

16 January 1948

PALESTINE INFORMATION REPORTS: NO. 1

(Press Reports received from the Jewish Agency)

1. December 11, 1947: Cabled Report from Jerusalem

Conference of Arab Government heads continuing Cairo. Conference will pretest against partition on Sunday by demonstration with participation members Egyptian Government and all parties and political factions. Hitherto conference dealt with matters of finance and equipment, namely, provision of arms and supplies needed for long-time guerilla warfare in Palestine. Proportionally Egypt will bear 42% of cost. This financial aid does not include private contributions and donations from Arab and Islamic countries and contributions of Arabs living in Western countries. Regarding equipment it was provisionally decided to obtain equipment from Arab countries while seeking sources from West. Possibilities obtaining arms through foreign states, namely, Pakistan also considered.

Regarding participation of Arab armies in Palestine, decided negatively for the time being. This will be considered at a later date in light of future developments. In the meantime recruiting and training centres will be set up in all Arab states under supervision of experienced commanders to attack frontiers and assist Arabs fighting within Palestine. Volunteers from Arab and Islamic countries who are not members of Arab League such as North Africa, Sudan, etc. will also be accepted. Also trainers from Western countries. It is reported that a number of German prisoners of war who escaped from custody in Egypt are already directing training in Egypt and Syria as well as in Palestine. Proposal to establish Palestine Arab Government under Mufti was also for the time being rejected, apparently in view

of strong objections from Iraq and Transjordan. On the other hand Transjordan premier stated that there are no grounds for reports that Arab Legion will take over Arab part of Palestine after British withdrawal.

In the meantime the Mufti continues to press his henchmen in Palestine to continue action and exploit Jewish restraint in order to impress Arab Governments and peoples that Jewish strength is fictional and thus strengthen response for support of his plans.

II. December 15, 1947

Neither police nor army have after a fortnight succeeded in keeping the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road open. Conveys are still proceeding unescorted and revolver licenses refused even to Egged bus drivers who held them during 1936-1939 disturbances.

Permission is still not granted to bring out on to the roads the armoured cars of the Jewish settlement police now used for static defence of settlements on the grounds that this would infuriate the Arabs. As a consequence of this refusal settlement police escorts are forced to travel in open tenders and are mowed down. Of the 10 killed in the Kfar Etzion convey five were settlement police; 12 killed in the Ben Shemen convey today were also in open tender.

Troops of the Transjordan Arab Legion, which are under British command, twice actively attacked Jewish transport; last week in Yazur, today at Beth Nabala Camp en route to Ben Shemen.

There have been numerous cases of police intervening on the Arab side in exchange of fire between Arab attackers and Jewish defenders. The latest example was the Arab attack at Holon today when, after the attack, British police seized the arms of Jewish defenders and arrested Jews found

armed. No move was made to seize the arms of the Arab attackers. Representations on all these points repeatedly made to the Inspector General of Police and to the Government but no effective action ever resulted.

III. December 20, 1947: Cabled Report from Jerusalem

Among the secret resolutions on Palestine adopted at the Arab League meeting in Cairo last week, are the following:

1. To establish Headquarters in Syria for an all-Arab military committee. Training camps, military arsenals and medical supplies shall be set up in Syria. Senior military commanders of all the Arab States shall participate in this military committee which will direct military and terrorist activities in regard to Palestine on the basis of mutual agreement. The committee will act in consultation with the Syrian and Lebanese defense ministers.
2. To establish Syria and Lebanon as the first centers for the concentration of volunteer doctors and nurses; and to set up permanent and mobile hospitals for the treatment of casualties brought from Palestine.
3. To embark on planned and organized military operations and terrorism in place of the current outbreaks. The plans shall conform with the withdrawal of British forces from Palestine. Terrorism shall be planned with a view to the spreading and dispersal of the Jewish defense forces by creating numerous fronts inside Palestine in order to enable military action to achieve its aims in the minimum of time and with the minimum of forces and casualties.

armed. No move was made to seize the arms of the Arab attackers. Representations on all these points repeatedly made to the Inspector General of Police and to the Government but no effective action ever resulted.

