

# Zionist Record Correspondent Confirms Report of "Exodus" Hunger Strike

## Why Should Facts Be Falsified?

(Special cable from Maurice Pearlman)

PORT DE BOUC, Tuesday.—The 24-hour hunger-strike staged by the "Exodus" refugees as a protest against their continued imprisonment aboard the three British caged ships in French waters ended at noon to-day with a warning from the refugees that they may be compelled to start a limitless hunger protest unless the vessels depart quickly and they are taken to Palestine.

## Salvaging Ruins of Deportation Policy

The strike, which was complete and general on all three ships, even included women and children, the pregnant and the sick, despite the efforts of their menfolk, the Red Cross doctors and even of the British doctor to dissuade them. Food deliveries were refused by the refugees and the food launches had to return to shore with their supplies.

Posters on which were written in both English and French "Open the gates of Palestine, our one hope" were posted up on the cages of one of the ships, and banners were improvised from personal clothing, shirts and towels and written on with iodine and gentian violet.

## Falsification of Evidence

Yet despite this, the British Embassy in Paris last night issued an extraordinary statement announcing that a British consular official had boarded the ships and reported that there was no hunger strike on any of the vessels. It is difficult to know what Britain gains by this flagrant falsification of evidence available to all eyes and ears at Port de Bouc unless she is seeking to take advantage of the current absence of British correspondents.

Both French and American correspondents saw the food launches returning with the same loads as they took out to the ships, and the representative of the *Entr'aide Francaise*, which is responsible for feeding the refugees, confirmed that they were on a hunger-strike.

## Harassed and Troubled

The consular official quoted by the Embassy is Mr. Ashcroft, the local press liaison officer. He was harassed and troubled, and when I saw him yesterday afternoon with the request that correspondents be permitted to board the ships he said: "No, no. There is no permission for anyone to board the vessels." When it was explained to him that we were anxious to see for ourselves how the strike was going, he replied: "I'm sorry, I can't help it." He declined to comment on the action of the refugees but made no attempt to deny what was taking place.

Though prohibited from boarding the ships, the correspondents circled round them by launch and saw the banners and the refugees behind the barbed wire looking feebler than usual. We heard them tell us that they were on hunger strike and why. The head of the Cabinet Prefecture, M. Bouchesdurhone, and the Acting Prefect, M. Albert Mallet, confirmed this morning in my presence that the refugees had gone on hunger-strike and confirmed that the Prefect had received telegrams from the three ships which have been forwarded to Premier Ramadier.

## Complicity

The message charged France with unintentional but nevertheless effective complicity in Britain's prolongation of the refugees' sufferings by permitting the prison ships to remain indefinitely in French waters and urged France to demand that the British take the vessels off immediately.

Meanwhile tension between the refugees and the British guards is rising, and the regime on board has become harsher in the last few days. Restriction of movement on the ships is now rigid—individuals requiring medical attention are forced to line up under armed guard for hours on end and even then they are not attended to. The soldiers are more free with their shovings and insults.

In a letter smuggled off the "Ocean Vigour" to-day a refugee writes: "This is clearly the latest tactic of the British in a last effort to salvage the ruins of their deportation policy. It is futile since the Jews are more determined than ever not to yield to pressure. The sole possible effect may be to provoke violence and bloodshed, thereby providing them with an excuse to use force and drive us to disembark. Our hunger-strike is a warning to France that her hospitality is being abused by the British and an appeal to world public opinion, particularly in America, not to allow this monstrous crime against humanity to go forgotten through indifference."

Another letter smuggled off the "Runnymede Park" concludes: "We remember the glorious role of Britain in the war against Hitler. We remember listening nightly to the 'Voice of Freedom' from London. It is to that England that we look for justice for our cause."

So the refugees go on suffering while the British troops sun-bathe, paddle, fish and drink and the French Government racks its brains seeking a polite formula to request the departure of Britain's floating prisons, while the British authorities main-

## Even Bibles Were Burned

PORT DE BOUC, Monday.—It now appears that the Bible is included among the books banned by the British on the refugee vessels. The officer commanding the "Empire Rival" explained that of the literature delivered to the refugees he burned all the books in Yiddish and Hebrew and all others dealing with the Jews and Palestine. He regretted that this included religious books, but since he had no Hebrew-speaking Briton on his staff he had decided to impose a "blanket ban." The refugees are thus without either Bibles or prayerbooks since both qualify doubly for the censor's ban.

