

DOC 06019 June's

'86 01/10/1948

Strictly Confidential

Report on the Enlistment of Jewish Personnel in Palestine

17.10.4

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1. General:

(i) On the outbreak of war approximately 100,000 Jews were registered by the Jewish Agency in Palestine. These men were offered for enlistment into the British Army to serve as combatant troops.

For certain reasons this offer was then rejected. Subsequently requests were made by the Army and R.A.F. for limited numbers of recruits to serve in specific units as the need arose. Some 10,000 Jews thus enlisted, can now be found in various units in the Middle East.

(ii) This sporadic recruiting took place with difficulty. Mass "appeal" which is an essential part of all recruiting campaigns in democratic countries was, by virtue of this peace-time policy, absent. Mixed Arab and Jewish units then formed were never popular and on the whole have now proved unsuitable.

The withdrawal⁹ from Greece and Crete when approximately 90% of the Jewish units serving there became prisoners of war, led to an impression being created among the Jewish public that the Palestinian units did not enjoy the same treatment and evacuation facilities which were available for British and other Dominion troops at the time. The conclusion of the Syrian campaign, which resulted in the diminution of immediate danger to Palestine, has given rise to increased complacency among the public.

It has been noted in many quarters that publicity with regard to the activities of Jewish Palestinian units has really been given in the press and on public platforms in the U.K. The fact that a publication like "Parade" has featured the activities of Arab units but to date has not done the same for Jewish units, has been freely commented on. The Jewish public appears to feel that it is only called upon to produce men for the Colours when other personnel is not readily available. There is a feeling prevalent that Palestinian Jews are not always given the welcome to the ranks of His Majesty's Forces that they have a right to look for as being volunteers and taking their place beside personnel drawn from other corners of the Empire, imbued with the same determination to achieve the same goal.

(iii) It can, therefore, generally be stated that until the present recruiting campaign was initiated, the feeling among the Jewish population in Palestine was not conducive to recruiting and the ground was far from fertile.

2. Analysis of Man Power:

(i) Over 40% of the Jewish population is aged between 20 and 45. The character, fighting quality and military competence of these men is on the whole equal to that encountered among the personnel of His Majesty's Forces at present to be found in the Middle East. This personnel can be roughly divided into two main categories:

- (a) Those organised within the Trade Unions Cooperative Societies or other Jewish institutions covering both agricultural and industrial work.
- (b) Independent workers, artisans, small shop keepers, etc. in the cities, smallholders and farmers in the agricultural colonies.

(a) embraces well organised and disciplined man power which is largely at the disposal of the central Jewish national institutions and has invariably shown itself ready to respond to any fair and just appeal made by such institutions for limited enlistment.

(b) is extremely difficult of access on the basis of any hand-to-mouth type of recruiting.

(ii) The able bodied Jewish population embraces a considerable number of highly skilled technicians and specialists for which the ordinary method of recruiting offer no obvious opportunity for efficient exploitation in the war effort. This type of personnel refuses to waste valuable experience and skill (of which the Empire is stated to be in need), by joining the ordinary services for which recruiting is now taking place.

(iii) Over 40 thousand refugees from Germany and enemy occupied territories have found their way to Palestine during the last decade. A number of German and Austrian subjects now of Palestinian nationality have been resident in Palestine since shortly after last war. Of these a proportion of well educated professional and business men who would be willing to enlist might form a source of supply for commissioned ranks.

3. Difficulties and Deterrents:

(i) Lack of a long term effective recruiting policy and sporadic recruiting eliminated all the factors required for a large scale appeal. All the psychological factors which impel a man to give up his civilian occupation to join the Colours are at present absent. The emotional factors for recruiting without conscription must be available in any appeal if it is to succeed. To put it algebraically: let A equal need for man power, let B equal emotional requirements for a successful large-scale enlistment, let C equal number of recruits enlisted. Then $A+B$ equal C. A is a military constant. B is a variable based on political expediency. C is dependent on the value of B and its total will increase in strict relation to B.

