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JEWISH BRIGADE IN ACTION IN ITALY; JTA CORRESPONDENT REPORTS ITS BAPTISM OF FIRE

WITH THE JEWISH BRIGADE ON THE EIGHTH ARMY FRONT, ITALY, Mar. 25. (JTA) -- For the first time since the beginning of this war, wholly Jewish units are fighting the Nazis man to man. The "Jewish Brigade," composed entirely of troops claiming Palestine as their homeland - except for a few British officers in the higher commands - has been in the line for more than two weeks.

As correspondent of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, I arrived on this front several days ago to observe the Jewish Brigade in action, but, for security reasons, it was not possible to report their presence here until now, as the Germans had not yet identified the unit.

These tough, tanned soldiers, probably more than any other unit in this army, have something to fight for. Some of these troops have escaped from Nazi concentration camps. Some have been tortured. Nearly half have relatives who are known to be dead, or worse, have vanished and are missing inside Europe. These soldiers are fighting an eye-for-an-eye and a tooth-for-a-tooth war. I have never seen men so desperately determined, so grave about combat.

Brigadier Ernest F. Benjamin, their commanding officer, is a veteran British soldier, noted chiefly for his great ability at training troops for special combat missions. He helped train American soldiers for the invasion of France. He is confident that the Jewish troops will give a splendid account of themselves when he really unleashes them. "The only complaints I get are from units not yet placed into the line," he said.

The Eighth Army staff doesn't expect immediate wonders from the Jewish Brigade, any more than it would from another comparatively green and inexperienced outfit. There are lessons that can be learned only by long combat experience.

Brigade Has More Than Held Its Own Against Nazis

But thus far the Brigade has more than held its own against the Germans. The Germans probing their lines have not advanced a foot. They have killed some Nazis and have suffered some casualties. While the Germans apparently did not know who was up against them, they must have thought that something funny was going on. Every time a Croat pokes his head above ground during daylight hours, a storm descends upon it. Every time German mortars open up they are swamped by counterfire.

What is going on here may be called the "battle of the floodbanks." The flat Lombardy plains are laced by straight narrow canals which merely trickle now. But when it rains, the canals rapidly fill up and they would pour over the low countryside except for the lofty, floodbanks that flank them.

The Jewish Brigade units are on one side of such a canal, and the Germans are on the other. They are so close they can lob grenades back and forth. Both sides

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burrow mole-like in the banks or burrow completely through and establish positions on the waterside.

There is little activity during the day since our enormous air superiority keeps the Nazis underground. But at nightfall the front becomes tense. Sporadic artillery barrages light the skies when movement is suspected. The Nazis throw over Nebelwerfer rockets. Flares rise over the floodbanks. Then small arms fires break out in one sector when patrols meet.

Fathers and Sons Fighting Side by Side in Brigade

They call themselves Palestinians. Their vehicles and arms bear the Star of David on a blue-and-white background - the colors of the Palestinian flag. But they are natives of 35 countries - every state in Europe. There are two cases of fathers and sons fighting side by side in the Brigade. There are instances where men fled from Germany to Hungary, from Hungary to Rumania and finally reached Palestine where they enlisted in the Brigade.

Major Ephraim Ben Arzi, one of the Jewish senior officers, like many other Palestinians, laments the fact that the Jewish Brigade entered the fighting so late in the course of the war. However, Jewish companies - such as the Palestine Transportation Company under Capt. Simon Maso - have been serving with the Fifth and Eighth Armies since the Italian campaign began. The Star of David is a familiar sight along Italy's roads. In addition, some of the troops which formed the nucleus of the Jewish Brigade were stationed as garrison troops in North Africa for long periods.

Gen. Mark Clark Welcomes Jewish Brigade to Italian Front

ROME, Mar. 25. (JTA) -- Lieut. Gen. Mark Clark announced today that the Jewish Brigade is now part of the Fifteenth Army Group and said that he "was delighted to have the Jewish Brigade operating with our forces on the Italian front."

