

Awarded by King George VI



To Malta April, 1942

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Arab boycott of Egypt LITTLE EFFECT LIKELY

(*Reuter's Service*) BAGHDAD. THE Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) said yesterday that Arab states had agreed on a total economic, political and diplomatic boycott of Egypt, including an oil embargo, to punish President Anwar Sadat for making peace with Israel.

A PLO spokesman told reporters that a five-day conference of 19 Arab League delegations had decided to sever ties with Cairo, halt all economic aid from the Arab world to Egypt and withhold funds from Egyptian banks.

The spokesman did not say when the economic boycott would start or whether a time limit had been set for it to begin.

The Foreign and Economic Ministers had decided that ties with Egypt on the diplomatic level would be broken and urged Arab governments to sever diplomatic relations within a month.

The decisions were part of a compromise formula designed to break a four-day-old deadlock at the conference — the first Arab gathering since the peace treaty with Israel was signed last Monday — and restore a measure of Arab unity.

But the compromise, announced as President Sadat returned to Cairo to a hero's welcome following the signing in Washington, appeared to leave

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loopholes which could shield him from severe penalties.

The PLO spokesman indicated that it was up to the separate Arab governments to decide when to break with Egypt, since the one-month time limit was a recommendation only.

He said Arab oil producers had decided to boycott Egypt because part of the peace agreement involved Egypt selling oil to Israel.

But the spokesman did not say when these measures would be enforced.

The 19 delegations of Foreign and Economic Ministers planned a final, formal session yesterday evening, apparently to endorse the agreement.

Other measures expected in a final accord were suspension of Egypt's membership of the Arab League and removal of the League's headquarters from Cairo.

President Sadat has already frozen Egypt's League membership while the hardline Arab states withdrew their envoys from Cairo last December. Jordan pulled out its Ambassador earlier last week.

Arab journalists quoted an official Saudi source as saying the desert kingdom, the world's big-

gest oil exporter, agreed to the economic and diplomatic measures provided that each country could fix its own time for severing diplomatic ties.

The Saudi source said Saudi Arabia agreed to pull out its Ambassador to Egypt "if Arab solidarity necessitated such a withdrawal at the present stage".

The Saudi position was a major shift from its earlier insistence that the conference merely endorse relatively mild sanctions approved by an Arab summit in Baghdad last November.

The boycott is unlikely to have much impact on Egypt. Only six per cent of its trade is with the Arab world and it is virtually self-sufficient in petroleum products as well as being a net exporter of crude oil.



by a Staff Reporter

THE TWO MINUTES on either side of midnight last night, made history. The last minute of March 31, 1979, marked the end of an era — Malta ceased to be a British military base for the first time in 180 years. As March lapsed into April Malta began a new life still uncertain insofar as its defence against potential attack is concerned.

Centre pages: Gaddafi speaks at Mediterranean Conference Centre; photographs of midnight ceremony at Vittoriosa.

They were a highly emotional two minutes, for the thousands who crammed the square at Vittoriosa, watched from the numerous boats crowded near the foreshore or who watched what was essentially a very simple ceremony on television. Those who will come in the future may re-live that historic moment, for yesterday's flag ceremony is perpetuated in the bronze monument which last night was the centrepiece of the ceremonial.

On no occasion, since Sep- (Continued on page 16)

THE UNION JACK is hauled down (left), followed by the raising of the Maltese flag at the Vittoriosa Freedom Monument.

START OF SUMMER TIME

HAVE you put your clocks and watches forward by one hour? Malta changed over to summer time at 2 a.m. today, and local time is now two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

Summer time usually starts on the third Sunday in April, and ends on the third Sunday in September, but this year summer time started two weeks earlier, as an economy measure.

Mr. Foot's hopes for continuing British relations with Malta

By a Staff Reporter

MR. MICHAEL FOOT, Leader of the House of Commons, said yesterday that he hoped for good and friendly relations between Malta and Britain for many centuries to come. Mr. Foot, who is 67 and generally regarded as being on the left wing of the British Labour Party, made that statement on arrival at Luqa Airport yesterday. He flew in with Mrs. Foot on a scheduled British Airways TriStar flight to attend the March 31 events.