III. December 20, 1947: Cabled Report from Jerusalem

Among the secret resolutions on Palestine adopted at the Arab League meeting in Cairo last week, are the following:

1. To establish Headquarters in Syria for an all-Arab military committee. Training camps, military arsenals and medical supplies shall be set up in Syria. Senior military commanders of all the Arab States shall participate in this military committee which will direct military and terrorist activities in regard to Palestine on the basis of mutual agreement. The committee will act in consultation with the Syrian and Lebanese defense ministers.
2. To establish Syria and Lebanon as the first centers for the concentration of volunteer doctors and nurses; and to set up permanent and mobile hospitals for the treatment of casualties brought from Palestine.
3. To embark on planned and organized military operations and terrorism in place of the current outbreaks. The plans shall conform with the withdrawal of British forces from Palestine. Terrorism shall be planned with a view to the spreading and dispersal of the Jewish defense forces by creating numerous fronts inside Palestine in order to enable military action to achieve its aims in the minimum of time and with the minimum of forces and casualties.

4. The Official military forces of the Arab States will guard the hinterland along the frontiers. The forces will not, however, participate in action inside of Palestine as long as British forces are present there. Even after the withdrawal of the British forces the official Arab armies will refrain from action inside Palestine, in the event that the Security Council sends an international force to Palestine. But if the volunteer Arab forces should suffer setbacks, or prove insufficient to overcome the Jewish defense forces and any international units, then a large part of the regular Arab army forces will be released from regular army duty and will go over to the ranks of the volunteers.

5. The seven Arab States shall provide funds on a proportional basis for the purchase of arms and medical equipment for volunteers to be sent to Palestine for military operations. (It is reported that an initial sum of £2,000,000 was indicated). Each state is to decide for itself the manner in which its share of these funds is to be raised, whether by imposing new taxes, increasing current taxes, or by direct allocation from its treasury.

It is not yet known whether Transjordan approved the above decisions; nor is it clear further whether the decisions are final or subject to ratification by the states and parliaments concerned.

IV. December 20, 1947: Cabled Report from Jerusalem

It is learned from authoritative Arab sources that last November while the United Nations was discussing Palestine a Syrian military mission left for Europe to purchase arms to fight against partition and also against the Greater Syria Plan. The mission consisted of Captain Aziz Abd-El Karim, Colonel Fawzi Tillo and Lieutenant Jamal Feizal.

The mission visited France, Belgium and Czechoslovakia and made considerable arms purchases. Part of these arms were deliverable immediately and the remainder by installments at two, three and four months intervals. The Syrian Minister of Defense, who reported at length to the Arab League Council in Cairo on the types and quantities of these arms, succeeded in obtaining League consent for the dispatch of further missions to other countries to acquire additional weapons. He also obtained League approval for a proposal to concentrate money, equipment, ammunition and training in the hands of a special military committee to be set up in Syria and to conduct operations in Palestine under the direct supervision of the Syrian Government. With the support of Saudi Arabia and Egypt the Syrian Defence Minister also influenced the League against adopting a decision to sever economic ties with the western countries, so that the Arab states might be able to obtain American dollars and other hard currencies to purchase arms of European countries which badly need such currencies in order to stabilize their financial situation.

V. December 29, 1947: Cabled Report from Jerusalem

According to information from reliable Arab sources in Syria, it is altogether untrue that recruitment of volunteers, purchase of arms and raising of funds in Syria and the Lebanon for use in Palestine, is being conducted by private persons or unofficial bodies or by a Pan-Arab military committee alleged to be sitting in Damascus.

The fact is that all these activities are being conducted by the Governments of these two countries.

Officials of the Ministries of Defense in Beirut and Damascus have set aside all their normal functions and are now engaged in organising the supply of arms and men for terrorist activities in Palestine.

The Minister of Internal Affairs of each of the two states, further, has instructed their respective frontier guards not to interfere with any Arab crossing from Syria or Lebanon into Palestine and vice versa, whether in possession of a passport or not. Instructions have also been given to the police and gendarmerie not to interfere with the traffic in arms and to customs officials not to check trucks going to Palestine, irrespective of whether they are carrying arms, food or medical supplies.

