

"Times"
Feb. 1, 1948

London Insists Communists Were Bound for Palestine

Officials Say Records Show That Many on Seized Ships Were Active Party Agents —Imply Soviet Inspired the Trip

By HERBERT L. MATTHEWS
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, Jan. 31.—The unauthorized Jewish immigrant ships Pan York and Pan Crescent, which sailed from behind the "Iron Curtain" for Palestine at the end of December, were carrying many Communist agents, according to official British sources.

One thousand of the 15,000 immigrants aboard spoke Russian, many belonged to militant Communist organizations, some may have been non-Jews and some had documents showing that they had served in Soviet forces during World War II, these sources say.

The immigrants on these vessels and on a number of others that sailed earlier from the Black Sea were collected and sent toward Palestine with the knowledge and sometimes with the active connivance of the Soviet Union and its satellites, according to British officials.

These statements are bound to cause dismay now that they are being made for the first time with authoritative backing. No statement made here is made on the authority of this correspondent or of THE NEW YORK TIMES.

Every statement comes from British official reports, ambassadorial, ministerial and military.

Much of this information has been made known to the State Department and the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington, but not all of it has yet reached Washington.

Some of it has been forwarded by the British to Moscow for its information.

The security precautions taken in advance by and on behalf of the immigrants of the Pan York and Pan Crescent were so thorough that British officials found it impossible to get direct positive evidence that any Russian-sponsored subversive elements were among the immigrants. In this connection, Communist elements are not

necessarily considered subversive.

Nevertheless, the British have convinced themselves that large-scale Jewish immigration, far from being discouraged or prevented by Soviet satellite governments, has been deliberately encouraged by them. Since the British take it for granted that the satellites would not or could not pursue such a policy independently, they assume that the immigration is in accord with Soviet policy.

In the case of the Pan York and Pan Crescent, the Russian conditions are believed to have been that the ships would be released only if 1,000 Jewish Communists were included among the immigrants.

It seems that at the last moment Jews in Palestine tried to prevent or at least to delay the ships' departure. It was at this time that a quarrel within the Jewish Agency for Palestine, followed by the resignation of Dr. Moshe Sneh, security officer of the agency, took place. The Jewish Agency did not halt the ships.

From the British official reports it is possible to re-create the background and chronological development of events as the British understand them.

For at least two years Jews streamed steadily into Rumania from the Soviet Union. Since no one can go out of Russia without approval, the British take it for granted that Soviet authorities knew of this migration. Moreover, there is evidence to the effect that Soviet authorities occasionally put military transport at the disposal of Jewish leaders to facilitate this transit.

It is also asserted that many of these Russian Jews not only were among unauthorized immigrants to Palestine from Black Sea ports in the last two years but furthermore received priority over Jews from elsewhere in Europe. It is asserted that Jews were helped by the Russians and Rumanians to embark from Rumanian Black Sea ports as well as to get to Bulgaria. Although clearances to ordinary travelers are virtually impossible to get, these immigrants readily got exit clearances.

Prior to the sailing of the Pan York and the Pan Crescent, at least four ships with unauthorized

immigrants left Rumanian and Bulgarian ports and three others left Yugoslav ports.

Camps have been in existence in Rumania, where paramilitary training has been given to would-be immigrants with the permission of the Soviet section of the Allied Control Council, it said, and a Major Levy of the Soviet section has been publicly engaged in Jewish extremist activities in Rumania.

Major Levy was said to have been in constant contact with Josef Klarman and Moshe Averbuch, who have been implicated in this immigration. Mr. Averbuch was connected with Haganah, Zionist militia. It is believed that the

Rumanian secret police was implicated with the tacit approval of Moscow.

Early in November, 1947, Dr. Sneh, a former leader of Haganah, conferred in Bucharest with Mr. Averbuch and Dr. J. J. Schwarz, European director of the American Joint Distribution Committee, according to the documents. The British think that was the time Dr. Sneh accepted Russian conditions for the sailing of the Pan York and the Pan Crescent.

On Nov. 15, British officials believe, a letter was read at a meeting of the Palestinian Jewish Communist party from a Jewish section of the Rumanian Communist party stating that the Rumanian Government would not hamper Jewish Communists who wished to leave for Palestine to strengthen the Communist movement there.

British information early in December was that Ana Pauker, Rumanian Communist leader and now Foreign Minister, was apparently opposed to this emigration from Rumania and was trying to stop it. However, the British surmise that, as the Pan York and the Pan Crescent were released from Constanta, a Rumanian port, and sailed mostly with Rumanians from Burgas, Bulgaria, Madame Pauker must have changed her mind or had it changed for her.

