

## FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

By JACOB BEN LIGHTMAN

*The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, New York, N. Y.***The New Council for German Jewry**

When the three English gentlemen, Sir Herbert Samuel, Viscount Bearsted and Mr. Simon Marks, visited the United States in January 1936, there was a great to-do concerning their proposals for emigrating Jews from Germany. What they actually had in mind is to be found in the language they used which was:

Let us do two things:

Let us set up a Central Coordinating Committee in London, on which English and American groups will be represented.

Let us, together, and with such others whose aid we may be able to enlist, map out a maximum program of German Jewish aid, centering it largely on a plan to emigrate annually between 20,000 and 25,000 Jews between the ages of 17 and 35 from Germany. To do this, we should have over a period of four years, \$15,000,000 for that purpose—\$5,000,000 from Europe and \$10,000,000 from the United States and elsewhere, so as to settle these people, about one-half in Palestine, about one-half in other lands.

A number of American leaders conferred with the British Delegation, among them persons connected with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the United Palestine Appeal, and the Refugee Economic Corporation. No formal agreement was reached, but there was a general understanding that there should be set up in London a Coordinating Committee or Council, on which English and American groups will be represented, including those already mentioned, the Central British Fund, the Jewish Agency for Palestine, and other kindred large Jewish organizations. To the extent that the several organizations may agree on a program, they will themselves, through their own bureaus and their own machinery carry out their respective activities.

It is understood that existing organizations will continue their work in behalf of the German Jews and will retain their full autonomy. The plan, it is pointed out, means no immediate mass exodus of the Jews from Germany; it does mean a hope for the future of those German Jewish youths, who first must be adequately trained for a new industrial and agricultural life, and then enabled to emigrate to all countries that will accept them and give them entry.

As the proposals of the English delegation contemplate a four year program with \$10,000,000 to come from America, only one-fourth of that sum will be required for 1936, and should therefore be provided for in the programs of those organizations already raising funds in the United States in campaigns for the aid of Jews of Germany.

One of these organizations, referred to above, is the Refugee Economic Corporation which is comparatively new. Early in 1934 a number of American Jewish gentlemen visited London, where they conferred with English Jewish leaders on the problem of German aid, especially through an enlarged movement of emigration. At that time they did not succeed in working out a definite understanding, looking toward a specific and comprehensive program of emigration. Nevertheless, a group of interested persons in this country, unwilling to delay action in behalf of the German Jews, along such lines as did not come within the direct orbit of the work of the other organizations, proceeded to organize the Refugee Economic Corporation, to which

large subscriptions were made by a number of individuals. That corporation is an independent body, and has for its purpose promoting and assisting the economic reconstruction of emigrés from Germany in countries of refuge. It is also planning to promote colonization and land settlement of such emigrés. With regard to its present funds and to future funds which may be secured from interested individuals, the Refugee Economic Corporation, it has advised, has promised full cooperation, along with other organizations, in the proposed program of the recent English visitors to this country.

Apropos of plans in behalf of the Jews of Germany, it may be appropriate at this point to indicate that the vacancy left by the resignation of Mr. James G. McDonald, as League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany, has been filled by the appointment by the League of Sir Neill Malcolm, retired British Major General, to the same office, the appointment having become effective as of February fourteenth. Announcement of his plans indicates that Sir Neill will confine himself to the legal and political aspects of the refugee problem, leaving the actual emigration, refugee aid and settlement work to those private organizations that have already been working along such lines. It appears that there will be no permanent measures considered until the meeting next September of the Assembly of the League when the proposal of absorbing the High Commission for Refugees from Germany into the Nansen International Office, will be taken up. In the meantime, Sir Neill will receive the full cooperation of the various organizations concerned with the problems of the Jews of Germany and will be assisted on such matters by Dr. Norman Bentwich, former Attorney General of

Palestine. It is also planned to tie-up the proposals of the three English gentlemen, who visited America, with the work of the new High Commissioner.

