

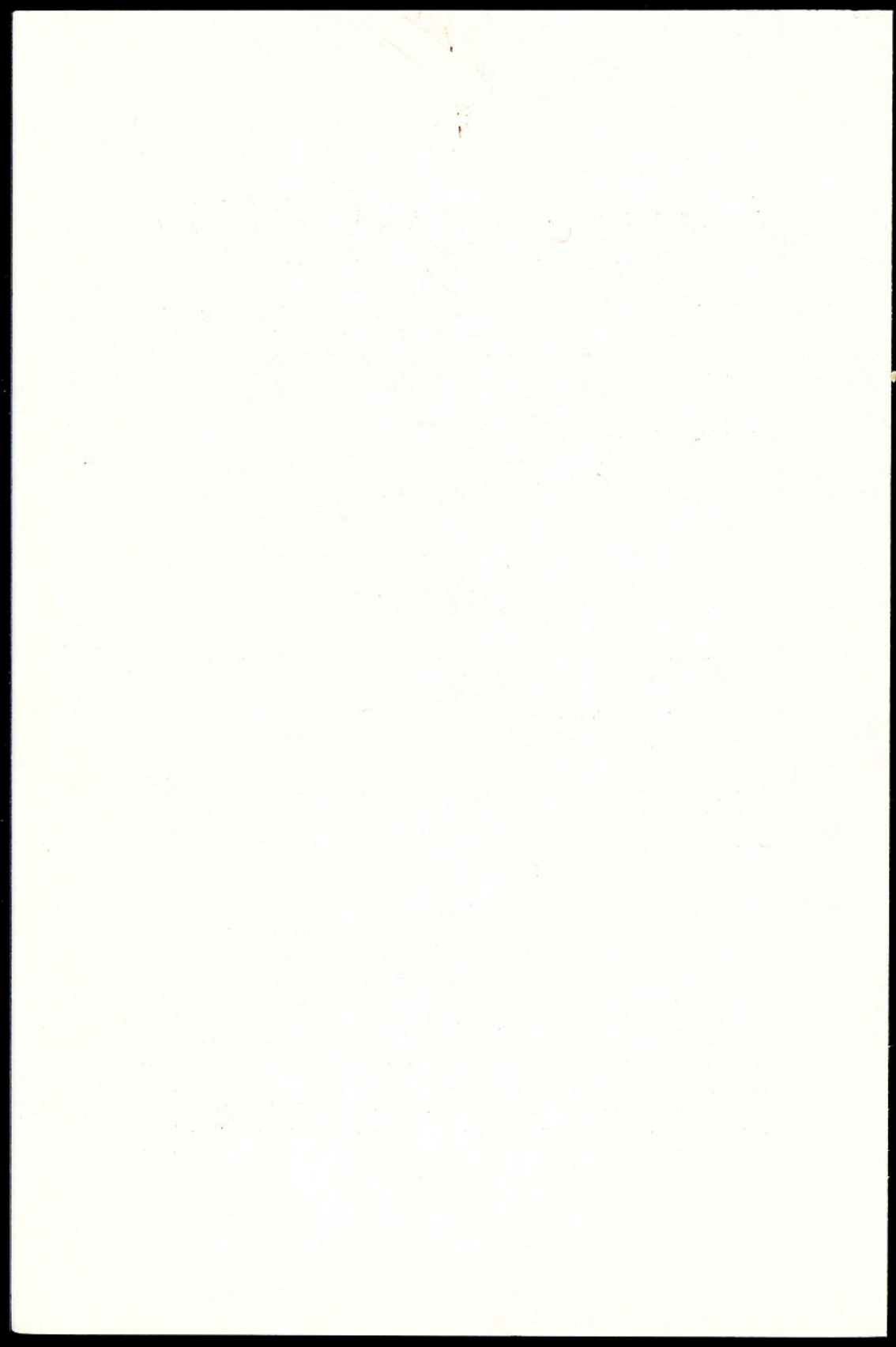
MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



JUNE, 1968

SIVAN, 5728

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN



MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

... אשר ישאלון בניכם ספר את אבותם... (יהושע ד:כא)

"When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come . . ."

