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EXTRACTS FROM WAR DIARY
OF

INTELLIGENCE (POLITICAL) G.H.Q., E.E.F.,

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1st.

As a result of enquiries from different sources if permission can be granted to Jewish colonists and Prisoners of War to enlist in the British Army, and to be drafted into the Jewish Battalion, the War Office, London, have been asked for instructions, it being pointed out by Dr. WAITZ, the Jewish Representative in JERUSALEM of the Special Committee, Cairo, that the possibility of reprisals on Jews in other parts of the Ottoman Empire has been considered by those interested in the movement, who have decided that they are willing to take this risk. This question is under consideration.

2nd.

In reply to a request from the French Government via M. PICOT for permission for M. PAVIE, ex-Manager of the JAFFA-JERUSALEM Railway, to visit PALESTINE for a short time, accompanied by his son, and to report upon that railway, it was stated that, although it was realised that these gentlemen were Reserve Officers in the French Army, permission could not be granted.

3rd.

In the Hejaz Expeditionary Force constant looting and pilfering are increasing the difficulties attending enemy supply problems. There were recently plundered on the journey South two trucks of wheat for MEDINA, each containing 15 tons.

Scurvey in the 2nd Composite Force has been increased owing to the interruption of railway traffic.

4th.

It is reported from GENEVA that in the course of conversation, TALAAT Pasha hinted to GENERAL LIMAN von SANDERS that the Central Powers were probably just as desirous as England that JERUSALEM should not again fall under the rule of TURKEY, and pointed out that Germany had not given Turkey the assistance in freeing her territory from enemy occupation which she was entitled to expect, since Turkish soldiers had been sent in aid of Germany in Europe.

General LIMAN von SANDERS immediately wired concerning this to HUNDENBURG, and, acting on his advice, the KAISER sent a signed letter to ENVER PASHA promising that Turkey should be freed from the enemy. This letter was placarded in the streets of CONSTANTINOPLE.

It is reported from BERNE that previous to the departure of TALAAT Pasha for BREST-LITOVSK, a Council of Ministers was held at CONSTANTINOPLE, and TALAAT Pasha was requested to insist upon the following points:-

/ (a)

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(a) The return to Turkey of the whole of occupied ARMENIA. Turkey would be willing to consult the population of ARMENIA as to their form of Government, but, as the provinces in question are inhabited principally by Turks, these would vote in accordance with the wishes of the Government.

(b) The freedom of the Straits would be assured to RUSSIA.

MUKHTAR Bey of the Prisoner Exchange Commission (who is still in Switzerland) has stated that, in his opinion, if the Germans do not support the Turkish point of view at the BREST-LITOVSK Conference, Turkey would be obliged to make the best bargain she could with the Entente.

It is reported from GENEVA that SHUKRI Bey, with the authority of the Committee of Union and Progress leaders had requested this Ex-Khedive to give certain explanations on the subject of his activities in Switzerland in connection with the BOLO and other cases.

The Ex-Khedive stated that he had nothing to do with all these questions; but that YEGHEN Pasha was really responsible.

It appears that, as a result of this, YEGHEN has been exiled to a town in ASIA MINOR. Note by Geneva. This information, if true, indicates that the Ex-Khedive and the Young Turks are already in disagreement, and also that there is friction in the Ex-Khedive's immediate entourage.

It is also reported that SELIM FUAD Bey, Turkish Minister in BERNE, received instructions from CONSTANTINOPLE to help Turkey's efforts to obtain further German Military assistance by arranging the publication of suitable articles in the Swiss Press, pointing out how invaluable Turkey had been to the Central Powers in the past, and that, if the zeal of Turkey in the war was checked by any action of the two Central Powers, the result would be felt very quickly.

This want done in the "BUND" although the Editor did not go to the length required of him by the Sublime Porte. Nevertheless SELIM FUAD has been congratulated by CONSTANTINOPLE on his efforts in that direction.

SELIM FUAD Bey also wrote to CONSTANTINOPLE suggesting that steps should be taken to win British sympathy for Turkey by pointing out that Great Britain was a great Moslem power, and necessary to the future of Turkey.

He has now been instructed to begin this propaganda, throwing, however, the responsibility of the war on the rulers of Great Britain, and not upon the people, who were always friendly towards Turkey.

A party is said to have been formed in the TURKISH PARLIAMENT in favour of "Peace at any Price", the leaders being HUSSEIN DJAHID Bey (a prominent member of the Committee of Union and Progress) and NEJMEDDIN MOLLAH (an Ex-Minister of Justice). In some quarters fears are expressed as to the state of

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discipline in the Army - but it is possible that these rumours have been manufactured by the Turks in order to force the Germans' hands, and to compel them to afford the assistance required.