At the same time, the two Finance Ministries are engaged in imposing new permanent taxes and special levies in support of their Governments' Palestine action. They are also busy securing hard currencies, including dollars and sterling, necessary for the purchase of arms from the Western countries.

On the other hand such bodies as the Pan-Arab military committee, and the representatives in Syria and Lebanon of the Palestine Arab Higher Executive and of other organizations recently created there to help the Arabs of Palestine, serve only as a cover and an alibi for the Syrian and Lebanese Governments vis-a-vis the world at large and especially to ward off any reaction from the Security Council.

Our information indicates that both Governments have apparently made up their minds to exploit the Palestine problem and the hostilities against the Jews, in order to kill two birds with one stone: namely, to preserve the unity of Palestine under Arab rule and to frustrate King Abdullah's plans for a Greater Syria.

VI. December 17, 1947: Mail Report from Jerusalem

Road Traffic

General Note

Traffic on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road was seriously interrupted and, at times, stopped entirely during the first ten days of the Arab rioting. The Jewish Agency made repeated representations to the Police and Government regarding the state of security on the roads, particularly the Ramle section where vehicles had been attacked and Jews murdered from December 1st. These representations proved unavailing. The Police were unable to provide adequate escort for Jewish convoys and, instead of permitting the Jews to defend themselves, continued searching Jewish vehicles for arms, compelling the convoys to proceed unescorted and unarmed.

From December 3rd, Jewish convoys skirted Ramleh and took a roundabout route via Gezer, Naan, Rehovot and Hatikva. When this route also proved unsafe following attacks at Kubeib, convoys travelled via Masmya and Rehovot. Attacks have occurred on this route as well.

From December 10th, the Army took over responsibility for security on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road between the hours 0900 and 1600. Traffic passed through Ramle without incident on that day, but on the morrow a convoy was attacked at Yazur village. As a result there was no traffic on December 12th. Jewish traffic has since reverted to the Masmya route.

It must be stressed that the obvious intention of the Arab Higher

Executive to interrupt Jewish traffic and thereby to deal the Yishuv a severe economic blow has to a considerable degree been rendered possible of achievement by the utter failure of the authorities to provide elementary security on the main roads. Besides the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv route, attacks accompanied by severe loss of life have taken place on the Hebron and Lydda roads. The number of Jews killed exceeds two score, while the wounded number more than twice this figure. Traffic on three roads, even in its present attenuated form, is unsafe to this day.

December 17, 1947: Report on the Ben Shemen Incident

1. This report has been compiled by a special messenger sent to Ben Shemen with the ambulance, escorted by armoured cars which sped to Ben Shemen immediately after the incident. The messenger gathered the material from a number of people on the spot.

2. The convoy consisted of the following:

- a. A tender with nine J.S.P. including a sergeant;
- b. Five lorries;
- c. A tender with seven Haganah men.

Its route was Petah Tiqva - Migdal Zedek - Muzriah - Koliah - Beit Naballa - Khadita - Ben Shemen.

3. The convoy was attacked by heavy fire in Koliah or some 50 m. beyond the village. The attackers were Arabs who used rifles and a machine gun which, however, fired only a few rounds. Our people returned fire. The Haganah tender was damaged and a number of people were slightly wounded. The convoy continued on its way leaving the damaged tender behind.

4. One of the lorries took fire near the Beit Naballa quarries, and the convoy stopped. Some of the men took up positions near the road, whilst others tied the damaged lorry to another one. At the same time an Arab bus arrived from Beit Naballa. The bus was full, and when the passengers saw our men in their positions, they stopped the bus and fled; the bus turned and drove back towards Beit Naballa. Some Arabs opened sporadic fire, our men returned fire, and the lorries continued again.

5. When the convoy was just opposite the Arab Legion camp near Beit Naballa, one of the lorries stopped for an as yet unknown reason; the others continued. At the same time another lorry arrived which was apparently the Army lorry which had collected the wounded men of the tender that had remained behind near Koliyah. Between 150 and 200 Arab soldiers wearing red keffiyehs burst forth from the tents and opened fire on the lorries with Bren guns, Sten guns and rifles, from a distance of no more than 20 metres beyond the camp fence.

6. 14 men were killed, 6 were seriously wounded and 4 were lightly wounded. The British Army lorry was also fired on.