— Joshua 4:21

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MICHIGAN JEWS AND THE JEWISH LEGION (1917 - 1920)

אידישען לעגיאָן פאַר ארץ־ישׂראל

די ענגלישע רעגירונג האט אונז גאראנטירט, אז די אידישע יונגע-לייט פון דעם ספעציע-
לען לעגיאָן וועלען געשיקט ווערען בלויז אין ארץ־ישׂראל, אז די גאנצע קאמאנדע וועט זיין א
אידישע, אז אונזער אייגענע ווייס-בלויע פאָהן וועט זיין אונזער עהרען-צייכען. די אידישע יונ-
גע לייט פון דיווען לעגיאָן וועלען אלזאָ אָנפירען דעם קאמף אלס א י ד י ש ע ר לעגיאָן,
אויס א י ד י ש ען לאַנד, פאר'ן א י ד י ש ען פאָלק. זיי וועלען בילדען די אמתע, די איינ-
ציגע אידישע ארמעע אויף דער גאנצער וועלט.

A JEWISH LEGION FOR THE LAND OF ISRAEL

The English government guarantees that the Jewish young men of this special Legion will be sent only to Eretz Israel, the military leaders will be Jewish, and our white-blue flag will be the standard. The men of this command will fight as a Jewish Legion in the Jewish homeland, for the Jewish people. They will be the only true Jewish army in the world.

An excerpt from a recruiting notice, 1917.

THE JEWISH LEGION IN WORLD WAR I ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND SIGNIFICANCE

(This article will serve as a background for the extensive coverage
in this issue to the JEWISH LEGION)

by ALLEN A. WARSEN

The assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria, on June 28, 1914, at Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, by a member of the secret terrorist Serbian society commonly known as the Black Hand set off a chain of events which led to World War I.

No sooner had the war started than the leaders of the oppressed and subjugated peoples of Europe, such as Joseph Pilsudski of Poland, started planning for the liberation of their countries and contemplated the organizing of peoples armies.

Among the Zionists, Wladimir Jabotinsky, later the leader of the Zionist-Revisionists, was the first to propose the establishment of a military Jewish organization for the liberation of Palestine from

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Turkish oppression. This oppression reached its climax when Turkey joined the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary) in the war' during October, 1914. Within a few weeks thereafter, Turkey's military commander in Palestine, Djemel Pasha, in a most barbaric manner ordered the expulsion from the Holy Land of all European Jews and many of its native sons. The majority of these exiles went to Egypt and some to other countries, including the United States.

In Egypt the exiles were visited by Jabotinsky, who together with Captain Joseph Trumpeldor and many of the other exiles, resolved to form a Jewish Legion. Their proposal was submitted to the British authorities in Egypt. However, General Maxwell who was in command of the British forces rejected it. Instead, he suggested the formation of a mule transport unit to serve somewhere on the Turkish front.

Accordingly, in 1915 the Zion Mule Corps was formed with Col. John Henry Patterson as commander and Joseph Trumpeldor second-in-command. Joseph Trumpeldor, it should be noted, already had a distinguished military career. In the Russo-Japanese War, he had the honor of being the only Jewish officer in the Russian army; and in one of the battles with the Japanese he lost his right arm. Later, during the Arab attacks in 1920, he was killed while defending the Jewish settlements of Tel Hai and Kfar Giladi in Upper Galilee.

The Zion Mule Corps consisted of 652 volunteers, of whom 562 saw service on the Gallipoli front. The Peninsula of Gallipoli was of immense strategic significance for the defense of the Dardanelles which were under Turkish rule, and which the British were striving to capture.

The English troops (120,000 men) were under the command of Sir Ian Hamilton. In 1915, after having suffered heavy losses, the troops landed on the peninsula. However, they were unable to defeat the Turks who were led by the German General Liman Von Sanders and the Turkish lieutenant Kemal Bey. Following the war, the latter became dictator of Turkey.

After a number of futile attempts to capture the Dardanelles, the British were completely routed. Their losses exceeded 100,000 killed and wounded, of whom sixty-one were of the Zion Mule Corps.

Following this colossal failure, the Zion Mule Corps was disbanded. Its members, it should be recorded, served with distinction throughout the Gallipoli campaign. Many of them were decorated and cited for bravery. In 1916, 120 members of the disbanded Zion

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Mule Corps re-enlisted in the British army, and formed the nucleus from which the Jewish Legion emerged.

It took Jabotinsky and his friends months of hard work to persuade the British authorities to consent to the formation of a Jewish military unit. Not only British politicians resisted the "legion" idea, but many Jews including Zionists, were opposed to it. Finally after repeated frustrations, disappointments, trials and tribulations, the British government in August 1917 officially announced the creation of the Jewish Legion.