Wishing the Brigaders luck, Gen. Clark said: "I am greatly satisfied that the Jewish people who have suffered so terribly at the hands of the Nazis should now be directly represented by this front-line fighting force. They will be given every opportunity to prove their worth alongside troops of other nations and of bringing honor to Jewry."

ROMANIA SENDS TRAINS TO POLAND TO BRING BACK LIBERATED TRANSYLVANIAN JEWS

BUCHAREST, Mar. 25. (JTA) -- The Rumanian Government today announced that special trains will be sent to Cracow, Western Poland, to bring back to their home towns about 12,000 Transylvanian Jews who were liberated by Russian troops from the notorious Nazi concentration camp at Oswiecim and who are now in Cracow awaiting repatriation.

Evidence presented yesterday at the trial of Col. Ispescu, Rumanian chief of police in Golta who is charged with ordering the mass-extermination of 48,000 Rumanian Jews deported to Transnistria, and held under his supervision in the Bogdanovka camp, revealed that the execution was carried out in December, 1941 by machine-guns and that Ispescu himself witnessed it and took pictures of the mass-murder. The bodies of the massacred Jews were later burned.

The Romania Libera, leading Rumanian democratic newspaper, today demands that Prof. Jon Gruia, author of the anti-Jewish racial laws under the previous pro-Nazi regime, should be purged from Bucharest University where he is a member of the law faculty.

250,000 POLISH JEWS IN USSR EXPECT TO RETURN TO POLAND; APPEAL TO U.S. JEWS FOR AID

MOSCOW, Mar. 25. (JTA) -- Emphasizing that there are 250,000 Polish Jews "temporarily residing" in Russia, the presidium of the Committee of Polish Jews in the USSR today issued an appeal to the Jews of America, Palestine, Britain and other countries asking for "immediate material help." The appeal points out that the Jewish refugees in the Soviet Union are "the core of the future Jewish community in Poland."

"The Nazi crusade against the Jewish population of Poland forced Polish Jews to leave their country," the appeal says. "To save their lives they left behind them all their worldly goods and property and fled in panic toward the east. In this manner some 250,000 Polish Jews escaped from the brutal Nazi terror to find asylum in the Soviet Union."

"Fully aware of their responsibilities they set themselves immediately to work in various industrial and economic fields joining with the local Soviet population in forging effective weapons against the rapacious German fascism. However, the arduous wartime conditions as well as the numerous evacuations from various districts imposed a severe strain upon their health, material resources and clothes."

"In view of the historically unprecedented crime committed in the extermination of the great Jewish community in Poland by the bloody hand of German fascism it is obvious that the Jewish refugees in the Soviet Union, owing to their numbers and their quality, will constitute the core of the future Jewish community in Poland. A majority of the refugees are skilled professionals - physicians, engineers, lawyers, intellectuals, teachers, clerks, artisans, merchants, prominent literary men and social leaders. Many are workers from the heavy industries."

"Therefore, from every point of view, it is of the utmost importance that everything possible should be done to protect the life and health of these Jewish refugees that they might one day return to Poland in comparatively sound physical condition. This is even more important since the Polish Jews in the emigration have always expressed and are now expressing their unswerving will to return to their Motherland - a revived democratic Poland."

"During this hardest period of their history the Polish Jews turn their eyes toward their brothers abroad with whom they are linked by blood. Irrespective of the aid rendered to our unhappy brothers who have survived in Poland and who waged a constant struggle against the brutal Nazi invader it is of the most urgent importance that immediate material help should be given to the Jewish refugees in the Soviet Union from whom the future Jewish community in Poland is destined to be recreated."

"On behalf of the quarter million Polish Jews temporarily residing in the Soviet Union and represented by the Organizational Committee of Polish Jews let us appeal to the feelings of Jewry in the United States, North America, South America, Canada, Palestine, Britain and Australia to concern themselves with the fate of the Polish Jews in the emigration."