**Jews of Today in Russian Bokhara**

There is an interesting article in a recent issue of "Tribuna," a Russian language periodical published in Moscow by the OZET (Society for Settling Jews on the Land and for Aiding Them thru Productive Occupation) on the strides made by the Jewish Community in a remote section of Russia. The article was written on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the founding of the first Jewish newspaper in Bokhara. Its tribulations, its growth and its influence reflect the changes that have been wrought in the life of that community. In summary, the article is as follows:

During the Czarist days in Russia, Jews in Bokhara, as in so many other communities, were considered "unclean" and pariahs. They could live only in definitely assigned quarters and engaged in trades of petty merchants with the usual discriminations against them. It also appears that there were hundreds of "limiting laws" with regard to Jews in the Emir's Bokhara, which placed local Jews there in a much more humiliating and oppressive position than other national minorities. The Jew was considered lower than the Mohammedan and had to wear the "Rope of the Curse." He was forbidden to ride a horse for it was too noble an animal for him. Downtrodden and illiterate, the local Jews in Bokhara led a miserable existence, until the October Revolution which destroyed the "limiting laws" and gave the Jews an opportunity to improve their lot equally with other nationalities.

Among the first results of this was the appearance on November 16th, 1925, at

Samarkand, in the Eastern Quarter inhabited by Jews, of the first issue of the Yiddish newspaper "Rushnoi." It was a small sheet, primitively printed in 200 copies and thereafter published once a week. "Rushnoi" was the first newspaper published in the local Bokharan Yiddish dialect, and the year of its publication coincided with the beginning of settlement activities of the Jewish working population, both on the land and in industry. The publication was at first greeted with catcalls and insults on the part of some elements of the Jewish population, but it nevertheless increased in popularity and its circulation has since grown uninterruptedly. The name of the paper was subsequently changed to "Bairoqi Mihnat" (which since 1933 has been a daily) and it took an active part in the rebuilding of the cultural and economic structure of the local Jewish working classes.

In one district called Uzbekistan there are fourteen Jewish collective farms, thirteen of them engaged in the raising of cotton. The names of some of them are Baumann, Babeshko, Bairoki Mihnat, Ozet, Mihnat, Ozet Iagudi, and Fruit of October. There are also Jewish collectives organized for caracul and dairy industries and for pig raising. Over seventy per cent of the Jewish farms in this section possess cattle and sixty per cent of them live in newly built European-type houses. A number of the colonies are fully electrified and equipped with radio. There are 2,600 local Jewish workers in the factories and workshops of Uzbekistan. In the various schools of higher learning and in the technical schools there are over 1,200 local Jewish students, while some 5,000 Jewish children are af-

forded every opportunity for a primary education.

During the last decade, it is interesting to note, the written language of the Jews in that locality has taken on a new form, based, of course, on the every-day speech of the masses. Instead of the old Hebrew alphabet, a new Latin alphabet has been adopted for the Yiddish of that community, in keeping with the suggestion of the paper, "Bairoqi Mihnat," the anniversary of which is being celebrated there. This new move is being credited with wiping out the illiteracy of the Jewish population, and with the fashioning of a new literature in the district. An outstanding achievement in this direction is seen from the fact that, whereas before the revolution the Jews in that locality had no primer in their own language, during 1935 alone there were some 800 titles of books published in their native tongue.

#### Recent Emigration Activities of Hicem

Hicem, the organization which represents the Hias, the Ica, and the Emigdirekt, has aided a total of 13,428 German Jewish refugees stranded in Europe to emigrate to permanent homes, from May 1933 to January 1936, according to its last Annual Report just issued. The total cost of this work has been over \$525,000. The Hicem has been receiving funds in large measure for this particular activity from the Jewish Colonization Association, the Central British Fund, and the Joint Distribution Committee, which latter has alone contributed up to fifty per cent of the total expenses.

Of the total number aided to emigrate, almost 5,400 were sent overseas, over 3,300 to Palestine, and over 1,500 to the countries of South America.

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