The Jewish Legion consisted of three battalions of Royal Fusiliers. The 38th Battalion, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Patterson, was recruited in England; the 39th Battalion was formed in the Western Hemisphere, mainly in the United States. The 40th Battalion was organized in Palestine. The 39th and 40th Battalions were under Lieutenant Colonels Eliezer Margolin of Australia and Frederick Dudley Samuel of England. In 1901-1902 Samuel served in South Africa and during World War I in Palestine. For his services, he received the distinguished Service Order and rose to the rank of colonel. After the war Colonel Samuel settled in Palestine where he became an outstanding lawyer.

Colonel John Henry Patterson was a non-Jew, but an admirer of the Jewish people and a friend of the Zionist cause. Before joining the British army he was an engineer and in 1896 built a bridge across the River Tsavo in Africa. His experiences there were later described in his famous book *THE MANEATERS OF TSAVO*. After the Gallipoli campaign where he commanded the Zion Mule Corps, and after the Palestinian campaign where he led the 38th Battalion, he wrote two more books: *WITH THE ZIONISTS IN GALLIPOLI* and *WITH THE JUDEANS IN THE PALESTINE CAMPAIGNS*.

Colonel Eliezer Margolin, while still a child, immigrated with his parents to Palestine in the early years of the "Bilu Movement." There he grew up to become a famous colonist. But before the close of the last century, he left for Australia and joined the Australian Territorial Army. At the outbreak of World War I, he volunteered for the front. At first, he served in Egypt as a lieutenant and later in Flanders where he rose to be second-in-command of his battalion. With the founding of the Jewish Legion, Margolin was transferred to Palestine where he was a colonel with the 39th Battalion. In Palestine, he distinguished himself as an outstanding military commander, and his troops were among the first to enter Transjordan, now ruled by King Hussein. After the war he returned to Australia.

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It is not our task to describe here the battles the Jewish soldiers fought in Palestine under the command of Colonels Patterson, Margolin, and Samuel. Suffice it to say that the liberation of Palestine from the Turkish yoke could not have been accomplished without the assistance of the 5,000 soldiers who comprised the Jewish Legion.

We now ask the question: What was the historic significance of the Jewish Legion?

According to Jabotinsky, the answer is threefold: militarily the legion helped liberate Palestine from the Turks, and afterwards guarded the peace of the land. Morally and politically, as a result of the Legion's participation in the war and its magnificent accomplishments, the Jewish people helped to further secure the undeniable right to their homeland.

How many Americans participated with the Legion in this movement? Seventeen hundred men who came from all walks of life and from every state in the Union. We asked Mr. Leon Cheifetz, secretary of the Bet Hagdudim in Avichail, Israel, how many of the soldiers came from Michigan. He replied, "To our regret, a complete list of the men of Michigan State who had volunteered for service in the Jewish Legion is not available, for the official records were destroyed during the Nazi blitz in London." Consequently, we are compelled to present an incomplete list of the participants, their memoirs and photographs. However, we have been pleased to assemble the material in this issue of the Journal. We are confident it represents an important saga in the story of our Jewish community. The reminiscences and photographs call to mind the spirit of the Jewish men and women who some fifty years ago contributed a memorable chapter in our history.

SOME MEMORIES OF THE JEWISH LEGION IN DETROIT — JUNE 1918

by MICHAEL MICHLIN

It was with some surprise that Detroit Jewry learned in 1918 of its participation in the Jewish Legion. Mr. J. Sandweiss was the first member of that illustrious group and who quietly left the city to play his part in the newly formed unit. Then came the Poale-Zion comrades, Harry Yachnitz and Meyer Levin, who gave added stimulus to the movement. Meyer was an engineering student at the University of Michigan who interrupted a promising future; Harry was a successful businessman. Within a few weeks they were joined by about thirty others.

Eventually, a recruiting office was opened on Hastings Street, with posters which read, "Enlist in the Jewish Legion Bound for Eretz Israel," and "England Offers us our Home — Let us Go and Occupy It." The Detroit Jewish community found the event very stimulating and older men would say a prayer (Shehechayonu). Those somewhat younger wore arm bands which read, "Hebrew Legion," and soon there were enough recruits for a second contingent. It was indeed an exciting time, but little did we realize that it would take thirty more years for our homeland to be restored.



MICHAEL MICHLIN

FROM THE DAIRY OF A JEWISH LEGIONNAIRE

by JOSEPH SANDWEISS

Born in Bereznitz, Russian Ukraine, in 1895, I received a Yeshiva education at Vladimir Volynsk. Arriving in Detroit just prior to the outbreak of World War I, I closely followed the events that were unfolding. When the news came that a Jewish Legion was being formed, I enlisted at the British Recruiting station on Woodward Avenue with the understanding that I would be sent to the Palestinian front. When I eventually arrived at Halifax, Nova Scotia, there were another hundred Legion recruits from New York and Cleveland awaiting passage to England. There we met the Jewish leaders: Chief Rabbi, Dr. Hertz, and Lord Rothchild. We trained for eight weeks at Plymouth, where our commander was Colonel Samuels.