In fact until the emotional aspects of recruiting involving semi-political considerations are incorporated in the policy, it can be stated that a very meagre response can be expected to any recruiting campaign undertaken in Palestine.

(ii) No adequate lead has been forthcoming from the civil authorities whose attitude has been noted by the public as indicating a lack of interest in recruiting. Numerous instances were quoted at recruiting meetings where junior officials of military age had apparently been discouraged by the attitude of their superiors. This factor continues to affect recruiting adversely.

(iii) Pay and allowances: The fact that the rate of pay is lower than the British rate is in principle a deterrent. The standard of living of the Jewish population is a European one and whilst it includes no luxury must assure the basic amenities. This cannot be achieved on the present rate of pay and allowances. Many of those already serving, find their families in dire financial straits. It is regarded as a reflexion on the Army, generally, that such a situation should have been permitted to arise. The Jewish community through its institutions has during the recent recruiting campaign demonstrated its concern for this problem by appealing for contributions from the public.

(iv) Discharged Soldiers: A number of these have been discharged as a result of wounds, etc., received on active service. They are now approaching municipal and other public bodies for financial assistance and request for employment. It appears that their cases are still under consideration by the War Office. Their presence without visible means of support and hope of employment constitutes a discouraging example to would-be recruits.

4. The Present Campaign:

An attempt was made throughout the present campaign to urge men to enlist on purely rational grounds, i.e. "Hitler regards Jewry as enemy No.1 and Jewry must reciprocate the compliment". An appeal to Duty was made. Young men were challenged by members of the Special Recruiting Staff and compelled to listen by force of argument and other means to the pros and cons of the case. Mass meetings were held throughout the country and groups as well as individuals approached. Military parades and displays took place and the press cooperated to feature all these activities. Recruiting booths were opened, at nine points in Tel Aviv (Jewish population approx. 250,000) leaflets were dropped by planes, posters were placed on hoardings, shop windows contained photos and facts concerning the Jewish participation in the Middle East campaigns. Places of amusement were visited by members of the Special Recruiting Staff and the public enjoined to cooperate by urging Jews of military age to enlist. The result of all this will, it is feared, prove extremely meagre in relation to the expenditure of effort, but it can be said that this campaign has broken the ice. It has so far, however, proved as difficult and thankless a task as making bricks without straw (an historical precedent which it is suggested should not continue to be emulated in view of the urgent need for personnel).

5. Recommendations:

Properly planned long term recruiting policy is required, the hand-to-mouth element being eliminated. The conception of a group of Jewish units in the form of a Bde or Div as recruiting warrants would be an objective likely to produce considerable numbers of men.

(ii) The introduction of Jewish names for various units associated with historical traditions of a military character would appeal. The adoption of some elementary form of insignia such as a shoulder strap with the word "Palestine" and for Jewish units a shield of David and for Arab units a crescent would adequately serve the case.

(iii) The civil authorities should be urged to release on equitable terms such Jews of military age as are desirous of enlisting provided they are not ~~kay~~-men (and many of them hold very junior positions such as clerks, messengers, etc.) The Government undertaking to reemploy them on the same terms at the conclusion of hostilities.

Note: This is being done by most of the larger business houses; banks and national institutions. In certain institutions the difference of pay is also made up to them during their term of service in the Army.

(iv) The Government should be urged to provide immediate employment for discharged and disabled soldiers and the army should ensure that no soldier is discharged without providing him with a minimum subsistence until his bonus or compensation is approved.

(v) The present campaign should be continued. The Special Recruiting Staff composed of selected Jewish military personnel detached

from units in Palestine should be employed for this work. Such men are in the best position to approach the public since they are conversant with the particular psychology of the population. This Jewish staff might be as follows:

1 Senior Jewish Officer O.C., S.R.S.
 1 Subaltern Adjutant
 2 Subalterns
 50 N.C.O.'s and O.R.'s

This personnel should be a revolving one on the basis of a roster to operate for a period of a month at a time or as long as the personnel can be conveniently spared from their units and retain the enthusiasm and zeal, so vital in this type of work.