Received Fuel in Rumania

There was a long period when the two ships lay empty in Constanta. The Pan York got there Oct. 1 and the Pan Crescent Oct. 11, and they did not leave until Dec. 22. During that period repairs were made, the ships were refitted and each got forty tons of fuel oil from a Rumanian company under the Joint Russian-Rumanian Control.

Meanwhile, the immigrants had been lined up the customary way. Those wishing to go filed applications months before. Each was assigned to a local group leader, and the immigrants were told they would be notified when and how to leave. They were notified first that they would sail from Constanta.

On Dec. 20 a number of cattle-car trains from all parts of Rumania set out for Constanta, where most of the immigrants arrived

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Dec. 21 and 22. The next day they were told the plan had been altered and they would sail from Bulgaria. Some of the trains that had not reached Constanta were directed straight for the frontier and to Burgas. Those in Constanta left the morning of Dec. 24 for the Bulgarian frontier.

On the Rumanian side there was strict customs examination of all the immigrants, but, curiously enough, there was no search or intervention of any kind on the Bulgarian side or during the twenty-four-hour journey to Burgas, where the Jews arrived the morning of Dec. 26.

The embarkation had been remarkably well organized. The Jews stayed in their trains from the moment they crossed the Bulgarian frontier until they boarded the ships. Bulgarian officials kept out of sight even in Burgas, although dock authorities were said to have been helpful.

Each immigrant received a card

assigning him to a bunk, stating what sitting he was to eat at and detailing his general duties while on the ship. Each also received a metal identification disk on a string. Discipline was strict at all times.

Both ships sailed from Burgas on Dec. 26. They were boarded, unopposed, by the British Navy off Cyprus and thence escorted to Famagusta, where the debarkation took place Jan. 1.

Questioning Difficult

Then came the usual interrogation by British authorities. It was a difficult matter because the immigrants had to be debarked quickly and could not be segregated afterward. Security during the train journey and the sea voyage had been so highly organized that there was not much to find. The orders had been to destroy all documents, and Haganah leaders gave repeated warnings about documents and about talking to the British.

Nevertheless, a number of documents were discovered. Among them were membership cards of the Union of Communist Youth in Rumania, the Rumanian Communist party, the Lenin United Communist Association, the Union of Female Anti-Fascists and the Universal Democratic Front.

All these bodies, it is asserted, are militant Communist organizations. Moreover, a number of Communist handbooks were found. As was previously stated, some of the documents showed that certain passengers had served in Russian forces during the war.

Also, about 1,000 of the immigrants spoke Russian, according to the British, who acknowledged that they have no means of confirming their suspicions that some of these were non-Jews.

Most of the immigrants were Rumanians. There were relatively few Hungarians, Bulgarians or Germans.

This correspondent repeats: Every statement in this dispatch is based on British official reports. None is made on the authority of this correspondent or of THE NEW YORK TIMES.

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British Statement Queried

Recent Story Charging Communists
Among Refugees Criticized

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

In Herbert Matthews' dispatch in THE TIMES of Feb. 1 he quotes "authoritative" British sources to the effect that the immigrant ships Pan York and Pan Crescent contained Communists. Perhaps the most depressing factor in this "authoritative" evidence, particularly because it is indicative of the point of view of its authors, are such statements as "some had documents showing that they had served in Soviet forces during the Second World War," and that "one thousand of the fifteen thousand immigrants abroad spoke Russian."

Inasmuch as we are asked to accept the view that our fellow soldiers of yesterday are to be denied the right to seek refuge for themselves and their children, I would like to submit the following observations.

When I entered Berlin in July, 1945, with the advance echelon of the United States element of the Allied Control Council, after spending several months in other parts of Germany, I found many men and women who had traveled for months to get out of the Russian Zone. They were in search of possible survivors of their families. They were also in search of normal living. I saw infants who had been born in the forests en route to Berlin. There was no question in my mind that before parents undertook such a journey they must have been impelled by both inspiration and desperation. Many of these people had lived in that portion of Poland which had been overrun by the Russians in 1941 by agreement with Hitler. Some lived in countries which were subsequently conquered by the Russians. These men were either transferred to Russian labor camps in the interior or, whenever possible, joined up with the Russian forces and aided in the fight against our common enemy.

We regarded these people as fellow soldiers; we sympathized with their wounded bodies; we admired them for having fought to the very last. Undoubtedly, many of them had learned to speak Russian. And as for their having "served in the Soviet forces during the Second World War," this, at that time, increased our admiration for them. Because the world political situation has since changed, shall we now say that these men should not have left their burning homes to join with whatever forces were available to them in the fight against Germany? This would be tantamount to condemning American, British and French soldiers for having fought on the same side as the Russians.

Considerable stress is placed in the report, in arriving at the conclusion that these people were Communists, on the fallacious belief that they could not have left the Russian Zone, Russia or its satellites without the blessings of the Soviet Government. Many of the men and women I met told me how they had traveled out of the Russian area. Many just walked out. I saw people do this myself during 1945 and early 1946. Many detoured sentry posts by merely walking several additional miles. Where sentries were strict, they waited till nightfall and slipped through. Not all of them made it.