By cattle train we made our journey to Italy, by boat to Alexandria, and then on to the outskirts of Cairo for further training. After two months, we traveled through the Sinai Desert to LUD, Israel (then Palestine). We marched with full equipment to the Jordan Valley near Jericho, which was close to the front lines. When a shell landed close by, a New York boy yelled, "Captain Reed, they are shelling us!" The captain looked up from his map and shouted back, "What do you want me to do, — send them a bloody telegram to stop firing?"

It was shortly thereafter that I contracted malaria and was sent to a convalescent camp near Cairo. Of the two hundred men in my unit, I was the only Jew. When this fact became known, I encountered some hostility and eventually had to take on a bully in a boxing match. After that my presence was accepted and I could read Jewish papers in peace.

Following recovery from the malaria, I rejoined the battalion at Sarafend near Rishon Le-Zion. Soon after, I was on my way back to Cairo, this time for training as a locomotive engineer. However, on the way we encountered signs of an Egyptian uprising and were assigned to guarding supply trucks. There was one close call when thousands of Egyptians approached our vehicle and we had to press ahead at top speed using bayonets and firing at the mob in self-defense. Not long afterward, the war ended and we prepared for the trip home.

In looking back on those eventful days, I firmly believe that we of the Jewish Legion took an important role in the events that led to the rebirth of Israel.

REMINISCENCES OF A JEWISH LEGIONNAIRE

by ALFRED H. BOUNIN

It was early in life that my attachment was formed for Zion. While very young in England, I was present in London when Dr. Max Nordau and David Wolffson visited our home. In October, 1914, I came to the United States to pursue an opera and concert singing career. I found an outlet for my Zionist feelings in the Poale Zion and Nazionaler Arbeiter Farband.

When the British recruited for a Jewish Legion, I volunteered without hesitation, one of two from Toledo. We were joined by four others in Cleveland and at Gray's Armory we received a send off from Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. After numerous stops we made it to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Fortunately I had prior training as a boy with the Jewish LAFS Brigade and had learned army drill. For this reason I was made lance corporal immediately.

We were a unique organization, with men from all all walks of life, some of whom would not have normally passed the physical exam, but got by on "chutzpa." Officers and enlisted men associated freely; there were discussions and meetings with Hebrew, Yiddish, and English inter-mixed.

While on duty, we presented concerts (see photo) which included performers like Beresin, a fine singer, and Sam Gach, an excellent comedian. These performances were important to morale and we gave them throughout the war area. In September, 1919, while awaiting return to the United States, we were informed by a messenger from our Commander, Colonel Margolin, that our concert group had been selected to represent the British Forces in Damascus at the ceremony marking the replacement by French mandate of the British occupation. We felt highly honored and came back to our unit for the occasion. They gave us a rousing welcome, which was ample reward for our decision.

There is much more that could be recounted of those historic days. I often recall with fond memories the part that we of the Hagdud Ha Ivri played in keeping alive the quest for Israel.

THE JEWISH LEGION — RECOLLECTIONS OF HARRY WEINSTOCK

by LEE FRANKLIN WEINSTOCK

The following reminiscences were left by my late husband as he recalled to me the exciting experiences he had while a member of the Jewish Legion. Harry Weinstock passed away on January 2, 1968 in Detroit.

In the early 1900's on a windy schoolyard in the Jewish section of Toronto, I was among a group of seventh grade boys who organized the Young Zionist Club. Part of our oath at that time was the vow to help regain the Jewish Holy Land. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 had a tremendous impact on the effort to achieve this goal, and so too in its way did the formation of the Jewish Legion.

We trained just near Windsor, Canada, and among our unit were Harry Meretsky and Abner Weingarden. There was additional training in England where we became part of the Royal Fusiliers. When we departed from Blighty station near London for Middle-East duty we all received a most welcome gift — a kosher salami. After a long train ride across Europe, we boarded a transport ship at Torino. On deck in the evening we listened to a recruit read from some of his writings. His name was Isaac Ben Zvi, and someday he would become president of Israel. Finally, we arrived in Cairo, then a most exotic city. At a small shop I purchased a set of embossed bronze carafes as a wedding present for my sister, Lily Katzman, in Windsor.

