

LONDON, Monday. — A vivid report of political and other developments in and concerning Palestine since 1939, coupled with many dramatic "Now It Can Be Told" episodes in the Yishuv's contribution to the British and Allied war effort, was given by Mr. Moshe Shertok, Head of the Jewish Agency's Political Department in Jerusalem, in a three-hour address to the Zionist Conference yesterday. Mr. Barnett Janner, M.P., was in the chair.

Outstanding points of Mr. Shertok's report were:

- (1) The Jewish Agency is now negotiating regarding the future of the Jewish Brigade;
- (2) The Brigade had contacted Jewish survivors who might soon be proceeding to Palestine; — 7 AUG 1945
- (3) The Palestine question, regarded as "closed" after the issue of the White Paper in 1939, had now been reopened;
- (4) The victory of Labour in Britain opened up new vistas for the Zionists' political struggle;
- (5) An understanding between the Jews and Arabs on the basis of the Zionist programme could only be reached after decision by the Great Powers favourable to the National Home.

Waiting for Decision

"One of the heads of the Arab States told me that we cannot talk now but must wait for a decision by the Powers," Mr. Shertok stated. "We did not mention the White Paper in the whole of our talk."

He flatly rejected the idea of a bi-national Arab-Jewish state, and concluded that the political departments of the Agency in Jerusalem, London and Washington must be reorganized to work as one unit to counter the political offensive the Arabs were planning.

Mr. Shertok began by recalling that at the outbreak of the war, it had been assumed that the British Government would not proceed with the implementation of the White Paper. But this was not to be. While the Constitutional part remained inoperative, the Land Law was promulgated in February 1940, compelling the Jewish Agency to enter upon a fight against the White Paper as if there were no war.

Importance of Land

Mr. Shertok emphasized the far-reaching importance of the land factor in view of the catastrophic shrinkage of the Jewish land potential to an insignificant fraction. Recounting the concrete difficulties with which land purchases had now to contend, he pointed to the imperative necessity of a major political break-through to get out of the impasse.

The main battlefield, however, he continued, had been immigration, which during the war had become, in the literal sense, a question of life and death. He enumerated the exertions for a substantial allocation of permits to save European Jews in time, which had been rejected by the Government, apparently on the ground that Jewish fears were exaggerated or invented to defeat the White Paper policy.

Every single allocation of permits had to be wrenched and wrested from the authorities, since Government was obviously anxious to prolong the distribution of certificates as far as possible with a view to postponing a test over the realization of the White Paper.

The tug of war continued until the quota was practically exhausted.

certain number of certificates were still due was immaterial they were faced by an overwhelming, large-scale demand for permits which only a new departure from the present immigration policy could satisfy.

Blood Circulation

Answering criticism raised during the political discussion, Mr. Shertok explained that there was no dilemma as between the concentration of their efforts on immigration and major policy. It was no good being told to concentrate on high policy instead of immigration, which meant stopping the blood circulation while keeping the heart going. There was an immediate organic connection between immigration and State policy.

But this act in the war drama — the immigration chapter — showed the Jew in the role of victim: there was another act in which they were the fighters. And he then proceeded to outline the principles on which the Jewish Agency's recruiting policy was based, and their achievements, culminating in the formation of the Jewish Brigade.

Mr. Shertok depicted the shallowness of those asking what the Jews had got in return for their efforts. The answer was very simple: self-respect, and the respect of others. "It did not diminish the estimation of our potential capacity to defeat the White Paper policy that could turn out without compulsion, and against heavy material and psychological odds, over 30,000 men and women, ready for the utmost exertions and the supreme sacrifice," he declared.

The mere fact that the White Paper Administration had put continual spokes in their wheel and tried very hard to belittle and curtail the recruiting effort was the measure of its

political value; but, above all, these boys had been desperately anxious to fight Hitler and join hands with their brethren in Europe.

Commandos and Paratroops

Mr. Shertok went on to describe the covert forms of Jewish participation in the war effort which, for security reasons, could not be published before, such as the organizing of special Commando expeditions at the behest of the British Military authorities — from one of which, consisting of 23 specially selected young men, none returned — and attempts to send parachutists into the heart of Europe.

Here Mr. Shertok disclosed for the first time that in 1942 the Jewish Agency proposed sending a contingent by parachute into Poland with a view to stimulating the then existing Jewish resistance. The offer was repeated after the news of the ghetto revolt reached them, but was rejected as impracticable and likely to cause more harm than good to the Jews.

A much more modest offer made in February, 1944, regarding the Balkans was likewise declined. Finally, in July, 1944, a somewhat similar scheme concerning Hungary was approved on the highest level, but when the offer had already reached the implementation stage it was vetoed because it was thought that the political disadvantages outweighed the military advantages.