Asked on his thoughts regarding the end of the 180 year British military presence in Malta, Mr. Foot said: "We are bound to feel sad, in one way, in Britain because there has been a fine association between Malta and Britain and we shared some great historic events. It is sad for many people. On the other hand we look to the future hoping that there is going to be good friendly relations between the two countries for many years and even centuries to come. That should apply for the whole world as well".

Mr. Foot added he hoped that there will be good relations whosoever is in Government in both countries. He said he knew there had been strains and stresses at times but he hoped that one could always talk to one another to overcome problems. The wonderful reception accorded to a folk group from Leeds University, during the past week, was probably a sign of what the people of Malta felt about the people of Britain, he said.

There are hundreds of thousands of people in the U.K. who have friends in Malta and who want to keep it that way as long as possible.

Asked about the British military presence in the Mediterranean, Mr. Foot said it was not for him to discuss a question of that nature. But he hoped the friendship between the two countries would continue. "And we want to translate that into every different form possible. We want to sustain the general friendship between the two peoples".

His predictions on the May 3 general election in Britain? Mr. Foot said it will be a very close one. Malta had some close elections as well. His guess was that the outcome would not be known until the very final minute. He hoped the Labour Party would win in the end.

Asked what was the likely topic he would bring up if had the opportunity of a chat with Colonel Gaddafi, now also in Malta, Mr. Foot replied that there were many topics that both would have an interest in. Mr. Foot said he hoped Colonel Gaddafi was as much in favour as Britain was in maintaining peace in the Mediterranean and throughout the world. "The world is much too dangerous a place for anybody to have wars. And that applies in the Middle East, the Mediterranean and everywhere else and I hope that more and more peoples and Governments throughout the world will understand that".

On a question regarding Malta's role as a "bridge" between Europe and Africa and whether the current situation in Europe could hinder this, Mr. Foot said he did not think so on the second part of the question. Britain wanted to have friendly relations in the Arab world. That was essential for peace in the Mediterranean and Britain wanted to secure that. Britain always wanted to establish good relations with the different Arab countries. "If Malta can help us in that we will be grateful".

When the correspondent of *The Sunday Times* was introduced, Mr. Foot said with a smile, "I'm glad *The Times* is still publishing. We hope *The Times* in England will start publishing again soon".

Soon after his arrival Mr. Foot was accorded a musical welcome by a folk group from Leeds University. He also joined the group in singing "We'll Meet Again" as he left the VIP Lounge.

The welcoming party at Luqa included Miss Agatha Barbara, Minister of Labour, Mr. Norman Aspin, the British High Commissioner, Mr. Purcell, the Deputy British High Commissioner, Rear Admiral O.N.A. Cecil and Air Commodore H.D. Hall, Dr. A. Sceberras Trigona, International Secretary of the Malta Labour Party, and Mr. Dennis Sammut, President of the Socialist Youths.

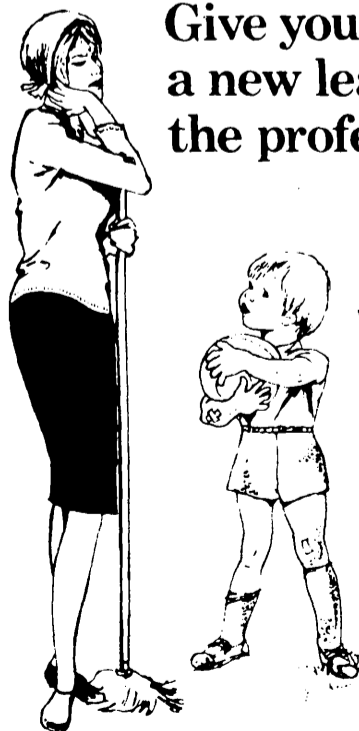
ISRAEL WINS EURO SONG CONTEST

ISRAEL last night repeated its 1978 success when it won the Eurovision Song Contest once again in Jerusalem. Nineteen countries took part in this year's contest.



MR. MICHAEL FOOT and his wife on arrival at Luqa Airport yesterday.

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