Soon my unit was transferred to a prisoner of war camp called Sidi Bishr, thirty miles out on the Sinai Desert. The heat was unbelievably intense, with water scarce. At mid-day we often lay in our tents, prostrate from dehydration. The diet was simple, pay was one dollar per day. For relaxation we would ride a camel or race goat carts. We learned some Arabic and visited Alexandria on weekends, where we made friends with many of the local merchants.

We also worked hard at our duties and felt we were fulfilling a role in the destiny of our people. In 1919 at the end of the campaign, before departing for home, assembled in formation under a bright sun, General Allenby appeared before us. The courage and devotion of the Jewish Legionnaires was commended, with each man receiving a medal which had his name inscribed, "40th Royal Fusiliers Egyptian Expeditionary Forces — Canada, England, France, Italy, Egypt, Palestine." This medallion — a souvenir of a page in Jewish history — I have kept to this day.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES OF MICHIGAN LEGIONNAIRES

MR. GERSHON AVRUNIN was born in Kiev, Russia in 1883. He came to the United States in 1903 and he settled in Detroit in 1906. There he obtained a law degree at the Detroit College of Law. He was active in the Zionist movement and was one of the founders of the Poale Zion organization of the United States. He was the first president of the Jewish National Workers Alliance (Natzionaler Arbeiter Farband). Prior to the United States entry into World War I, he was one of the first organizers of the movement for a Jewish legion in Palestine; and from April, 1917, he was the chief recruiting officer in the United States. He enlisted in 1917, and served in the 29th Battalion as a private. He died in 1923.



GERSHON AVRUNIN

MR. ABRAHAM BOOKSTEIN was born in Lovitz, Poland on March 15, 1899. He came to the United States in July 1913 and settled in Detroit where he was engaged in the furniture business. On April 7, 1918 he enlisted in the Jewish Legion, serving as a private and medical orderly. His battalion was the 38th, and Lieutenant Jabotinsky was one of his superiors. His regimental number was J-5559 and his camp at Saraphen. There, too, one of the soldiers was Isaac Ben Zvi, the Second President of restored Israel. For his service, Bookstein received the British War and Victory medals. On September 14, 1919 he was discharged. After returning to Detroit, Bookstein received a twenty-five dollar bonus from the local Zionist organization, and re-entered the furniture business. He is now living in Oak Park, Michigan.



ABRAHAM
BOOKSTEIN

Michigan Jews and the Jewish Legion (1917-1920)

MR. HYMAN BOOKSTEIN who was born in Zherardov, Poland in 1890 came to Detroit in 1913. Five years later, he joined the Jewish Legion and served in the 38th Battalion as a private. His company and he were entrusted with guarding the Turkish prisoners of war. After the war they guarded the peace in Palestine. Mr. Bookstein received the British War Medal for his loyal service. In 1920 Bookstein returned to Detroit where he first opened a bicycle shop and later entered the furniture business.



HYMAN
BOOKSTEIN



ALFRED
BOUNIN

MR. ALFRED HALPERN BOUNIN was born in Riga, Latvia. He and his family came to London, England in 1898. There he attended the local schools. After graduating from the Higher Grades School, Bounin studied philosophy, psychology, and music at London University. He arrived in the United States in October 1914, and enlisted in the Jewish Legion in Toledo, Ohio in 1918. He served as a corporal in the 39th Battalion until his repatriation to the United States in February 1920. For many years now, Alfred Halpern Bounin has been living in Detroit where he is in the insurance business and is active in B'nai B'rith. He is known locally as MR. B'NAI B'RITH.

MR. NORMAN COTTLER was born in Corbulew near Kiev. He left for Canada in 1913 and came to Detroit in 1916. As an enlistee in the Jewish Legion (February 17, 1918), his regimental number was J-4077. He served in the 39th Battalion as a sergeant. After the war he returned to Detroit to become a well known businessman and community leader.



NORMAN COTTLER

Michigan Jews and the Jewish Legion (1917-1920)

MR. SAMUEL ELLENHORN was born in Grodno, Russia on May 21, 1896. He came to the United States in 1912, and lived a number of years in Detroit. He left for Palestine in 1918, where he served as a private in Battalion 40 of the Royal Fusiliers under Col. Samuel. Ellenhorn's regimental number was J-4102.



SAMUEL ELLENHORN



SAMUEL B. GACH

MR. SAMUEL GACH who was born in Russia on October 12, 1899, came to Detroit in 1905, and moved to California in 1913. He returned to Detroit in 1917 where he enlisted in the Jewish Legion. He served in the 39th Battalion as a sergeant with regimental number J-4131. He returned to the United States in 1920, and is now living in Los Angeles where he is editor-publisher of the California JEWISH VOICE.