Despite this, they are issuing their own bi-weekly newspaper, written by hand in Hebrew and Yiddish and containing editorials, features, short stories and announcements. It is called "Bade-rech," Hebrew for "On the Way," and the title is superimposed on a sketch of the ship sailing for Palestine.

tain an Olympian aloofness and deny airily that anything untoward is happening.

## BITTER CONFLICT IN ACTIONS COMMITTEE PREDICTED

NEW YORK, Wednesday.—Reports published in the American press predict a bitter conflict between the American delegates and the delegates from the Yishuv and Europe at the forthcoming Actions Committee meeting. The reports suggest that the American members with their militant policy intend to obtain domination over the World Zionist Movement.

NEW YORK, Wednesday.—Prof. Einstein, Mr. La Guardia, Mr. Sumner Welles and 40 other prominent Americans sent a cable to the French Government expressing thanks for the treatment of the "Exodus" refugees.

## PAKISTAN AND YEMEN WILL SUPPORT ARAB LEAGUE

LAKE SUCCESS, Tuesday.—It is expected that Pakistan and Yemen who have now been admitted to the United Nations will support the Arab League.

Dr. Stephen Wise, speaking for the World Jewish Congress, protested against the admission of Yemen on the grounds of its discrimination and humiliation of the Jewish minority.

## BRAKPAN'S J. N. F. EFFORT

Brakpan Jewry have rallied magnificently to the appeal of the Jewish National Fund, and after several days of intensive canvassing, during which almost every member of the community contributed, the result can really be called outstanding. Mr. Louis Weinberg, the chairman, and Mr. Charles Greenblatt, the secretary, led their local workers with great energy and devotion to ensure a record effort for Geulath Haaretz.

A full report of the campaign meeting, which was addressed by Dr. Granovsky, Mrs. Katie Gluckmann and Rabbi Z. Schwartz, will appear in our next issue.



Owing to unforeseen circumstances, it has been found necessary to change the date of the Jewish Guild Birthday Club's luncheon in honour of Mr. D. Dainow to Wednesday, August 27, at 12.45 p.m. (as reported on page 13). Members may now book (phone 22-2771) up to 5 p.m. on Monday, August 25.

## ARAB BOYCOTT WAS FICTITIOUS

LONDON, Monday.—The Arab boycott against the UNO Commission now appears to have been merely a technical manoeuvre. When the Commission was in Palestine several of its members are reported to have met Emile Ghoury, Jamal Husseini and others in the home of Mrs. Antonius.

In addition, the secretariat of the Arab Higher Committee transmitted to the UNO Commissions all the Arab material formerly presented to the Anglo-American Committee, including critical observations about the Jewish evidence.

These contacts were intensified during the Commission's stay in the Lebanon and were continued in Geneva by two emissaries of the Arab Higher Committee, Rassem Khaldi and Maarouf Dawalibi, who are spending most of their time in the Palais des Nations, where the Commission holds its meetings.

## NEWSPAPER OFFICES SEARCHED

JERUSALEM, Monday.—The press and offices of Jerusalem's "Palestine Post" and other newspaper offices in Hasolel Street—Jerusalem's Fleet Street—were searched on August 14 by the police and military squads.

A ninety-minute search did not yield any results. In the evening both the army and the police told the editor of the "Palestine Post," Mr. Gershon Agronsky, that the search of the "Post's" offices had not been ordered and was due to an officer's "excess of zeal."

## Mystery Plane Drops Arms— Says Arabic Daily

JERUSALEM, Monday.—The Arabic daily "Falastin" carried a sensational report of a mysterious plane, dropping a large consignment of arms by parachute near the Arabic village of Ramallah, which is supposed to be destined for an early Jewish settlement. The plane was supposed to have sought a landing after dusk, but on failing to find one, it dropped loads by means of parachutes.

At dawn, the paper continues, the Arab villagers found a giant 'chute to which arms were attached, and they immediately notified the police, who confiscated the parcels containing automatic weapons.

The story, which is pure imagination, circulated like wild fire amongst the Arabs.

## Excellent Concert at City Hall

OSCAR NATZKA, Elda Ribetti and Raffi Petrossian were given a rousing ovation when they made their first appearance on the South African stage last week. The audience expected first-rate fare and were certainly not disappointed.

Oscar Natzka, who is one of the most impressive personalities ever to have appeared before a Johannesburg audience, has an excellent bass voice, and did justice to his part of the programme.

Elda Ribetti, possessor of a beautiful coloratura soprano, who has on many occasions appeared opposite Gigli, and Raffi Petrossian, the young American pianist, are gifted artists, and were well received by the audience.