

ROME COMMUNITY ELECTIONS AGAIN POSTPONED

Bitter Conflicts Between Local Leaders

(From Our Own Correspondent)

ROME, December 4.—Acting on the recommendation of Col. Charles Poletti, head of the Allied Military Government in the Rome area, the Italian Government has again decided to postpone elections to the Board of the local Jewish community, it was announced here.

The action was taken as a result of a conflict between two groups of Jewish leaders in Rome, each of which accusing the other of having had fascist tendencies under Mussolini's gime. In view of the fact that the controversy has aroused excitement among the followers of both groups, Col. Poletti and the Italian Government felt that elections to the Jewish Community Board were inadvisable at the present time.

The status of the Rome Jewish community was fixed by the concordat concluded between the Italian Government and the Vatican in 1933 and is based upon customs of many decades. Under the concordat, Jews are responsible for raising their own funds for their own charitable and religious organisations. The same principle also applies to Italian Protestants. Thus, the President of the Jewish Community has almost official authority over the Jews of Italy and is practically a Government official.

Prominent Lawyers

The leaders of the two Jewish groups in Rome are both prominent lawyers. One, Signor Hugo Foa, was the President of the Jewish Community Council prior to the liberation of Rome by the Allies. Following its policy of replacing leaders of all groups with new men, the Allied Military Government ousted Foa and appointed Signor Silvio Ottolenghi to head the Jewish Community Council and re-named the Council the "Jewish Commissariat."

Since then Foa has been demanding new elections. He has been directing an attack against Chief Rabbi Israel Zolli of Rome, arguing that the Rabbi should have stayed with his congregation during the German occupation instead of hiding. Rabbi Zolli had a price of 300,000 lira on his head. His life was undoubtedly saved by the fact that Catholic friends hid him.

A "Necessary Step"

Foa is also directing his attack against Ottolenghi, pointing out that the latter, together with other Rome Jews, in 1938, signed a statement condemning international Zionism. Ottolenghi's friends explain that this statement was a necessary step in view of anti-Semitic propaganda which was, at that time, being conducted throughout Italy by Fascist officials.

On the other hand, Ottolenghi's supporters, including Chief Rabbi Zolli, point to Foa's Fascist record. Foa joined the Fascist Party in 1932. He is President of the Association Nostro Azzurro, a non-political organisation of war veterans. His Jewish opponents say that only those truly persona grata with the Fascists could head a national organisation, even a non-political one. But Foa is attacked, above all, because of the fact that the lists of all Rome's 11,000 Jews fell into the hands of the Germans, thus enabling the Gestapo to swiftly hunt down many Jews and seize them. It was Foa's duty, his opponents argue, to destroy this list.

Lublin Liberation Committee Allocates Large Sum for Jewish Relief

(Soviet Jewish Press Agency)

MOSCOW, Monday.—The Polish National Liberation Committee in Lublin has allocated the sum of sixteen million zloti for Jewish relief in Poland. The allocation was made in response to an application from the Central Jewish Relief Committee in Poland.

The Jewish Committee described the terrible conditions prevalent among the surviving Jews, many of whom are physically exhausted and sick. They are completely ruined materially and require special provisions if they are to stand on their feet again and live active and useful lives.

There are also many children in liberated Poland whose parents were killed by Fascists. These orphans need great care and the proper upbringing.

The request of the Jewish Central Committee was discussed at a special meeting of the Polish National Liberation Committee. It was heartily supported by the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Bierut, who noted that the Jews who survived deserved particularly considerate attention. The assistance rendered by the General State Relief system was inadequate to satisfy their special needs and requirements.

The meeting decided to allocate sixteen million zloti for Jewish relief. The sum was handed over to the Jewish Central Relief Committee with instructions to give aid in the first place to children's homes, the housing of war orphans and also to surviving Jewish intellectuals.

(See also page 6).

Ghetto Songs Performed at First Jewish Concert

By Yanosovich

MOSCOW, Monday.—The first Jewish concert was held in Lublin recently. After five years of German occupation Jewish songs again resounded from the stage.

The singer, Diana Blumenfeld, rendered some old Jewish folk songs as well as new ones composed in the Ghetto.

This concert was a big event for the Jewish population of Lublin. After five years of terrible persecution the Jews again gathered together in a public and cultural centre. The people embraced each other in their pleasure and excitement. But when Diana Blumenfeld sang the Ghetto songs, sobs were heard in the auditorium.

The concert was also attended by high officials and Polish authorities.

"Jewish Youth Comes Home"

SPECIAL HOSPITALS FOR NEW ARRIVALS

HAIFA.—An emergency hospital with 18 beds to accommodate newly-arrived refugees was opened at Haifa in the premises of the old Hadassah Hospital. Ten cases amongst arrivals during July were taken there.

The expense was borne by the Rothschild and Hadassah Hospitals and the Jewish Agency's Immigration Department (out of Keren Hayesod rescue funds), while the equipment was put at the disposal of the new hospital by Dr. B. Nissenbaum, president of the Haifa Red Shield Society.



Large contingents of refugees have reached Palestine recently. Mr. Eliahu Dobkin, Head of the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency (top picture) is here shown welcoming the refugees among whom were many children. Their luggage (bottom picture) is silent witness of Nazi rule. It is marked with the Yellow Badge.

GRIM FATE OF RIGA JEWS

By B. HERZBACH

(Soviet Jewish Press Agency)

MOSCOW, Tuesday.—It is now revealed that in July, 1944, there were still 18,000 Jews, including 15,000 from Western Europe, in concentration camps situated in Riga and its environs. At this period the position at the front became critical for the Germans, who began a series of massacres. Among the victims were many leading Jewish figures.

At the end of July 3,000 women were evacuated for deportation to Hungary, but no news has ever been received of their arrival in that country. In August 2,000 Jews, including 400 from Riga, were exterminated. According to available information all of them were gassed. Among the victims was Samuel Bergman, a well-known public figure in Riga. Directly responsible for this crime was Major Bludau and his assistants, Bucholz and Helmuth Wagner, a doctor of Mathematics.

In the course of the next few months the remaining camps were cleared. The victims were transported to various destinations. A large number was brought to Eastern Kurland and killed in the woods.

It is known that the celebrated surgeon, Doctor Minz, as well as Dr. Kretser and Dr. Idelson, were sent to Germany. Dr. Shenfeld, Director of the Psychiatric Hospital, was tortured to death.

The leading Jewish historian, Professor Shimon Dubnow, and Rabbi Sacks, of Riga, were publicly executed

on October 9.

A most revolting experiment with lice was carried out by the Germans on five Jews from the ghetto, at a special laboratory, under the direction of Dr. Fritz Steinker, established some ten kilometres from Riga. The blood donors for this purpose were Professor Mikelson of the Philological Department at the Latvian University, Percy Gurevich, David Dolgitzer, Simon Peiors, and engineer, and his 16-year-old son Misha. This experiment continued for a period of two years. In July, 1944, the victims managed to escape from the Institute and remained in hiding until the arrival of the Red Army.

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