7. Arab Legionaries mounted the lorry and counted the dead in English and in Arabic. Yoram Goldman and Haim Kimchi simulated death and were thus spared. Then there were shouts of "Irjah" (come back), and the soldiers disappeared.

8. The entire convoy, except for the tender that was left between Koliyah and Beit Naballa as well as the lorry that stopped near the Arab Legion camp, reached Ben Shimon and with ^{them} two of the

lightly wounded.

9. Not a single shot was fired by our men in Beit Naballa, nor was any grenade thrown. The bodies of the dead were taken to Beer Yaakov hospital.

Arab Temporary Additional Constable Deserters

The following cases of desertion of Arab T.A.C.'s. have been reported in the press during the last week:

<u>December 7th</u>	Three Arab T.A.C.'s charged with smuggling 1 tommy gun 2 Sten guns Ammunition One T.A.C. gave up rifle in Shafr Amr.
<u>December 8th</u>	2 Arab constables disappeared from Nablus Police Station with their weapons.
<u>December 14th</u>	Arab T.A.C. shoots Jew whom he is supposed to escort.
<u>December 15th</u>	Arabs steal rifles from 2 Arab T.A.C.'s in Jaffa.
<u>December 16th</u>	Arab from Camel Corps deserts with 12 rifles 1 sub-machine gun 1 rocket pistol three boxes of equipment

A corporal of the railway guards near Shukrir alleged to have collected 5 rifles and 400 rounds of ammunition and makes off.

"Ahram" reports that 700 Arab T.A.C.s have crossed into Syria, most of them with their arms.

December 14th 400 rifles, 60,000 rounds of ammunition, 3 Bren guns and 6 Sten guns were stolen when Arabs attacked the Arab auxiliary Police School near Ramle. Additional information reveals that Arab T.A.C.s participated in the robbery and deserted with their weapons.

December 16th 25 Arab T.A.C.s reported to have deserted with their weapons from Majdal Police Station in the last two days.

One Arab T.A.C. guarding the military car parked near the King David Hotel in Jerusalem deserted with his rifle.

"Ash-Shaab" reports that 60 Arab T.A.C.s have deserted to join Arabs in Damascus being recruited for service in Palestine.

MEMORANDUM

16 December 1947

The Responsibility of the Arab Higher Executive for the Disturbances

The following information has been received from an absolutely unimpeachable source:-

The Arab Higher Executive is continually approaching the Mufti and his entourage with urgent and insistent demands for arms, money, and men for the purpose of continuing the riots in Palestine. These approaches are made from Palestine by means of special messengers as well as through regular channels of communication. These calls were formerly addressed to the Lebanon and are now addressed to the Mufti in Egypt. Emil Ghoury has said quite plainly that the purpose of his trip to Egypt on December 16 was to obtain arms, money and men.

Consignments of arms are arriving from Transjordan on lorries belonging to Amin Kawa. The Arab Higher Executive office deals with the receipt, storage and distribution of the arms. During the last few days this duty may have been transferred to the new office of the Jerusalem "Boycott

Committee". Note: Mrs. Goldie Myerson informed the Chief Secretary some time ago of the place where the arms are received.

Tawfik Saleh Husseinai, Jamal Husseinai's brother and Deputy Chairman of the Arab Party, and men of his entourage are permanently stationed in the house (i.e. the Boycott Office) and distribute arms. All this is carried on with the knowledge of the A.H.E. There is continuous contact between the A.H.E. office and the Boycott Office on the subject of arms, and people are sent from the A.H.E. office and from that of the Arab Party to Tawfik in the Boycott Office. Kamel 'Arikat is usually to be found at the Boycott Office assisting Tawfik.

A.H.E. circles are voicing repeated complaints against the people of Hebron for not having so far participated in the rioting sufficiently. Attempts are being made to get the Mayor of Hebron, Mohammed Ali el Jabri, to go and see the Mufti so that the latter can influence him in the desired direction. Sheikh Sabri Abdin has been sent to Hebron by the A.H.E. for the purpose of inflaming the town and inciting it to action.