(vi) One of two journalists and public speakers of experience should be specially enlisted for this recruiting staff since only men in uniform who have made the gesture of joining can effectively approach the public.

(vii) The numerous specialists and skilled technicians for whom there is no obvious opening under the present recruiting scheme should be mobilised under the direction of a competent person able to control military scientific research to be carried out in laboratories already in existence in Palestine or wherever the services of these personnel can be put to best use. The Director should be conversant with the latest methods employed in the net work of military research now carried out in the U.K. and would be competent to select the technicians and put them to work on the problems and keep them posted on research progress in other parts of the Empire. He would also act as a clearing house for scientific and technical activities carried out in the Middle East. It is suggested that he be situated at Force Headquarters Jerusalem, and that he be provided with certain funds to be allocated for the acquisition of apparatus and encouragement of promising research even outside the actual frame work of his organisation. How far this skilled personnel should be militarised would be a matter for consideration.

(viii) Pay and Allowances: If it is found inexpedient to raise these to a higher level it is suggested that some compromise arrangement be entered into whereby a standard of pay and marriage allowances adequate to meeting the need of Jewish married personnel might be made available through some unofficial channel. There is already a precedent for this in respect to Jewish Palestinian Police stationed in the largest cities where the cost of living is so much higher. The difference between the official police pay and the scale of the cost of living is made up by a grant in aid payable through the Tel Aviv Municipality (for police in Tel Aviv).

Perhaps a grant in aid to raise the marriage allowances could be disbursed through some institutions such as the National Institution of Jews in Palestine (which embraces all parties and sections of the Jewish community).

(ix) Potential Officers of Enemy Origin: Each case is apparently now submitted to the War Office, London, for consideration resulting in enormous delay. It is suggested that a board of officers be established in Jerusalem to consider each case on the spot. The obvious advantages in reaching the correct decision for a board able to consult the C.I.D., Int. Branch and local institutions and to do this expeditiously must be apparent.

(x) Publicity: Adequate suitable photos and material for a feature story are available in regard to the activities of Jewish units in the Middle East. These it is suggested should be made up into a few feature articles, one to appear in Parade as soon as possible and other material to be sent to the U.K. for use in the USA and elsewhere (the important public opinion constituted by the four million Jews in America is worthy of consideration in respect to its political significance. The natural interest of this American element in their co-religionists' participation in the war effort as Jews, has its significance).

(xi) The posting of Jewish personnel away from mixed Arab and Jewish units to purely Jewish units should, it is suggested, be expedited.

(xii) A recommendation for an award and mention in despatches for personnel of one of the Jewish RASC units which served throughout the withdrawal in the Western desert, has just been submitted. If it receives favourable consideration the publication of these distinctions will prove a filip to recruiting for the present campaign.

(xiii) A small but on the whole valuable number of British and Dominion subjects who are Jews resident in Palestine is beginning to come forward with an ~~offer~~ offer to serve in the army. In certain instances these men should be encouraged to give the benefit of their British background and training to the Jewish units. If they do so there is at present some doubt whether they will, on joining the Palestinian units, be able to draw pay and allowances on the British rate. It is suggested that this matter should receive favourable consideration.

6. Conclusion:

The above recommendations and observations are made on the basis of careful analysis carried out during the last six weeks. If the recommendations are adopted in the spirit and manner required there is every reason to expect that recruiting of Jewish personnel can be carried out on the scale adequate to the present needs of His Majesty's Forces. It should not prove impossible to enlist an additional ten or twenty thousand Privates, drivers and technical personnel since it is estimated that there are well over sixty thousand men available between the ages of 20 and 45. It is felt that unless many of the basic recommendations are adopted that no matter how much energy and work is put into the recruiting, there will be difficulty in enlisting more than one or two thousand men during the immediate future.

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Cairo,
17.10.41