I cannot escape the feeling that this "official report" is the product of overly enthusiastic junior officials who have started with a conclusion and have sought evidence which would support it. Civilization is so highly indebted to England for its contribution to our basic concepts of fair play, that it seems hardly worthy of that great nation to harass a handful of tormented DP's for political objectives.

JOSEPH M. LANDOW.

New York, Feb. 4, 1948.

"Times"
Febr. 17, 1948.

WJH
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"Times"
Feb. 5, 1948

BRITAIN CONFIRMS SMUGGLING OF REDS

Foreign Office Tells Officially of Agents on Palestine Ships —Refutes Cyprus Denial

GOT DATA, MARSHALL SAYS

40 Out of 57 Refugee Craft Halted Thus Far, Colonial Chief Informs Commons

By HERBERT L. MATTHEWS
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, Feb. 4.—The British Foreign Office officially confirmed today a dispatch in THE NEW YORK TIMES of last Sunday reporting evidence in British documents that many Communist agents were aboard the unauthorized Jewish immigrant ships Pan York and Pan Crescent.

A spokesman for the Foreign Office told newspaper men at the regular daily press conference held there that the information in THE NEW YORK TIMES dispatch had been based on official material furnished to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

Doubts were cast on the account yesterday by a statement from Sir Godfrey Collins, Commissioner for the Jewish immigrant camps in Cyprus, where the passengers of the two ships now are interned. Sir Godfrey denied that Communist literature and identity papers were found and said there were no indications that there were any Communist agents among the immigrants.

When asked about this statement, the Foreign Office spokesman said that Sir Godfrey could not have had the information that was available elsewhere. The Commissioner is merely in charge of routine administration, said the spokesman, and is not in any sense responsible for security.

"It seems clear that he was not informed," he added.

Report Sent to Jerusalem

From other official sources it was learned that interrogation of immigrants at Famagusta, Cyprus, was, as always, handled by securi-

ty officers of the Palestine Government. These officers reported back to Jerusalem, not to Sir Godfrey, who had nothing to do with this question, it was stated.

Two British officials ruefully commented to this writer today on the difficulties that arose when, in their words, the right hand did not know what the left hand was doing. Sir Godfrey is connected with the Colonial Office, not with the Foreign Office, where officials were frankly flabbergasted at his statement.

At any rate, his contribution forced the Foreign Office to go on record openly on this subject. THE NEW YORK TIMES dispatch pointed out that every statement made was official and came from "British official reports, ambassadorial, ministerial and military," and was not made on the authority of the writer of THE TIMES.

Today's statement by the Foreign Office spokesman unreservedly supported that assertion.

It seems generally realized that the controversy cannot be left in its present confused state. There have been signs that Foreign Secretary Bevin is going to be questioned about it in the House of Commons. It also is possible that the whole issue may be crystalized at the United Nations.

Commons Asks Ship Data

Parliamentary concern with some aspects of unauthorized immigration was shown by questions in Commons today. Maj. T. V. H. Beamish, Conservative, asked Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones how many ships had tried to land such immigrants since V-E Day. The Colonial Secretary said that fifty-seven vessels were known to have tried, of which forty had been intercepted. Since June, 1946, only four small ships escaped intervention, he added.

In reply to another question, Mr. Creech Jones said that the total cost of operating Jewish refugee camps in Cyprus was £2,500,000 [\$10,000,000] to date. He assured the Commons that this cost would fall and was falling on the Palestinian Government, not on British taxpayers. This, he added, means that Arab taxpayers are contributing, as well as Jews.

Information Received by Marshall

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4 (AP)—Secretary of State Marshall said today the State Department had been informed that Communists were among a group of Jewish immigrants intercepted while on the way to Palestine from the Balkans.

General Marshall said at a news conference that he had seen the Department's report but did not recall on what authority it was based. He added that he had a dim recollection the report said something like 150 to 200 identified Communists were included among the 12,000 immigrants. Their ships were halted by the British.

Reuters Quotes Foreign Office

LONDON, Feb. 4 (Reuters)—The British Foreign Office today confirmed that a considerable number of Communist party members had been discovered among the 15,000 Jewish visa-less immigrants in the ship's Pan York and Pan Crescent, who are now detained at Cyprus.

The Foreign Office spokesman said Sir Godfrey Collins, officer in charge of the Jewish visa-less immigrant camps at Cyprus, who strongly denied that there were Communist agents among his charges, would not necessarily be aware of the information in possession of the British Government, which had been obtained from other sources.

