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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

COMMITTEE ON JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM AND HOLY PLACES

Chronological Notes 24 April to 15 June 1949

(Collected and prepared by the Secretariat)

The purpose of the following notes is to bring to the attention of the Committee on Jerusalem developments concerning Jerusalem and the Holy Places which have occurred since the Commission's arrival in Lausanne :

- Date
- 24 April Speaking in New York, President Weizmann declared that there was no real incompatibility between the Papal Encyclical of 15 April and the aspirations of the people of Jerusalem to assure their government and security in conformity with their national allegiance. He added "We pledge ourselves to ensure full security for religious institutions in the exercise of their function, to grant supervision of the Holy Places, to those who hold them sacred, and to encourage and accept fullest international safeguards and controls for their immunity and protection".
(Palestine Post April 24)
- Mr. Sharett, Foreign Minister of Israel, told a press conference in Tel Aviv that Israel wanted Jewish Jerusalem to be part of the State of Israel, but would agree that the Old City and the Holy Places should be put under an international regime. Other proposals might also be considered; he did not think the resolution of the General Assembly of 11 December 1948 was the last word of international statesmanship on the subject.
(Palestine Post 25 April)
- At the meeting of the Jerusalem Municipal Council (Jewish sector) attended by Mr. Shapiro, Minister of Justice, the Mayor, Mr. Daniel Auster, asked for government assistance for Jerusalem's water supply, employment program and housing and industrial projects for immigrants and ex-soldiers. Mr. Shapiro promised every possible assistance and expressed the hope that the entire Government would be able to move to Jerusalem.
(Palestine Post 25 April)
- 25 April Five divisions of the Ministry of Justice moved to Jerusalem. They are the State Attorney's Office, the Administrator General, the Official Receiver, the Registrar of Companies and the Land Registry.
(Palestine Post 24 April)
- 4 May It was announced that the Church of Scotland would shortly begin its health and education activities in Israel. The Moderator of the Church of Scotland is now arranging for the release of church properties used by the Jewish authorities. He had found all church property in good condition except "Church House" in Safad which had been blown up in April 1948. As regards the future of Jerusalem, the Moderator is against internationalisation and advocates a Jewish and an Arab Borough, joined in a Municipal Coordinating Commission. He suggests that an inter-faith commission should supervise the Holy Places and ensure access to them.
(Palestine Post 5 May)
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- 5 May Israel announced to the ad hoc Political Committee of the General Assembly that she was ready to accept United Nations control of Holy Places in Jerusalem and throughout Israel (A/AC.24/SR.45).
- 9 May, Glubb Pasha, Commander of the Arab Legion, told a press conference in London that the partition of Jerusalem was the only possible solution for the Holy City. It should be combined with free trade between the two parts of the City. "The Arabs would be perfectly willing to allow the Jews to have access to the shrines, notably the Wailing Wall, now inside the Arab-held Old City".
(Palestine Post 10 May)
- 11 May The Administration of Posts, Telegraphs, Telephones and Radio of the State of Israel moved to Jerusalem.
(Palestine Post 6 May)
- An article in "Fides", weekly bulletin of the Catholic Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, declared that Zionism had become a grave menace to the continued existence of Christianity in the Holy Land. "Whether through ignorance or indifference, Christianity has not opposed this menace ... Only a vast informative campaign in Christian circles, and a widespread diffusion of Papal recommendations expressed in Encyclicals, can give the United Nations the support of an informed public opinion which would erect a barrier against the excessive ambitions of Israel".
(Palestine Post 11 May)
- 12 May Arab residents of the Musrara quarter of Jerusalem (now partly in Jewish hands) have asked the Special Israeli Trans-jordan Committee to be allowed to return to their homes. They claim to represent 25,000 former inhabitants of the quarter. According to the Palestine Post, the entire Arab population of Jerusalem outside the Old City did not exceed 20,000 before the war.
(Palestine Post 12 May)
- 15 May Ramallah came under the administration of Jerusalem (Arab sector).
(Palestine Post 19 May)
- The Jerusalem Municipal Council (Jewish sector) decided to grant special concessions for new industries in Jerusalem. The concessions would include a 50 per cent discount on building licence fees for industries, exemption from municipal rates for periods ranging between three and five years, and a 50 per cent discount on water rates. The Municipality is also negotiating with the Government for a large tract of land which would be allotted to industries.
(Palestine Post 16 May)
- 16 May Replying to a question in the House of Commons as to whether the United Nations had any means of imposing its will concerning Jerusalem, Mr. Bevin, Foreign Secretary, replied "It has the means, but until now it has not shown any desire to exercise them".
(Palestine Post 17 May)
- Seif El Din El Zabi, a member of the Knesset (Nazareth Democrats) asked the Prime Minister why the Government had not formed a Central Wakf Committee to take over Moslem religious properties in Israel. Mr. Ben Gurion replied that the Government was studying the regulation of Wakf property. The members of the Central Wakf Committee and the Supreme Moslem Council

left the territory of Israel as a result of the war. In order to ensure that Wakf property should not be neglected, the Ministry of Religions had taken over as far as possible the care of the Holy Places and the Custodian of Abandoned Property had taken over care of lands and property.