Some 2/3000 Indian Prisoners are said to be at DENIZLI (120 m. E.S.E. of SMYRNA), of whom 500 have died from exposure and privation. Others are stated to have been recently sent to SCALA NUOVA (20 miles S.E. of SMYRNA) to work at trench digging and gun emplacements.

5th.

The Commander-in-Chief has telegraphed to the War Office to the effect that in the near future, for military reasons, there is no prospect of Allied consuls being allowed to proceed to JERUSALEM, that he deprecates the appointment of a new Spanish Consul, and strongly advises that Count BALLOBAR be allowed to proceed to CAIRO on leave, and to return to JERUSALEM when his health is restored. As SPAIN was not an Allied Power his return would create no precedent, but would be of great assistance to the Commander-in-Chief.

It is reported that all the Hospitals in ALEPPO were full of sick and wounded, and most of the wounded were now being sent to ADANA. There was no contagious disease, but the sick were suffering from hunger and lack of clothing. The best provided patients were only wearing a shirt and a pair of cotton pants with a single covering over the bed.

It is reported that ENVER Pasha is acting as Minister of Finance during the absence of DJAVID Bey, and as Vizier during the absence of TALAAT Pasha, who has left to take part in the peace negotiations with RUSSIA. JEMAL Pasha is acting as Minister of the Interior in TALAAT's absence, a proof that he is not in disgrace in CONSTANTINOPLE.

6th.

A Prisoner of War, captured 1-3-18, gives the following information:- all the men in his battalion and regiment are Turks; formerly there were about 300 Arabs in the Regiment, but most of them had deserted, and these that were left, about 100 in number, were employed on the Transport. They are not trusted in the firing line.

There is no chance of a revolution in Turkey as the German influence is all-pervading. In most districts the crops are poor, owing to the shortage of labour. There are no serious epidemics in the army or among the civilian population. Maize and wheat are the principal cereals which the Turks procure from the Arab villages. Their bread is now made of maize and wheat in the proportion of 2 maize to 1 wheat. Trains run only as far as KALKALIA (15 miles N.E. of JAFFA) arriving at night, and returning immediately. There are no trains by day to KALKALIA. They run by day to TULKERAM (10 miles N.E. of KALKALIA).

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The Moslems in JERUSALEM are more friendly now that they see their co-religionists being appointed to responsible posts under the British Regime, but they have conceived the notion that the British intend to set up a Jewish Government, and that France will intervene, and oppose a Zionist State. The Christians state that they would prefer to emigrate rather than to remain in Jerusalem under the domination of the Jews.

JERUSALEM is generally settling down and becoming calmer in tone owing to trade facilities and other communications with Egypt, and it is felt on all sides that the import of foodstuffs and commodities for the resumption of industries and the re-opening of banks will gradually, but surely, solve the various economic problems which are now engaging the attention of the authorities. No less than 8,000 men, women and children are being employed by the Military Labour Bureau in the Jerusalem district. Under the Turk, it should be noted, such work received no remuneration.

7th.

A Prisoner of War, formerly an O.C. of Police, captured 9-12-17, gives the following information:-
The inhabitants of DAMASCUS and the surrounding district desire an independent Government consisting of Arab Ministers with European Advisers, preferably British, as they are anxious to increase trade communication between themselves and Egypt. They are intensely anti-German. Among the Moslem and Christian Arabs, however, South of DAMASCUS, the dislike and fear of Germany is not so noticeable. This fact may be due to their dread of Jewish Domination, believed to be encouraged by the British Government. This fear also exists among Syrian Christians, whose sympathies are French and anti-Semitic.

JEMAL Pasha changed his policy of oppression towards the HAURAN Druses in July of 1917, and initiated an extensive system of bribery. He collected all the Sheikhs whom he could not rely upon, and bribed them to remain in DAMASCUS, leaving the loyal Sheikhs in the villages, but still continuing to give them monthly payments. Moreover, he collected all those who were in possession of arms, bribing them £4. each in gold to remain in the town. JEMAL has not changed his policy towards the LEBANON Druses, as he considers them incapable of serious opposition owing to their geographical position.

The same informant supplies details with regard to the Turkish Political Secret Service. JEMAL Pasha draws £24,000 in gold every month for this purpose. The Head of the Service is ABDUL HAMID Bey SAID of Egypt. The personnel of the Service consists chiefly of Egyptian Nationalists, with a few Cretans, Tripolitans, Tunisians, Jews and Syrian Arabs. The reason that the Egyptians and North

/Africans

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Africans are preferred, is that, being strangers to SYRIA, they are unbiassed and have no enemies. They are given passes allowing them to circulate in a certain area, but if they are caught in area of Military Operations, they are arrested, as the Turks fear that they might desert to the British. Their method of obtaining information is to make friends in coffee houses, and report all anti-Government conversations.

