

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

COMMITTEE ON JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM AND HOLY PLACES

Chronological Notes 7 June to 10 August 1949

(Collected and prepared by the Secretariat)

The purpose of the following notes is to bring to the attention of the Committee on Jerusalem recent developments concerning Jerusalem and the Holy Places.

Date

7 June

The Rome correspondent of the "New York Times" reported that Israeli policy had been described as hostile to the interests of Catholics by Father Alberto Gori, Father Custos of the Holy Land. Father Gori was quoted as saying that the Israeli Government prevented freedom of movement for members of religious orders. "We have been prevented from exercising our inalienable rights; in some cases our properties were actually invaded, while in others attempts to invade them made our Fathers the targets of open hostility".

(New York Times, 7 June)

10 June

According to the New York correspondent of the "Palestine Post", Father Anton Zolli, former Chief Rabbi of Rome, a convert to Catholicism and recently admitted to the Franciscan Order, is the prime mover in the Franciscan crusade for the internationalisation of Jerusalem and the removal of all Christian Holy Places from Israeli control. The article added that Vatican circles headed by the French Cardinal Tisserant had taken a more conciliatory attitude.

(Palestine Post, 10 June)

12 June

Archbishop Athinagoras of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, crossed the lines to Jewish Jerusalem on the occasion of the Whitsun celebrations and celebrated Mass at the Russian Church, together with Archimandrite Leonide, representative of the Patriarch of Moscow.

(Palestine Post, 14 June)

14 June

Both Israeli and Arab Legion soldiers withdrew from the Government House area according to the schedule decided by the Transjordan-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission on 13 June.

(Palestine Post, 15 June)

15 June

Addressing the Knesseth, Mr. Sharett, Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that the Government of Israel had taken upon itself to ensure the safety and freedom of the religious institutions of all creeds, and to protect and hold inviolate the Holy Places and the existing rights of all churches. It sincerely hoped that it would reach an agreed solution, with the sanction of the United Nations, of all open questions in which the Christian world was taking a special interest - first and foremost of the question of Jerusalem. Mr. Sharett added: "There can be no Jewish life in Jerusalem without the State of Israel, nor can there be a State of Israel without Jerusalem". He emphasised that at the same time Israel was determined to ensure full control of the Holy Places in Jerusalem by the United Nations, and that it pledged its full and active cooperation in this regard with the United Nations as well as with the churches and religious heads concerned.

(Israel Government release, 15 June)

16 June

Rabbi I.L. Maimon, Israeli Minister of Religion, speaking at a Press Conference, called on the Israeli Government not to delay longer in restoring the City to its place as the real spiritual centre of the country. He complained that the Budget contained no special allotment for rehabilitating Jerusalem and preparing it to be the future capital of the country. Only the Ministry of Religions and the Ministry of War Sufferers had moved their offices to Jerusalem, although many others could do the same if there was only the will.

(Palestine Post, 17 June)

21 June

The Jerusalem Municipality (Jewish sector) is to receive a loan of £80,000 from the Israeli Government for public works.

(Palestine Post, 21 June)

22 June

For the third time this month Rabbi A. Shaag (Orthodox) moved a Knesseth debate on the political status of Jerusalem. The Chairman of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee said that the motion would be discussed in sub-committee.

(Palestine Post, 23 June)

25 June

The Israeli Council in New York announced that persons writing to Jerusalem should address their letters to Jerusalem, Israel, not Jerusalem, Palestine.

(Palestine Post, 25 June)

29 June

Asked in the House of Commons to make a statement on the Conciliation Commission's proposals for securing international control under United Nations auspices of Holy Places, such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth, Mr. Bevin replied "The Conciliation Commission is charged with the task of submitting to the Fourth Regular Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations detailed proposals for the internationalisation of Jerusalem area and the protection of the Holy Places. The Commission have not yet published their proposals and it would be premature at this stage to make any statement". In reply to further questions as to whether the United Nations would have powers to deal with areas outside Jerusalem such as Bethlehem and Nazareth, and at what date their report would be ready, Mr. Bevin said: "I cannot tell when the report will be available, but the decision of the United Nations was that the whole area should be internationalised. That is the directive which the Commission has been told to work out with the parties".

(House of Commons, Parliamentary Report, 29 June)

30 June

The United Nations placed the Bible Society House at Mandelbaum Gate under the United Nations flag. It will serve as a permanent meeting place of the Transjordan-Israeli Special Committee and Mixed Armistice Commission.

(Palestine Post, 30 June)

4 July

The Cairo Daily "Al Misri" published a dispatch from Lausanne saying that Israel and Transjordan had agreed to stand firm against any attempt to internationalise Jerusalem.

(Quoted in Palestine Post, 5 July)

7 July

The Vatican Radio reported that talks between the Israeli Government and the Franciscan Representatives for the return of the Dormition Church on Mount Zion had broken down because Israel refused to pay for war damage.

(Palestine Post, 8 July)

It was announced in Tel Aviv that the £60,000 which remained in the coffers of the Jerusalem Military Government's Supply Department (Jewish Sector) when military rule came to an end, will be used for the development of Jerusalem and for the encouragement of small industry in the city.

