

MOYNE ASSASSINS FACE EQUAL GUILT

Egypt Asks Death for Both —Palestine's World Role

Widens Echoes of Case

CAIRO, Egypt, Jan. 16 (AP)—The two young Jewish nationals on trial for the assassination of Lord Moyne, British Minister Resident of the Middle East, lost their confident, debonair attitude today as the prosecution suddenly altered the charges to make both responsible for the shooting.

Originally only Eliahu Hakim had been charged with the death of Lord Moyne. His companion, Elaihu Bet-Tsouri, had been charged with complicity in the killing of the diplomat and with the slaying of Lord Moyne's chauffeur. As the slaying of the chauffeur was unpremeditated Bet-Tsouri had stood a good chance of escaping the death penalty.

The prosecution's eleventh-hour move was taken under advisement by the court and a decision will be announced tomorrow. The change in charges is permissible under Egyptian law, but nevertheless the defense opposed it.

Though the prisoners have not abandoned hope, they appeared aware for the first time that their lives were in danger. In early conversations with correspondents, Bet-Tsouri had acknowledged that they might be executed, but obviously he did not believe they would.

The court announced that a physician would be called upon to establish Hakim's age through examining his body. The youth first said his age was 20, but defense lawyers produced a birth certificate indicating he is 18. They have contended his youth should be regarded as an extenuating circumstance.

Case Has Wide Implications

By Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

CAIRO, Egypt, Jan. 16—Paradoxically, although the assassination of Lord Moyne was vigorously condemned by all religious groups in Palestine and the assassins, now on trial, represent the secret Stern group, which is only a tiny minority of even extreme Jewish opinion, the crime and its judicial processes have combined to divert considerable public attention to the problems posed by that mandated Levantine territory, whose history is so closely tied up with the three principal religions of the Western World.

Palestine is situated in an ideal geographical location to give it a strategic importance far beyond its size or natural wealth. It borders on and commands the crossroads of the world and British imperial communications. It is likely to be a future airways junction between the East and West.

It is the seaboard for the Mosul-Kirkuk pipeline in Iraq. It is the littoral for an extensive Middle East hinterland. It may eventually have the terminus of the Haifa-Baghdad railway, and there once was a plan for the free transit of Iraq's imports and exports at Haifa.

It will be the last segment of the Calais-Cairo railway route, now that the Haifa-Tripoli link is completed. It may conceivably include a pipeline and terminus for a link between the Saudi Arabian petroleum fields and the Mediterranean, if the American project ever crystallizes.

Furthermore, it is of special importance to Britain in view of the empire's relations with Egypt. Under the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936, Britain promised to clear out of Egypt militarily in five years—an undertaking interrupted by the present war.

Canal Rights Involved

A good deal of the barracks and base construction in Palestine is of a permanent nature, suggesting a British intention to maintain fairly large forces in Palestine for a while after the war. The Suez Canal agreement expires in 1968 and Egypt will then get complete control of the canal.

Suggestions have been made to cut an alternate canal across from a point south of Gaza through the Palestinian part of the Sinai Desert and out at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba into the upper part of the Arabian peninsula where it juts into the Red Sea. The Gaza Canal, according to some estimates, might be engineered for \$60,000,000.

These material considerations make Palestine an extremely important responsibility to the power holding the mandate. The headache from the cooling down of religious passions flaring there, especially between Jew and Arab, has wide ramifications spreading far from Palestine.

The British authorities do not wish to offend world Jewish opinion by any steps that appear to discriminate against Zionist aspirations. On the other hand, the British Empire contains millions of Moslems already in the Middle East, groping toward some form of Arab federation, who are ready to resent openly anything that they consider discrimination against the Arabs in Palestine.

Thus, although the Moyne murder has been an exceptional instance of a type of violence fostered by a tiny but well-trained group and it is basically a Palestinian situation that shows an apparent surface lull, a deep-seated political fractiousness remains and should it ever break out on a large scale it would be a question of primary world importance.

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