There have been repeated requests to the A.H.E. emanating from various towns and villages - especially from Jaffa and Haifa - for reinforcements of money, men and arms. In Jaffa these requests are usually made by the Mufti's collaborators and agents such as Mustapha El Taher, 'Ali Dabagh, Mohammad Salim Abu Laban and Rafiq Tamimi, rather than by the "official" representatives in the National Committee. The requests are usually addressed to Emil Ghoury and Dr. Khalidi.

Apart from the members of the A.H.E. who are engaged in organising "reinforcements" as best they can - Dr. Khalidi, Rafiq Tamimi and particularly Emil Ghoury, a number of A.H.E. officials also take part in this work:

Mahmoud Umri, Hamed Nah'wi, Jamil Shabahi, Saleh Rimawi, Omar Tamimi, Abd El Ra'uf Fares and Mohammed Ali Saleh.

The A.H.E. has elaborate plans to starve out the Jewish towns, particularly Jerusalem. Everything possible is being done to prevent the sale of vegetables, eggs, etc., by Arab merchants and fellahin to Jews. This activity is not connected with the general boycott, which was in force before the outbreak of the riots, and it must be related directly to the present situation. The A.H.E. agents have been instructed to inform the A.H.E. office at once whenever they see any sale or transfer of Arab produce to Jews. In such cases the A.H.E. sends some hooligans along to stop the sale. Kamel Arikat is the chief organiser of this particular activity.

The A.H.E. is attempting to influence high Arab government officials to activity in the collection of funds and in influencing notables of various districts towards incitement and organisation for action. 'Aref el 'Aref is particularly active in Ramallah in the collection of funds for the A.H.E. and is in continuous contact ^{with} the A.H.E. in Jerusalem.

The tone of the Arab press, which is now entirely under the guidance and discipline of the A.H.E., is sufficient to show the direction in which the A.H.E. is influencing the Arab population. One need only read the description of the incidents, headlines, comments, leading articles and the columnists.

The Arab population in general knows very well whom it has to approach with complaints or requests in connection with the riots. The Franciscan Convent, for example, complained that Arab hooligans were using its buildings for their purposes and that they had installed guard posts. The superior officials of the convent approached the A.H.E., which in reply, did not deny

responsibility for what these hooligans were doing.

The A.H.E. is sending all kinds of organisers, Mukhtars and other personalities to Egypt for the purpose of arms-smuggling and for talks with the Mufti, who gives them instructions and expounds his policy. The Egyptian consulate does not usually issue entry visas for Egypt except on the recommendations of the A.H.E., and at times the recommendation of the Mufti himself is necessary.

Preparations for the attack on the Kfar Etzion convoy were carried on in close cooperation between the A.H.E. office and a number of people in Hebron and Bethlehem, among them Ayoub Husellam of Bethlehem. There is reason to believe that Hassa Bandak, the Mayor of Bethlehem, also know of the preparations. Whenever the A.H.E. informed callers and collaborators of this act, the news was given out as a piece of good tidings.

The theft of 400 rifles from the police school near Ramleh was carried out with the advance knowledge of the A.H.E. The removal of the arms and their storage were also carried out in contact with the A.H.E. office.

REPORT NO. VII

CABLED EXTRACTS FROM EGYPTIAN PRESS, JANUARY 11, 1948

1. Al Ahram states that the Egyptian Government allotted a half million Egyptian pounds as a first installment in support of Palestine Arabs fighting against partition. This sum was allotted from a secret budget of the Premier and of the Foreign Ministry and is not part of the official budget. This was done in order to avoid the possibility of a conflict with the

Security Council or the General Assembly in the event that Egypt is accused of a violation of the General Assembly Resolution or of the United Nations Charter.

2. Roz El Musof reports that the Arab League Secretariat has just received from the Indian and Afghanistan Governments a large quantity of arms and ammunition. The Secretariat is now arranging for the safe transfer of this consignment to Palestine.

The same paper reports that the Mufti asked the Egyptian Premier for permission to transfer to Palestine all arms and ammunition acquired by his agents and envoys in Egypt, in the Western desert and in Libya.

3. Al Nassaway states that 110 Egyptian officers have been granted six-months' leave with full pay to go to Syria and to join Arab voluntary forces.