jerusalem.

The Yishuv read with amazement the report issued by Tass, the official Soviet news agency, to the effect that Soviet citizens in Palestine who desire to return to the U.S.S.R. were being persecuted by Jewish organisations.

The facts are as follows:

A Soviet Military Repatriation Mission, consisting of Lieut.-Col. Karassov and Major Simny, arrived in Palestine recently and was given facilities and office-space by the Government Department of Migration for the registration of Soviet citizens who wish to return to the U.S.S.R.

Advertisements were inserted in the press and broadcast from Jerusalem radio calling upon people desirous to return to register. Some 40 people replied, mainly Christian Russians and Ukrainians who had arrived in Palestine with the Polish army via Teheran in 1942.

ORPHANS INTERVIEWED.

The Soviet envoy then asked the Jewish Agency for permission to interview the Jewish orphans who had come to Palestine from Transdnistria, former Roumanian territory, in order to ascertain whether they wished to return. Although it was known that the children were actually Roumanian citizens who had been deported to Soviet territory near Odessa, the Jewish Agency willingly provided facilities for the Russian officers to meet the youths in Kibbutzim and among Youth Aliyah groups.

The Soviet Mission received from Jewish official bodies the fullest information regarding the whereabouts of the children and all facilities to visit and talk freely to them.

It is understood that the children insisted that they wished to remain in Palestine, where they were happy, excepting one girl who desired to return to Russia. She was not hindered by anybody in her wish. A number of adults who wished to return were also not hampered.

A thorough enquiry discloses that the allegations that any Jewish organisation was persecuting Soviet citizens was utterly groundless and was characterised by responsible Jewish leaders as incomprehensible. It is impossible to discover any organisation which attempted to conceal the whereabouts of the handful of Soviet citizens at present in the country. Similarly, the allegation that anti-Soviet propaganda was being conducted amongst citizens in Palestine is described as imaginary.

After questioning the youths and finding that they were unwilling to return to the U.S.S.R., the Soviet officer declared that they would be taken back, as they were minors and could not make up their minds themselves. The Soviet Government was responsible for them, the officers stated.

The Mission left for Cairo and apparently sent to Moscow the Tass report. They then returned to Tel Aviv and were awaiting fresh instructions.

The allegations that "people were dismissed from work, ejected from homes and publicly beaten and intimidated into refusing to return" are described here as sheer invention. Such incidents were never reported to the police or otherwise.

CASE OF SHULKIN.

The only specific incident quoted is that of Mikhael Shulkin, who is reported to have been thrown out of an hotel belonging to Israel Cohen

in Tel Aviv and assaulted, and is typical of this misinformation.

Shulkin is a Polish Communist who came to Palestine as a Christian refugee (he had been converted to Christianity in Poland). He edited a bulletin called "Free Poland", published in Tel Aviv. The Polish military authorities sought to arrest Shulkin as a deserter, but he managed to evade them. Shulkin did not live in an hotel, but with a private family. He was never expelled by them, although he quarrelled with his landlady over the use of the latter's balcony—a quarrel not unusual among tenants and landlords. After the quarrel he apparently reported to the Soviet Mission that he had been molested.

What seems remarkable is that both Lieut.-Col. Karassov and Major Simny had told a pro-Soviet group in Palestine that they had come to the country in order to deal with the repatriation of about 1,000 deserters from the Red Army.

They said that a number of Russian P.O.W.s on their way home to the U.S.S.R. had deserted their units because they feared punishment for having served the Nazis during captivity. They also stated that they had been promised the co-operation of the British authorities in order to find these deserters. No suggestion was made that the Red Army deserters were Jews.

Shulkin alleged that he had been thrown out of the hotel and was told by the proprietor, "I will not have a spy in my place." Shulkin had been busy influencing the children to return. On his initiative a letter was sent at the beginning of the year to the anti-Fascist youth movement in Moscow complaining that "reactionary Jewish organisations were persecuting the youths" and begging for repatriation. The letter was signed by Misha Mogilevsky, of Haifa.

A spokesman of the Jewish Agency in London said that the Soviet commission which arrived in Palestine to discuss the repatriation of Russians was told that they would be given every assistance, but only those who volunteered could be repatriated. About 200 adults and a few minors wanted to go home, and the rest desired to remain in Palestine.

Jerusalem.

Two new buildings, with accommodation for 34 beds, have been added to the Kupat Holim convalescent home and sanatorium at Shavei Zion, a middle-class settlement of German Jews.

Our Parents' Home

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Applications, stating age, previous experience and enclosing copies of the two last testimonials to be submitted to the Secretary, Jewish Immigrants' Help, 41 Saratoga Avenue, Johannesburg.

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