MR. BENJAMIN HENDIN was born in Russia on March 5, 1894. He came to Detroit with his family at the age of 12. He joined the Jewish Legion in 1918 as a private in the 38th Battalion, and his regimental number was J-5617. After the war Benjamin Hendin returned to Detroit where he was active in the Legion Club which existed only a few years. He lives now in Los Angeles.



BENJAMIN HENDIN

Michigan Jews and the Jewish Legion (1917-1920)

MR. BENJAMIN KAPLAN was born in Russia in 1890. While still a teenager, he was arrested for revolutionary activities and sent to Siberia from where he later escaped. Kaplan came to Detroit in 1913. Here he was a boatman and quite often worked on boats going to England. In 1918, he enlisted in the Jewish Legion where he served in the 38th Battalion with Ben Zvi and Ben Gurion. For his service, he received the Bronze Medal. After the war, he settled in Jerusalem; and after Israel became an independent country, he and his family moved to Petach Tikvah where he worked as a stonemason. He died in May 1966.



BENJAMIN KAPLAN



NACHMAN LINDENBAUM

MR. NACHMAN LINDENBAUM was born in Russia in 1897. He came to the United States at the outbreak of World War I, and enlisted in the Jewish Legion as a private. He served in the 39th Battalion under regimental number J-5902. Lindenbaum returned to the United States after demobilization. He is active in the Labor-Zionist movement, and resides in Southfield, Michigan.

MR. JACOB PINES was born in 1888 in Kiev and came to the United States in 1913. He joined the Jewish Legion in April 1918, serving in the 39th Battalion as a private under regimental number J-4313. After the war he returned to the United States to reside in Flint where he is active in community affairs. A grove of 1,000 trees was planted in his honor in Israel by the Jewish National Fund.



JACOB PINES

Michigan Jews and the Jewish Legion (1917-1920)

MR. MORRIS RABINOVITZ was born in Baccan, Roumania on March 2, 1899. He came to the United States at the age of six. He joined the Jewish Legion in Detroit on October 1918 as a private; his regimental number was J-8930, and he was attached to the 38th Battalion. After his discharge on October 10, 1919, Mr. Rabinovitz returned to the United States.



MORRIS RABINOVITZ



JOSEPH SANDWEIS

MR. JOSEPH SANDWEIS was born in Sarna, Russian-Poland in 1895. He came to the United States in 1913. He joined the Jewish Legion in 1918 and served with the 39th Battalion as a private. His regimental number was J-2926. After demobilization Sandweis returned to Detroit where he engaged in business. He visited Israel in 1963.

MR. ELY SIMON was born in New York in 1901. While still a young boy he and his family settled in Detroit. Simon enlisted in the Jewish Legion at the age of seventeen. After the war he returned to Detroit where he died on February 24, 1944.

Michigan Jews and the Jewish Legion (1917-1920)

MR. HARRY WEINSTOCK was born in London, England in 1899. From there he and his family came to Canada while he was still a young child. According to his Discharge Certificate, he enlisted at Windsor, Nova Scotia on April 20, 1918. He served as a private in the 40th Battalion. After having served "one year and 158 days" he was discharged on September 24, 1919. For his valiant service he received the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and Chevrons. His regimental number was J-5509 and the serial number of his discharge certificate was IRL/RF663S. On June 7th, 1920, he received a bonus of twenty-five dollars from the Zionist Organization of America. Similar bonuses were also given to other discharged legionnaires. After the war, he settled in Detroit where he was engaged in the real estate business. He died in 1968.

Four Members of B Company,
38th Battalion



Upper row, left to right: Jack Aarons, Canada; Harry Merecki, Canada. Lower row, left to right: Abner Weingarden, Canada; Harry Weinstock, Detroit.



ABE WEINTROBE

MR. ABE WEINTROBE was born in Russia in 1901, and came to Detroit in 1914. Here he attended school for a number of years, and then at the age of seventeen joined the Jewish Legion. He served as a private under Colonel Margolin in Company B of the 39th Battalion.

After demobilization in 1920, Weintrobe returned to Detroit where he resided until 1938. Since then he has been living in Flint, Michigan.

Michigan Jews and the Jewish Legion (1917-1920)

MR. MORRIS ZWEIG was born in Poland. While still a youth he emigrated to Denmark where he lived until 1916. In that year, he came to Detroit and a year later joined the Jewish Legion. Zweig served until late in 1919 when he was discharged. He remained in Palestine for a few more years. There he married Ada Meiberg.

