

2 February 1948

(Sources: New York Times and New York Herald Tribune)

Jerusalem, Feb. 1 - A bomb tonight blasted the offices of "The Palestine Post", starting a fire which destroyed the building. At least 20 persons were injured.

Nine explosions in all sounded over Jerusalem during the day. Arabs and Jews renewed their fighting in the city, while 280 new Jewish immigrants were being shipped to Cyprus by British authorities at Haifa. (Turner, NY Herald Tribune)

Jerusalem, Feb. 1 - Jewish fighters killed 8 Arabs in what was termed a preventive raid against the headquarters of 150 Syrians in the village of Beit Safafa, south of Jerusalem, according to Haganah. (A.P., N.Y. Times).

Lake Success, Feb. 1 - In a formal statement issued tonight, the Arab Higher Committee of Palestine, supporting charges by British officials that Communists were being shipped to Palestine, declared that Russia had a plan to infiltrate 1,500,000 Communist agents into Western Europe and the Middle East, and that "Zionism now is the secret ally of communism." (N.Y. Times)

Milwaukee, Feb. 1 - Moshe Shertok today labeled as "fantastic and malicious untruths" the recent statements by official British sources to the effect that two unauthorized Jewish immigrants ships, the Pan York and Pan Crescent, that sailed from Black Sea ports for Palestine last December were carrying many Communist agents.

Mr. Shertok charged the British Government with "attempting to mobilize American opinion against the establishment of a Jewish state by playing on American susceptibilities regarding Communists."

Jerusalem, Feb. 1 - Turner (N.Y. Herald Tribune) reports that against the Haganah's 60,000 or 70,000 civilian fighters in all-out campaign, the Arabs could muster probably fewer than 30,000 trained fighting men. Unlike the tight-knit Haganah, the Arabs are organized loosely and are divided at the moment by personal and political rivalries. According to Arab sources they are less well armed than the Jews.

The Arabs, however, claim that their forces are just beginning to gather strength and that they are ready to fight for three or four years to defeat partition and establish Arab rule over Palestine.

There are two distinct Arab forces in the country and two rival military leaders. The Arab League volunteer force, potentially the stronger of the two,

is commanded by Fawzi Al-Kawukji, and already has about 3,000 trained men, principally Palestinian, stationed in the 500 square miles of mountains between the Arab towns of Nablus, Talkarm and Jenin. This force, which is financed by the Arab League, has not yet seen action as a unit.

The rival force, led by Abdul Kadir Husseini, cousin of the exiled Mufti, is chiefly composed of ardent followers of the Mufti and is organized in guerilla bands of 50 to 200 men under district commanders. It has made several test attacks on Jewish settlements. The force is financed by the Mufti's Arab Higher Committee of Palestine and numbers probably less than 2,000 regulars.

Rivalry between the two leaders is military as well as political. Kawukji and the Arab League believe, apparently, that the war should be fought as an orderly, civilized campaign to occupy and subdue the country. Abdul Kadir reputedly stands for a repetition of the 1936-1939 guerilla war of harassment.

A third organization, the Arab Defense, is directed by the Arab Higher Committee through national and village committees organized in each locality. The Arabs say it numbers as many as 24,000 armed men, but the actual figure is probably smaller.

Jerusalem, Jan. 30 - Consul General Robert B. Macatee warned Americans doing military service with the Jews or the Arabs that they will lose their passports and be denied recognition as United States citizens during the period of their service.

Of some 4,500 Americans in Palestine, a few hundred are Arabs, only a score of whom are serving as volunteer fighters, according to the Arabs. Of possibly 4,000 American Jews, Jewish sources believe that about 1,000 belong to Haganah.  
(Turner, N.Y. Herald Tribune)

Jerusalem, Jan. 31 - The statement by Sir Alexander Cadogan to the Palestine Commission that the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force would be disbanded caused considerable consternation here and the censors forbade its publication locally. It was feared that the troops might desert with their arms and ammunition. (Brewer, N.Y. Times)

17 February 1948

PALESTINE INFORMATION REPORTS: NO. 3

(Press Reports received from the Jewish Agency)

11 February 1948

Extracts from Egyptian Press. Cabled Report from Jerusalem.

1. Al Masri (2/11/48) publishes an interview with the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Hamdi Al Bajaji and with the vice-president of the Arab Higher Committee, Jamal Hussein. The former said that official armed forces from the Arab States should actively associate themselves with volunteers for the liberation of Palestine. He was sure that British forces in Palestine would not try to oppose or fight the Arabs because Britain was a friend of the Arabs.

Jamal Hussein reiterated his warning to the members of the United Nations Palestine Commission that special commando squads had been organized among the Arabs with the object of attacking them upon their arrival in Palestine. The Arabs were not deterred by the possibility that international forces might be sent to Palestine to carry out the United Nations decision. Referring to Camille Chamoun's proposal at the final session on Palestine of the General Assembly, for the establishment of Palestine as a federal unitary state, Jamal stated "we reject such a solution and will not accept any other than the extermination of the Zionists and complete independence for the whole of Palestine."

2. The Near East Radio Station (Arabic) (2/10/48) stated that the Political Committee of the Arab League had concluded its debate on Palestine and decided to recommend to the League Council that the Arab States continue to send money, man-power and arms to Palestine until victory.

3. Roz El Yusef (2/11/48) reports the Egyptian Government has approved the grant of six months' leave of absence to 174 Egyptian army officers in order to enable them to join the Arab volunteers for Palestine. It has also approved the opening

of three training camps in Alexandria, Manquabad and Merse Mutruh for Egyptian volunteers who will be assigned to invade southern Palestine.

4. Akhbar Al Yom (2/7/48) reports that King Ibn Saud has sent LP 400.000 to the Arab Military Committee as a first contribution for the Arab war in Palestine.

5. Al Ahram (2/9/48) reports that secret laboratories for the preparation of explosives and bombs for Arab guerilla warfare have been established in various parts of Palestine under the supervision of Iraqi, Syrian, and other experts.