While all these schemes to form a Jewish fighting force

ilitary groups were turned down, the Jewish Agency nevertheless succeeded, with the cooperation of certain military authorities, in sending 30 men and women into eight countries — Rumania, Bulgaria, Austria, Hungary, and Italy — Greece, Slovakia, Yugoslavia, on behalf both of the British authorities and for Jewish rescue and resistance efforts.

Not all returned, and some were known to have been killed, including Hannah Czeched, aged 24, who was dropped by parachute into Marshal Tito's territory, thence smuggled into Hungary, eventually court-martialled by the Hungarian Nazis and sentenced to death. She was refused an appeal but advised to ask for mercy; this she refused, saying that she would not cringe before murderers. From the frontier, Hannah sent a last message to Palestine in the form of a poem, beginning: "Glory, the martyr who was consumed while kindling the flame."

Message of Hope

All these acquitted themselves gallantly in their military tasks, bringing a message of hope and courage to their people in Europe; but it was after the war that the long-cherished dream of establishing contact between the Diaspora and Palestine on European soil was realized on a large scale when the Brigade met survivors of the ghetto fighters, the Partisans, and the Hahutz stalwarts who, he hoped, would soon be on their way to Palestine.

The speaker then surveyed the achievements of the Yishuv in Palestine, which took the initiative and assumed primary responsibility for rescue abroad, and for setting up 50 new settlements during the war.

In no political circles had the White Paper ever been considered an honourable act. Victory was bound to increase the heart-searchings and groping for a solution, even if there had been no change at the helm; but the Labour victory in Britain was the hardest blow ever struck against the White Paper.

After reviewing the continued Agency efforts to maintain contacts with most Arab centres, Mr. Shertok arrived at the conclusion, from innumerable conversations with Arabs, that agreement was only possible if the Great Powers decide the issue and strengthened the Jewish position.

He recalled the Weizman-Feisal agreement concluded after the issue of the Balfour Declaration, and quoted a certain head of an Arab State who admitted that Zionism was an international problem and must therefore be decided by the Great Powers, after which he hoped the Arabs might try to accommodate themselves to that decision.

Arab statesman freely admitted that if ever the Jews and Arabs united, they would be able to achieve great things for progress and development in the entire Middle East. Actually, emissaries and missions arrived continually in Arab League on the unification of agricultural programmes, for example, were found to be based on a study of results obtained by the Jewish Agency's Agricultural Research Institute at Rehovoth.

In conclusion, Mr. Shertok outlined a programme of political work in England and Arab States.

Mr. Ben Gurion returned to London from Moscow yesterday (adds a Falcor message), and he and Mr. M. Shertok were invited by the Colonial Secretary to meet him at 2.45.

Zionist Leaders Not Received By Bevin

LONDON, Saturday. — The interview which Mr. Bevin was to have given Mr. Ben-Gurion and Mr. Shertok, of the Jewish Agency, on Thursday, did not take place. The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is calling a country-wide emergency conference on Tuesday. It will be addressed by Prof. Brodetsky, Mr. M. Shertok, and Mr. B. Locker, members of the Jewish Agency Executive.

Prof. S. Brodetsky, member of the Jewish Agency Executive and President of the Board of Jewish Deputies, will not be able to leave England. Nor will Mr. M. Shertok who is remaining in London for the present.

Mr. Remez, Chairman of the Arab Council of Palestine Jews, is returning from London next Sunday.

Mr. Ben Gurion expressed deep appreciation of the kindly attitude of the military authorities in occupied Germany, particularly of General Eisenhower and his Chief of Staff, Gen. Bedell Smith.

He then turned to Mr. Bevin's statement, saying that 15 days ago he and Mr. Shertok had been summoned to the Colonial Office where Mr. Hall gave them copies of the document, which was to be read in the House of Commons half an hour later. They had been invited to meet Mr. Bevin a few days afterwards, but the meeting had been postponed, and he had left London without giving his comments, which he offered now.

ZIONIST LEADERS ARRIVE FROM LONDON

Mr. B. Locker, of the Jewish Agency Executive, has arrived in Jerusalem from London to attend the emergency meeting of the Executive.

Prof. S. Brodetsky is expected today and Mr. M. Shertok tomorrow.

AGENCY TALKS IN JERUSALEM

By Our Political Correspondent

The Head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, Mr. Moshe Shertok, returned to Jerusalem yesterday morning from England.

Mr. Shertok immediately joined the Jewish Agency Executive in session in Jerusalem since Sunday. The number of members of the Executive in addition to which Mr. Harry Sacher, of the London Political Committee, is attending.

Mr. and Mrs. Shertok will not be at home today or tomorrow.

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