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# Zionists Urge Army of 50,000 Palestine Jews

Aid to Allenby in World  
 War Recalled in Plea for  
 New Unit to Fight Nazis

The author of the following article was a British United Press correspondent in the Near East for five years, maintaining the Bureau of the 20th Legion in Palestine, 1936-39.

By Arthur Sattler

The spread of hostilities to French-mandated Syria, which lies along the northern gateway to Palestine, has prompted leading Zionist Jews in the United States and in Jerusalem to intensify their efforts to induce British authorities to establish an army of young Jews for service with the armies of the Nile.

These efforts are predicated on the belief that a well trained, well equipped Jewish army in the Holy Land, for which upward of 50,000 men are available, would be an important factor in Allied resistance to the impending Nazi thrust from Iraq and Syria. There has been much grumbling in Zionist circles over Great Britain's failure to draft Jewish troops into an all-Jewish force. It is pointed out that London's policy of thus appeasing the Arabs has failed to win dissident elements or even to greatly pro-British Moslems who would remain loyal in any case.

In the World War more than 60,000 Jews of a total of 340,000 in the British Army saw active service with the Allies. At the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 Turkey joined with the central powers, and among other war measures the Turkish military authorities in Palestine expelled more than 12,000 Jews from that country. It was then that the idea of creating a Jewish legion that would fight with the British forces for the liberation of the Holy Land occurred to Vladimir Jabotinsky.

### Organized Mule Corps

The general officer commanding in Egypt, Gen. John Grenfell Maxwell, told a committee that laid the proposal for the formation of a Jewish legion before him, that he could use such a legion as mule drivers but that he was not empowered to send the legion to the Palestine front. The late Gen. Maxwell's offer was accepted and in 1915 the Zion Mule Corps was organized. The corps performed valuable service in the Gallipoli campaign. Many legionnaires were killed in action and many received decorations for bravery under fire.

At the close of the Dardanelles expedition the Mule Corps was disbanded. About 150 of its members reached London after being torpedoed in the Mediterranean and enlisted in the 20th London Regiment later to form the nucleus of the Jewish Legion. The War Office in 1917 organized a battalion in which Jews could serve together and maintain their own religious serv-

ices. Jews in the regular British Army were transferred on request, and the legion was called the 20th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers.

### Aided Allenby Campaign

Further enlistments for the Jewish Legion prompted the authorities to form the 39th Battalion (R. F.) under command of Lieut. Col. Eliezer Margolin, D. S. O., a Palestinian. In 1918 in the United States a group of enthusiasts launched a movement for enlistment of Jewish volunteers in the B. E. F. for action in the Holy Land. About 6,500 men joined, with the result that the 40th and 42d Battalions were formed.

The 38th and 39th Battalions reached the Palestine front in time to take part in the final campaign of the late Field Marshal Viscount Edmund Allenby and in the conquest of Transjordan. Another 2,000 men joined the reserve battalions in the depot in England. There were more than 9,600 men in the Jewish Legion.

Jews hope that Britain again will allow the formation of Palestinian Jewish regiments. Zionists point out that the conquest of Palestine may sound the death knell of Egypt.

"We have maintained ever since the World War," a Jewish leader told me, "that a strong Jewish Palestine was vitally important for strengthening and stabilizing the position in the Middle East.

### 10,000 at the Front

The Jewish Agency for Palestine, highest governing body for Palestine Jewry, proposed to bring a selected group of 100,000 youths of military age from various European countries under Nazi domination on condition that they enter military training on arrival. Upon the outbreak of war Jewish authorities in Jerusalem called on the Jewish community to register voluntarily for national service. A total of 136,000 registered. Although the Palestine government in Jerusalem expressed appreciation, it refused to avail itself of their services. About 10,000 Palestine Jews were enlisted into the British armed forces in the Near East and are serving in Libya, in the Western Desert of Egypt and in Palestine proper.

Palestine is the only country in the Middle East that has been actively pro-British. Iraq has been at war with Britain, and her Prime Minister, Rashid Ali Beg Ghalib, is avowedly pro-Nazi, permitting the violently anti-British former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el Husseini, to spread propaganda. Syria, under the administration of the Vichy government, is considered a probable jumping-off place for a Nazi attack on Palestine. Saudi Arabia has maintained an attitude of neutrality and reserve, which, in the circumstances amounts to hostility to the British. Turkey, despite her treaty obligations with Britain, seems determined to stay out of war. Even Egypt has failed to declare war, although her territory has been invaded.

The Jewish units now serving in the British forces are for all purposes part of the regular army, wearing identical uniforms, eating the same fare and performing the same duties. Their rate of pay is lower, however, and among themselves they speak Hebrew. They remain vitally nationalistic, and they are not discouraged in their feeling that they are serving their national

Zeitschriftenliste, -- wenn unbekannt -- Stichwort suchen

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homeland of Palestine. They read Hebrew books and newspapers, sing Hebrew songs and attend Hebrew plays performed for their benefit. They feel that they are the vanguard of a large Jewish army that may soon spring into reality, and according to reports already are "making traditions."

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Presseabteilung Auswärtiges Amt  
P XII Sonderdienst Politischer Nachrichten (SPN)

3.9.41.

Blatt 1

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1. Globerouter Hell Morse aus London 20.15 h (v.2.9.):  
Forderung zur Bildung jüdischer Truppeneinheiten.

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Gestern, Dienstag, äusserte David Ben-Gurion, der Vorsitzende der Exekutive der jüdischen Agentur in Jerusalem, der gerade in England eingetroffen war, die dringende Bitte, jüdische Einheiten zu bilden, damit die Juden **Palästinas voll zur Unterstützung der Kriegsanstrengungen herangezogen werden könnten.** "Wenn dies geschehen würde," sagte er, "würden die Juden in den neutralen Ländern, vor allem in den Vereinigten Staaten, zu Tausenden herbeiströmen, um sich ihren Brüdern anzuschliessen." Es befänden sich bereits 10 000 Juden bei den britischen Streitkräften, aber mindestens 30 000 junge Juden in Palästina hätten den Wunsch, zu dienen.

2. United Press Telegramm Morse aus Washington 20.15 h  
(V.2.9.): Rege Tätigkeit Roosevelts.

Roosevelt kehrte am Dienstag Vormittag in das Weisse Haus zurück. Er hatte Besprechungen mit Hull, später plante er, Wallace, Barkley und andere Führer der Legislative zu empfangen, um mit ihnen über die Reaktion des Kongresses auf seinen gestrigen Aufruf zu sprechen, in welchem er Amerika aufforderte, seine ganze Kraft einzusetzen, um Hitlers "ungesunde Gewalt" zu zermalmen. Man ist der Ansicht, dass dies der Beginn einer Reihe von Konferenzen sei, womit der Präsident hofft, die Hilfe für die Demokratien zu beschleunigen.

Tr.

Fortsetzung Blatt 2

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