1,000 JEWISH WOMEN FROM GERMANY, SLOVAKIA, HUNGARY SAVED BY RED ARMY NOW IN LODZ

LUBLIN, Mar. 25. (JTA) -- One thousand Jewish women from Hungary, Germany and Slovakia who were liberated from German camps by the Red Army are now in Lodz, the Lublin radio reported today. The broadcast also revealed that 135 Jewish women from Lodz were among survivors found at the Althammer camp in Silesia. At the same time, it announced that the Lodz Jewish Committee has organized a department of culture and propaganda.

INCREASED GENEROSITY AMONG JEWS WILL CONTINUE AFTER WAR, MEDALIE PREDICTS

NEW YORK, Mar. 25. (JTA) -- The increased generosity now noticeable in the field of Jewish philanthropy can be counted on to continue into the post-war era as one of the great forces for social welfare betterment, George Z. Medalie declared today in his annual report as president of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, delivered at the 28th annual meeting of the Federation at Temple Emmanu El, attended by more than 1,000 persons.

Mr. Medalie said that, while complete campaign receipts are unavailable pending the close of the federation fiscal year on June 30th, it could be estimated that the final total will not only meet in full the regular budgetary requirements of the 116 Social Welfare and Medical institutions represented in the Federation, but will also provide enough special funds to serve as a margin of safety for their uninterrupted operation in the event of a post-war emergency. "Through the community's generosity," he said, "Federation has been made ship-shape and seaworthy to ride uncertainties of storm or tide the post-war years may bring."

He praised the work of Samuel S. Schneiderman, chairman of the 1944 appeal, and his 10,300 volunteer workers, pointing out that it was the first time in Federation's history that its organization of workers -- "not sponsors, not mere names on a letter-head, but actual campaign workers, passed the 10,000 mark." The total number of individual and group gifts recorded for the year has passed 74,000 Mr. Medalie said.

AMERICAN FUND FOR PALESTINIAN INSTITUTIONS ANNOUNCES \$500,000 BUDGET FOR 1945

NEW YORK, Mar. 25. (JTA) -- The American Fund for Palestinian Institutions will seek to raise \$500,000 in 1945 to meet essential needs of 69 beneficiaries, it was announced here today by Lt. Edward A. Norman, president, who recently returned to this country from Europe, after having served with the Third Army. Lt. Norman reported that the American Fund raised in 1944 about \$300,000, with overhead expenses of eight percent. Of this amount, \$235,000 was distributed to 52 beneficiaries during the past year.

Because of the inclusion of many Palestine Yeshivoth in the program, the Board of Directors, at its annual meeting, elected the following additional orthodox leaders: Dr. Leo Jung, Mr. Max Stern, Commissioner William B. Herlands, and Rabbi Eliezer Silver of Cincinnati as honorary chairman of the Advisory Council of Orthodox Leaders. The American Fund also established a Canadian Advisory Board, chairman of which is Mr. Edward B. Gelber of Toronto, at the fifth annual meeting of the Fund. The following officers were re-elected: Lt. Edward A. Norman, president; Judge Louis E. Lovinthal, vice-president; Dr. Maurice B. Hexter, treasurer; Alan M. Stroock, secretary.

IRA HIRSCHMANN LAUDS J.D.C. ROLE IN OVERSEAS RELIEF AT LOS ANGELES REGIONAL MEETING

LOS ANGELES, Mar. 25. (JTA) -- The role played by the Joint Distribution Committee as the major American agency for relief to distressed Jews overseas, was lauded here today by Ira A. Hirschmann, former overseas representative of the War Relocation Board, addressing a meeting in Hollywood of 400 representatives of Jewish communities in the Los Angeles area. Joseph C. Hyman, executive vice-chairman of the J.D.C., described to the gathering the stark tragedy faced by the Jews in Europe and spoke of the intensified needs of the Jews in liberated countries.

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