Each Commissioner of Police is allowed to have as many Secret Service police as he likes. Their reward consists solely in exemption from Military Service. They are the scum of the population, and are highly corrupt.

This informant was unable to say much concerning the Military Secret Service, but he is of opinion that there is not any definite organisation of such. All the information the Turks received during the time they were holding the GAZA line was supplied by Bedouins, who crossed over from the British to the Turkish lines. These must have been untrustworthy, as they worked for both sides.

The two German aviators brought down on the 3rd inst., and now in hospital at JAFFA, told the Intelligence Officer there that such German troops as there were in this country were not on good terms with the Turks, and that disputes were of constant occurrence.

8th.

A Turkish deserter, who surrendered on 3rd March, has given the following information. Gratuities have been offered for any one capturing a British Soldier. A Turk of the 1/77th Regiment, who in a patrol encounter a few nights ago captured two British soldiers, one wounded, and one unwounded is to receive £16, and be promoted Corporal.

The moral is bad. The Officers beat the men, who have to dig all day and patrol or man the trenches by night. Their food is poor, and their clothes and footwear are deficient... They are very weary of the war, and many desert to the Interior.

The last word from the Druses was a letter from SELIM PASHA EL ATRASH, proposing a Sherif-paid force of 600 DRUSES to take over the Turkish Police off SUWEIDA (25 miles N.E. of DERA) SALKHEAD (30 miles E. of DERA) etc. The Turks were not to know the Paymaster, but presumably were also to pay the voluntary Police. The Druses were getting food stuffs from two sides. They were very content and all for delay. They will not declare for us until the HAURAN Arabs have struck and NURI shown himself. They are about 7,000 fighting men so intensely jealous that it is a miracle that even a third of them work together, and with no commanding

/personality

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personality among their Sheikhs, who are legion. The HAURAN Arabs, much more numerous and better fighting men are to-day strongly in our favour. Unfortunately they are poorly armed.

9th.

Another Prisoner of War, a Sergeant-Major, captured 5-3-18 states that all over Syria Moslems, Christians, and Jews are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the British and that they entertain no special regard for any of the other Allies. The majority of the officials in DAMASCUS are Arabs. Articles written in Arabic in the local press are well veiled so that only Arabs can clearly understand them, but are in essence hostile to the Turk. No one hesitates to blame Germany for the present situation of the Turkish Empire. This sentiment is evinced even among the lower class uneducated civilian portion of the population. The Arabs generally are delighted to hear of the Sherif's successes.

11th.

A Prisoner of War, an Armenian Doctor in the Turkish Army, supplies the following medical details regarding the health of the troops. During the winter of 1917 about 100 typhus cases were daily admitted to the Hospital of Infectious Diseases in Damascus. About 50% died the day they were admitted, and 25% during the course of the disease. All those who were very run down on discharge were sent on leave. About 10 cases a day of other diseases (including scurvy) were admitted to the same hospital. Of these, 25% died, one half were given long leave on recovery, and the remaining 25% returned to their regiments. Most of the cases suffering from these diseases came from the Hejaz Expeditionary Force. In the summer of 1917 cholera broke out amongst the troops around DAMASCUS, about 20 cases being admitted to this hospital every day. As a matter of fact, 75% of these supposed cholera cases turned out to be chronic dysentery, and the remaining 25% cholera. The mortality was small. Malaria has always been rampant round DAMASCUS, and the mortality was 5% of the cases.

12th

Advanced Intelligence Officer, JAFFA, reports that a general improvement in the situation has been noticeable during the past three weeks. This appears to be due (1) to our official notice that Sheikhs and Moukhtars will be made responsible for the inhabitants in their villages, (2) to a gradual realisation by the population on our side that the British have come to stay, (3) to the revulsion of feeling caused by recent treatment of the Arab population by

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the Turks, especially as regards the violation of women. There is little doubt that a definite current of feeling in our favour has set in.

13th.

The Commander-in-Chief has asked for instructions as to what nationalities should remain with the Jewish Battalion, and how he should dispose of the remainder as a number of Russians are included in the Jewish Battalion who might be a source of danger.