He refused to comment when a Jewish correspondent asked whether it was not strange that the officer in charge of security at the camps at Cyprus had not been informed about Communist penetration when such information had been passed to the United States State Department.

He stated that this news had been given to THE NEW YORK TIMES from British official sources.

Weizmann Discounts Report

The reports of Communist agents on the Pan York and Pan Crescent are "malicious nonsense," Dr. Chaim Weizmann, veteran Zionist leader, said in New York yesterday. He arrived from Southampton on the liner Queen Mary.

The 73-year-old former president of the World Zionist Organization said: "To brand them as Bolsheviks and create public opinion against them is, I think, very unfair."

He declared that those aboard the immigrant ships were persons whose lives had been in danger in their former countries.

In past elections in Palestine it had been evident that the Communist party was a "microscopic" factor, Dr. Weizmann said, adding that "Bolshevism always flourishes where there is either great poverty or other abnormal economic conditions," which he remarked did not prevail in Palestine.

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"Times"

Febr. 6, 1948.

Cyprus Official Repudiates Denial Of Red Agents on Palestine Ships

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, Feb. 5—Sir Godfrey Collins, Commissioner for the Jewish immigrant camps in Cyprus, categorically denied today that he had said, as quoted in a Reuters dispatch, there were no indications of Communist agents among Jewish immigrants from the ships Pan York and Pan Crescent, it was stated by a Colonial Office spokesman here today.

Sir Godfrey also declared that he had not denied that Communist literature and identity papers were found on those ships.

The supposed statements by the British official in Cyprus on Tuesday caused a sensation here and apparently in New York, since they appeared to refute information that the Foreign Office had furnished to THE NEW YORK TIMES. Both the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office were mystified and asked Sir Godfrey what had happened.

The Colonial Office spokesman gave THE NEW YORK TIMES this afternoon the following account of the reply from Sir Godfrey:

"Sir Godfrey Collins stated that the local correspondent of The Palestine Post informed him that Mr. [Herbert L.] Matthews of THE NEW YORK TIMES had stated that there were 1,000 Communists on the ships and that Communist literature had been found on them, and asked whether Sir Godfrey knew this. Sir Godfrey said he had no information on the subject.

"He made no denial, and the correspondent was aware of this. Sir Godfrey was also unaware that this statement that he had no information would be used as a Reuters message misconstruing it into an official denial."

For the record, it should be noted that the original dispatch from London did not say that there were 1,000 Communist agents on the two ships. It said that according to British official documents, 1,000 of the immigrants spoke Russian and that British officials believed there were "many" Communists on the Pan York and Pan Crescent.

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*Illegal presence of
Communists*

J.T.D.
Febr. 5, 1948.

MARSHALL SAYS 150 COMMUNISTS "INFILTRATED" JEWISH REFUGEE SHIPS; SOURCE OF DATA NOT CLEAR

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4. (JTA) -- Secretary of State Marshall said today that the State Department has information that between 150 and 200 Communists were among the 15,000 Jewish immigrants on the Pan York and Pan Crescent.

Asked at his weekly press conference whether the information came from the British Government or was independently secured by the State Department, Marshall replied he was unable to answer, since the information was merely handed him on a typewritten sheet with no indication as to its source. He said he would inquire into the source, however.

Later, M. J. McDermott, special assistant on press relations to Marshall, said "The Department has thus far received only preliminary reports from the British Government with regard to Jewish refugees on the Pan York and Pan Crescent. These refugees are now on Cyprus. Most of these refugees are Rumanian Jews. The incomplete character of the preliminary reports does not warrant further comment at this time."

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MJC

Illegal papers
(Pan Yarmouth 1947)

J.T.A.
Febr. 8, 1949.

BRITISH COMMISSIONER IN CYPRUS REITERATES DENIAL ON "COMMUNIST INFILTRATION" AMONG DP'S

KYRENIA, Cyprus, Feb. 6. (JTA) -- Sir Godfrey Collins, British administrator of the Jewish refugee camps in Cyprus, today reiterated that he had heard "absolutely nothing" of any Communist papers being found among the 15,000 Jews who were diverted by the British from Palestine to Cyprus aboard the two refugee ships Pan York and Pan Crescent.

Commenting on a communique issued yesterday in London by the Colonial Office which said that Collins denied making such a statement on Tuesday, Sir Godfrey told a Reuter correspondent here today that the first time he had heard of any Communist papers being discovered among the Pan York and Pan Crescent immigrants was when a London report containing this allegation was published in the New York press last Sunday.

MPK
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Moshe Shertok
(Communist)

"P. M.
Febr. 2, 1948.

Shertok: 'Malicious And Fantastic'

The *New York Times*, in a special dispatch from Milwaukee, reported that Moshe Shertok, political chief of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, had declared in an interview that the British charges that DP ships were carrying Communist agents were "fantastic and malicious untruths."

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