(Palestine Post May 17)

17 May The Jerusalem police denied a Vatican report that Israeli soldiers had invaded the chapel and residential quarters of the Franciscan Sisters at Ain Karim, and that the Israeli military authorities had requested the Sisters to leave the convent as it was to be requisitioned for troops. The Jerusalem police stated that during the preceding week, four Israeli soldiers had entered a monastery garden to pick flowers. The monks had called the police and the soldiers had been told to leave.

(Palestine Post 18 May)

The medical school of the Hebrew University was opened in Jerusalem.

(Palestine Post 18 May)

18 May The Egyptian Foreign Minister, Ahmad Mohammed Khashaba Pasha, who has been having talks with the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Dean Acheson, issued a statement on May 18 demanding internationalisation of the whole of Jerusalem.

(Palestine Post 19 May)

19 May The number of unemployed in Jerusalem (Jewish sector) was 2,170 in April as against 1,961 in March, according to the General Labour Exchange. The Labour Exchange warns of a serious crisis in the Jerusalem labour market and recommends large public works schemes to act as an impetus to private building activity.

(Palestine Post 19 May)

A new archeological survey is under way in Israel, announced the Director of the Archeological Survey of the Israel Department of Antiquities, Mr. P.L.O. Grey. He announced plans to repair, among other buildings, the Tomb of David on Mount Zion.

(Palestine Post 19 May)

The Special Israeli-Transjordan Committee discussed the opening of roads to Mount Scopus and Bethlehem and the division of the Government House area.

(Palestine Post 20 May)

23 May The Jerusalem Elections Committee has completed its work, and lists of eligible voters will be published soon. The elections are expected to be held at the end of June or the beginning of July.

(Palestine Post 23 May)

24 May The Mayor of Jerusalem (Arab sector) told a committee of municipal employees that certain Arab merchants were boycotting the Municipality by refusing to pay taxes.

(Palestine Post 24 May)

The Rev. Garland Evans Hopkins, delegate of the Methodists "Peace and Justice for the Holy Places Movement", is visiting the Old City.

(Palestine Post 24 May)

26 May The Minister of Religions gave a reception on the occasion of the installation of his department in Jerusalem.

(Palestine Post 27 May)

27 May After six weeks suspension for violation of censorship, the Old City daily paper "El Ba'ath" resumed publication with an editorial attack on the Transjordan Government.

(Palestine Post 27 May)

30 May The Municipality of Jerusalem (Arab sector) could not balance its budget, announced the District Officer, Adhan Yunis Husseini. He said that new taxes had been imposed and must be paid or else "we must live in dirt and slums".

(Arab Post quoted in Palestine Post 30 May)

31 May A special commission is to deal with the development of Jerusalem (Jewish sector). Mr. Sharett will attend its first meeting.

(Haarex 31 May)

1 June The British House of Lords debated the future of Jerusalem. The Lord Chancellor, speaking for the Government, declared that Britain favoured the internationalisation of the whole Jerusalem area, as laid down by the United Nations. It had no doubt that the Conciliation Commission was aware of the practical difficulties involved and of the various suggested modifications to the original proposal. It was for the Conciliation Commission to formulate proposals and for the United Nations to decide how they could best be put into effect. The British Government felt confident that the Commission would bear in mind the interests of the nations in the future status of Jerusalem and worldwide concern for suitable protection of the Holy Places, and free access to them.

(House of Lords Official Report June 1)

6 June The Employees' Committee of the Jerusalem Municipality (Jewish sector) have charged that the Municipal Council has broken pledges of salary adjustment. A strike appears imminent.

(Palestine Post 6 June)

7 June Father Leon Naveau has arrived in Rome bearing a large wooden cross from Jerusalem said to contain a relic of the True Cross. It is understood that the organisers of Father Naveau's journey intend to start a crusade for the internationalisation of all the Holy Places of Palestine.

(Palestine Post 7 June)

Scores of former Arab residents of the Musrara quarter of Jerusalem are calling daily at the Arab Legion Headquarters in the Old City to obtain permits to return to their homes. The Legion has refused the permits.

(Arab Post quoted in Palestine Post 7 June)

8 June The Commission's staff in Jerusalem reported that fifty fully armed Israeli troops entered Government House under command of an Israeli officer who stated that he had been ordered by Colonel Dayan to occupy the Girls College of the Agricultural School and a position ~~gab~~ outside Government House.

13 June The Commission's staff in Jerusalem reported that the Mixed Armistice Commission had decided that the presence of Israeli and Arab troops in the Government House area was a violation of the Israeli-Transjordan Armistice Agreement and that the troops should be withdrawn behind the Armistice lines.