The Foreign Office has telegraphed to the Chief Political Officer that instructions have been given to H.M.'s Ambassador in ROME to make a communication to the Italian Government regarding the proposed visit of Count SENNI, that H.M. Government recognise the validity of the objections raised by the Commander-in-Chief, E.E.F., that the Italian Military Attache can make any enquiries his Government may desire, or if the Italian Government prefers, he could be replaced on the G.O.C's staff by some officer better suited for such a post by reason of his civilian experience, that M. PICOT is not looked upon as holding consular rank, and that the Military Authorities refuse to interfere with any questions as to compliments paid to him, or refused him, by any religious community. The Spanish Consul is in a peculiar position, having safeguarded interests of subjects of the Allies in JERUSALEM during the Turkish occupation.

The Moslems are somewhat disappointed at the way in which the Arab movement has so far developed. They had expected the Arab movement to be an independent movement for the interests of Islam, although aided by Great Britain. They seem surprised that the Sherif has not entered JERUSALEM and offered his prayers at the Mosque of OMAR. They are beginning to feel that England stirred up the Arab movement for her own benefit. Some declare that if the Khalifate could be conferred upon the Sherif this would compensate for the loss of prestige which Islam has suffered.

15th.

The Chief Political Officer has telegraphed to the Foreign Office that M. PICOT has never created any dissensions, and that no situation of distrust exists. He has loyally refrained from any attempt to interfere in administrative questions, although when he came out he fully expected the administration would be joint Anglo-French. He is very apprehensive of the dislike of Zionist aims displayed by local Arabs. The

/Chief

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Chief Political Officer does not agree with M. PICOT as he looks to the WEIZMANN Mission to put things on their right footing and to adopt a conciliatory attitude.

The Commander-in-Chief has given instructions that officers and men may now visit the Holy Shrines at JERUSALEM and BETHLEHEM under the following conditions:-
(1) Officers with a special permit issued by the Military Governor, specifying name and date.
(2) Other ranks in parties not exceeding 12 under charge of an officer with a similar special permit.

18th.

Intelligence Officer JAFFA reports that the peace between Germany and Russia has given rise to a certain amount of talk that Turkish and German reinforcements are likely to appear on this front.

20th.

A telegram has been received by the Commander in Chief from the War Office to the effect that while it is undesirable to enlist Russian Jews any further in the Jewish Battalion, there is no objection to those of other nationalities, who wish to enlist being enrolled, providing they can produce satisfactory references. This policy is being carried out in regard to those from America. If men already enlisted should not prove satisfactory, they should be dealt with by the Commander-in-Chief as soldiers under the military code. Colonel PATTERSON, who commanded the Zion Mule Corps successfully, should be able to ensure that undesirable characters are detected.

The Commander-in-Chief has sent a telegram to the War Office to the effect that from every point of view he considers the employment of a MALTA Battalion in PALESTINE undesirable; that it would be of the same fighting value as the French reinforcements, and that at present he had no place for either of them.

22nd.

Letters from the German population in Occupied Enemy Territory passing through our Censor show that they are contented and perhaps somewhat surprised at our good treatment of them. The following extract is from a letter written by a German woman in JAFFA: "We celebrated Xmas all together. As the children were singing "Stille Nacht" there was a soft knock at the door, and, as we opened, at least ten soldiers came in and gazed at the tree; then they began to sing so wonderfully. It was very moving. We were dreadfully frightened at first, but they were so nice and well behaved, and delighted like children.

/ 23rd

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The visit of the Zionist Commission will be keenly watched by the upper and influential Moslems and much depends upon the behaviour of members of the Commission, and the attitude they adopt towards Moslems and Christians. Any open Zionist demonstration would be unwise. A few evenings ago a small band of young Jews (about 15 in number) all in high spirits, and some apparently the worse for liquor marched through the suburbs singing the Maccabean song. This particular song was absolutely forbidden by the Turks and Moslems feel annoyed that the Jews should consider themselves so protected by the British that they can freely indulge in such outbursts.

24th.

The Commander-in-Chief has received a telegram from the War Office to the effect that it is essential for political reasons that the MALTA Battalion should go to Egypt as a combatant battalion. It can however be used for labour purposes on arrival.

A telegram has been sent by the Commander-in-Chief to the War Office recommending that a certain number of Russian Jews in the 38th Btn. Fusiliers should be offered their release from service. These Russians ask for release on the strength of Russia having declared peace and that Great Britain has latterly refrained from calling up Russian Subjects for service in the British Army.