(Palestine Post, 8 July)

7 July The Armenian Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Israelian Guregh II, visited Israel for a two-weeks stay.

(Palestine Post, 8 July)

10 July Anwar Khatib, Mayor of Jerusalem (Arab Sector) who was reported by the Arab press to have resigned from his post, withdrew his resignation.

("Falastin", quoted in the Palestine Post, 10 July)

12 July Merchants in the Old City of Jerusalem have applied to the Transjordan authorities for permission to operate an electric company in the Old City. An official of the Jerusalem Electric Corporation has cabled to the Company asking it to send a representative to the Old City to negotiate with the authorities and pointing out that otherwise there was a danger that a concession would be withdrawn and given to a new Arab company.

(Palestine Post, 12 July)

14 July On his return from a trip to Europe and United States, Chief Rabbi Dr. Herzog told a Press Conference in Jerusalem that at a meeting of the Jewish-Christian Association in London, he had proposed an interfaith-committee, consisting of the heads of Jewish, Moslem and Christian religions, to supervise and control the Holy Places. This, he explained, was only an alternative to his suggestion that Israel should be entrusted with the safeguarding of all the Holy Places.

(Palestine Post, 15 July)

19 July According to the Transjordan Press. Abbé Léon Naveau, head of "Palestina", the former Belgium Refugee Relief Committee, has returned to Arab Palestine to start a crusade for the internationalisation of the Holy Places.

(Palestine Post, 19 July)

22 July Mgr. Thomas J. MacMahon, head of a Papal mission to the Middle East and of the American Catholic Near East Welfare Association, crossed the lines to Jewish Jerusalem from the Old City. He was received by the Chief Rabbi, the District Commissioner and the Mayor.

(Palestine Post, 24 July)

1 August

The diplomatic correspondent of the "Palestine Post", discussing the Soviet Government's claims regarding religious properties in and around Jerusalem, stated that these properties appeared to fall into four categories: (a) those claimed as belonging to the Holy Synod, over which there was no legal difficulty; (b) those formerly in possession of the Czarist Government, which would normally pass to the Soviet Government; (c) properties held in the name of the Grand Duke Sergei,* who could establish a legal claim; (d) those of which the title was held in the name of the Orthodox Palestine Society.

(Palestine Post, 2 August)

2 August

The transfer of the following Israeli Government offices to Jerusalem was announced on 2 August: Controller of Banks of the Ministry of Finance; Water Research Station of the Ministry of Agriculture. The latter Ministry also appointed representatives of several of its departments in Jerusalem.

(Palestine Post, 3 August)

The diplomatic correspondent of the "Palestine Post" asserted that the Government of Israel was assured the full support of the Soviet bloc at the United Nations for the partition of Jerusalem and the incorporation of the Jewish sector into the State of Israel.

(Palestine Post, 3 August)

3 August

Four liaison officers of the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs have been appointed to concern themselves with Christian affairs in the following areas: Jerusalem; Haifa and Western Galilee; Nazareth and Eastern Galilee; Jaffa, Lydda and Ramle. Their functions are to care for the churches and religious institutions in their area, and to ensure that repairs are undertaken in the case of war damage. The Ministry of Religious Affairs announced that churches and religious institutions occupied during the fighting have, where possible, been returned to their owners, and that special permits were being granted to representatives of Christian churches in Arab Palestine who wished to visit churches or institutions in Israeli-occupied territory.

(Palestine Post, 4 August)

5 August

"Il Quotidiano" charged in an editorial that the United States was supporting a position exactly opposite that of the Vatican at the current Lausanne discussions on Jerusalem. It asserted that the American representative was advocating a project that virtually endorsed the solution desired by the Israelis. The paper added that until

* who was assassinated in 1904 and who might have heirs

now Christianship rights as a third party to the dispute had now been well regarded at Lausanne.

(Palestine Post, 10 August)

7 August

In a speech on the occasion of the re-opening of the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem railway, Mr. Ben Gurion declared that the railway bound "all parts of the country to the capital of the land with strands of steel and love" and that it would strengthen the historic and political bond between the Jewish people and its eternal capital

(Palestine Post, 8 August)

In an editorial on the reopening of the Jerusalem railway, the Palestine Post spurred all concerned to further efforts to restore and rehabilitate Jerusalem, declaring that by now it should have been possible, for example, to transfer several more Government Departments to the city, and to have elicited from the Jewish Agency's Jerusalem Development Department "something more than the few unimportant schemes which it has produced during the past year".

(Palestine Post, 7 August)

8 August

According to the Arabic daily "A-Diffa", France has "adopted" Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahur. This was announced by Dr. Champenois, director of the French Hospital in Bethlehem.

(Palestine Post, 8 August)

Thousands of Jewish worshippers from all over the country took part in a pilgrimage to the cave of the Prophet Elijah on the slopes of Mount Carmel. The pilgrimage followed an ancient Jewish tradition of visiting the site on the first week-day after the Sabbath.

(Palestine Post, 8 August)

The residents of the Jerusalem garden suburb of Beth Hakarem wrote to the Palestine Post to complain that the amenities of their district have been spoiled by the installation in its midst of a large industrial chicken farm. The letter points to the dangerous precedent thus created.

(Palestine Post, 10 August)