Returning to Detroit, Zweig opened a cleaning plant and participated in the activities of the Poale-Zion movement. He died in 1964.



MORRIS ZWEIG

Michigan Jews and the Jewish Legion (1917-1920)

DO YOU KNOW ANY OF THESE MEN?

The following photographs are of Michigan men who served in the Jewish Legion. Unfortunately, except for the name of one, we have been unable to make further identification. Readers of this Journal are invited to send in any information they may have regarding these individuals.



NAHUM ELKUSKI



Michigan Jews and the Jewish Legion (1917-1920)

PHOTOS FROM THE LEGION ALBUM



Members of the Jewish Legion in front of Jewish Soldiers Home. At the extreme lower right corner is Hyman Bookstein and directly in back of him is Abe Weintrobe.

Michigan Jews and the Jewish Legion (1917-1920)



At the West Wall with a group of Yemenite Jews.
Corporal Alfred H. Bounin is eighth from left.



Sergeant Norman Cottler (in center) with friends in front
of a military tent.

Michigan Jews and the Jewish Legion (1917-1920)



A choral group of Legionnaires. Sergeant Sam Gach, second from right, bottom row; Alfred Bouin, extreme right, second row.



Seated from left to right: Hyman Bookstein, Abe Shvat, and Abe Weintrobe. Soldier at extreme right is unknown.

Michigan Jews and the Jewish Legion (1917-1920)



Sergeant Norman Cottler (in center) surrounded by fellow Legionnaires, including Meyer Levin on the extreme left.



A group of Legionnaires . . . Hyman Bookstein extreme right.

Michigan Jews and the Jewish Legion (1917-1920)



From left to right: Fannie Seltzer, Chana Weintrobe Michlin, Esther Yanitz Beitner, Fannie Lipshitz Levin, and Dr. Davis of New York.



Mrs. Posner



Aliza London

Members of the Detroit Chapter, Mogen David Adom, the women's service organization which assisted the men who had come to Detroit from various points in the United States to join the Legion.

JEWISH EDUCATION AT TEMPLE BETH EL, 1850-1871

by IRVING I. KATZ

As far back as 2,000 years ago, a Jewish sage said that "one should not live in a community which has no school." Throughout the centuries, Jews have made every sacrifice in order to give their children an education. Practically all boys were taught to read and write, to pray in Hebrew, and to chant the weekly portion of the Bible. Every community had at least one elementary school. The larger cities also had Yeshivot or academies for high school and college youth. Jews have always considered education as part of their religion and as one of the community's chief responsibilities.

It is not surprising, therefore, that, when Jews left the old world and immigrated to the United States, they were vitally concerned from the very beginning, with their children's education. Wherever a number of Jewish families settled in this land, a school was sure to be established. The existing public schools before the Civil War were not as yet fully conceived and many of them were conducted under the auspices of churches. The Jews, therefore, organized all-day schools of their own where the pupils received both secular and religious instruction. When in the course of time the public schools developed and improved, the Jewish all-day schools gradually declined and were discontinued. Most Jewish parents preferred to have their children receive a general education in the public schools, which, together with all citizens, they helped to maintain. For their children's Jewish training, special schools were established which met in the afternoon, after public school hours, or two days a week on Saturday and Sunday. As a result, two types of Jewish schools arose in America: The afternoon Hebrew school or Talmud Torah, and the Sabbath or Sunday Religious School.

DETROIT'S FIRST JEWISH SCHOOL

Prior to 1842, the schools of Detroit were conducted either as private institutions or under church auspices. Largely through the efforts of Dr. Zina Pitcher, Mayor of Detroit from 1840 through 1842, the State Legislature consented in 1842 to levy a tax on the residents of Detroit to support a system of free public schools. This was the beginning of general primary education in Detroit, and Dr. Pitcher has often been called the "father of the Detroit Public School System." The first high school in Detroit was opened on August 30, 1858.

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dren to the private schools. The concept of public school education, which is part and parcel of our American democracy today, was not generally accepted in those days, especially among the newly arrived German-Jewish immigrants who were accustomed to Jewish community supported schools in their native Germany. But, between 1842 and the 1860's the public schools of Detroit improved vastly, both in curriculum content and the quality of teachers. In addition, the process of Americanization began to assert itself quite strongly among the local German Jews, resulting in their desire to send their children to the public schools in order to perfect themselves in the English language. German Jews were opposed to being segregated from their non-Jewish neighbors, and with the improvement of the public schools they felt the time has come to give their children the opportunity to mingle with the non-Jewish children of their age and thus foster a democratic society in consonance with the spirit of the law of the land. They also felt that as citizens and taxpayers it is unnecessary for them to support private schools and employ teachers for secular instruction, when their children can receive this very training from more competent teachers in the public schools. It is for these reasons that in 1869 the leaders of Beth El decided to discontinue the "Hebrew-German-English School" and to open a school for religious instruction only. The children were now sent to the public schools for their secular education and the religious school held sessions on Saturday afternoon, Sunday morning, and twice weekly after public school hours.