The enthronement of the Right Rev. Bishop R. Mac.Innes as Anglican Bishop in JERUSALEM took place in St. George's Cathedral on Sunday March 17th. Representatives from the following churches were present:- Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Coptic, Abyssinian, Syrian, Greek Catholic and Protestant. The Grand Rabbi of JERUSALEM attended in person and the Mufti who was unable to be present owing to illness, was represented. The Military Governor read the King's mandate authorising the consecration and assigning to the Bishop the care of the Anglican Churches throughout SYRIA, PALESTINE and EGYPT, and parts about the RED SEA, the Anglo-Egyptian SUDAN, the Island of CYPRUS and parts of ASIA MINOR. The Mayor and the representative of the Mufti warmly congratulated the Bishop at the conclusion of the ceremony.

25th.

The Commander-in-Chief has issued instructions that no-one will proceed East of JERUSALEM without permission being received from G.H.Q. owing to the great congestion of traffic on the JERUSALEM - JERICHO Road.

A telegram from the Foreign Office has been received by the Chief Political Officer containing the following information:- "The Italian Government alleges that the French have taken unofficial steps to inform the Vatican that 3 Commanders (sic) of the Entente Forces in PALESTINE have consented to M. PICOT's

/customary

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customary honours until peace is concluded.

The Chief Political Officer is asked by the Foreign Office whether there are any grounds for this statement. No information on the subject has been received in LONDON.

26th.

M. PICOT sent word on the 23rd inst., to the French Communities and to the Latin Patriarchate that the question at issue between himself and the Custode had been satisfactorily settled by the Vatican, and that the Custode had been compelled once again to acknowledge France's ancient rights.

27th.

A telegram has been received by the Commander-in-Chief from the War Office to the effect that it has been decided that all Russians called up under the Convention and serving in the British Army are bound by their enlistment and none of these men are to be released from serving.

M. PICOT in a conversation with the Chief Political Officer again expressed dissatisfaction with his position although he made no complaint of his treatment. He maintained that if and when the British occupy Syria a large measure of French participation would be essential in any provisional administration (whether military or civil) of such territories.

The Military Governor of JERUSALEM reports that M. PICOT visited him on 23rd March and informed him of the orders received from the Vatican by the Custode to the effect that the customary honours were to be paid the French representative in the Holy Places. M. PICOT gave his opinion that this solution of the difficulty would have been still more satisfactory if it had been arrived at by firmness on the part of British Military Authorities in PALESTINE which would incidentally have produced a far better impression in PARIS. The Military Governor replied that the order of Divine Service in places of Public Worship, and generally, could hardly be said to come within the scope of Military Administration, that it would seem rather to have been a matter between the French Government and the Vatican; and that if recent representations resulting in this happy consummation had been begun two or three months ago all parties would have been saved a great deal of trouble.

28th.

In reply to a telegram from the Commander-in-Chief to the effect that there is a feeling in the E.E.F. in favour of the erection of a memorial near JERUSALEM to members of the forces of the British Empire who have fallen in the campaign, such movement to be raised from contributions voluntarily subscribed by the E.E.F. the War Office states that no memorial should be erected until after the war, as none are yet being erected in other theatres of war but that there is no objection to the opening of a subscription list.

/30th

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The Chief Political Officer, in reply to questions relating to the internment of Aliens and the enemy educational establishments in Palestine, has informed the Foreign Office that all physically fit adult males have been interned, the total number being fifty. German and Austrian Jews and members of religious orders as a class have not been interned, but have been dealt with, each case individually. Strict supervision is being exercised over those at large. Purely military requirements have been satisfied by the above measures, and no internment has been made nor restrictive measures imposed for political or economic reasons only, in the absence of any instructions to the contrary.

31st.

The following information has been supplied by an Armenian in JERUSALEM who is considered reliable:-
The Moslems in Occupied Enemy Territory are on the whole disappointed with the British Administration owing to the present exorbitant cost of living. The Moslem Arabs here are not actuated by high ideals. Money seems to occupy most of their time and attention. The majority, moreover, would not be adverse to a restoration of the old regime on the grounds that their present rulers are infidels, that privileges are to be given to the Jews, that arrears of taxation are being demanded by the British Government that precedence is given to the family of HUSSEIN, while those of KHASHDI and NESHESIBI are ignored, and that Moslem women will now enjoy a liberty which is not in accordance with Moslem notions of propriety. The Christians are pro-British in their sympathies but they are dissatisfied with the employment of Moslems of the old regime in Government Departments. Among the Christians employed there is an objection raised that the principle of proportion is being ignored, seeing that Orthodox Greeks are in the majority.
The Jews are satisfied with the British occupation as they foresee the realisation of their national ideals, but there are many among them whose national ideals are subordinate to their love of money, and who would be prepared to sacrifice their ideals if by so doing they could obtain any financial advantage.
The people of JERUSALEM, without distinction of religion detest the Germans - the only pro-German elements are to be found among the Greek Patriarchs and the Jews.