The change from an all-day school to a congregational religious school took place during the ministry of Rabbi Elias Eppstein. In 1870, when Dr. Kaufman Kohler was the Rabbi of the Congregation, forty children attended the religious school. The decrease from seventy children in the all-day school to forty children in the religious school was probably due to the fact that even in those days there were parents who were indifferent to their children's Jewish education. Rabbi Kohler was assisted in the school by Rev. M. Greenblatt and a lay volunteer teacher.

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF 1871

In 1871, English replaced German as the language of instruction in the religious school.

The school was governed by a School Board, consisting of Herman Freedman, President; Magnus Butzel, Secretary; Julius Robinson, Benjamin Schloss, Sigmund Simon, Maier Weiss and David J.

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Workum. The members of the School Board took a very active interest in the conduct of the school and rotated in visiting each session of the school. The subjects of instruction consisted of Hebrew, Bible, History and Religion. The textbooks used were: "Minhag America Prayer Book" by Isaac M. Wise, "Essence of Judaism" by Isaac M. Wise, and "Biblical History" by Samuel Adler. Bar Mitzvah for boys was included in the curriculum, in addition to Confirmation for boys and girls which was held on the morning of the Festival of Shavuot. An annual public examination of the pupils, usually in the month of June, was conducted by the Rabbi in the presence of the School Board and the parents of the children. There were some fifty children in the school, instructed by Rabbi Emanuel Gerechter, spiritual leader of the congregation. Albert Rosenfield, a Hebrew teacher who received a yearly salary of \$200, and a lay volunteer teacher.

The following Rules and Regulations for the Religious School were adopted by the School Board in 1871 and they are reproduced here without changes:

1. The hours for instruction are:
 - a. On Saturday, during the term from November 1st to April 1st from 2 to 4 o'clock P.M.
from April to Nov. 1st
from 8 to 10 o'clock A.M.
 - b. On Sunday, from 10 to 12 o'clock A.M. during winter months Nov. to April and from 9 to 11 o'clock A.M. from April 1st to November 1st.
 - c. On Wednesday, from 4½ to 5½ o'clock P.M.

2. Children of members of Congregation Beth El are admitted to the schools; such children must be at least six (6) years of age. Parents or guardians who are not members of the Congregation desirous to have children attend this Religious School, must obtain permission from the Board of Trustees.

3. New scholars will be admitted only on the first Sunday of each month from October to April inclusive.

4. The doors of the schoolrooms will be open fifteen minutes before the appointed hours; scholars are required to be promptly on hand and are not permitted to occupy the sidewalks or enclosures in front of the Temple, either before or after school hours.

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5. Absence from three (3) successive school sessions, without sufficient cause or excuse being given to the teacher in writing, will suspend the scholar from the school. Such can only be again reinstated by consent of the Board.

6. Each Scholar has to be provided with such Books and stationary as the Board will adopt for use in the School.

7. Confirmation classes will be formed the first Sabbath in January each year; only those children will be admitted to that class, who are of the proper age and have passed examination.

8. Children are required to conform to all the rules of the school and its discipline. Misbehavior toward the teachers or other bad conduct entails reprimands or expulsion from the school. Complaints, if any, should be made in writing and presented to the Board for investigation.

Jewish Historical Society of Michigan

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan was organized on June 1, 1959, for the following main purposes:

1. To promote the study and research of Michigan Jewish history by encouraging all efforts to create a wider interest on the part of Michigan Jews in the growth and development of their many respective communities.

2. To foster the collection, preservation and publication of materials on the history of the Jews of Michigan, to which purposes the society publishes *Michigan Jewish History*, a semi-annual journal, and has established the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library as a permanent archive-depository for Michigan Jewish historical source material.

3. To encourage all projects, celebrations and other activities which tend to spread authentic information concerning Michigan Jewish history, such as the erection by the Society in conjunction with the Michigan Historical Commission, of the historical marker commemorating Michigan's first Jewish settler, at the restored Fort Michilimackinac.

4. To cooperate with national Jewish historical societies as well as with other state and regional Jewish historical groups.

Membership is open to all who have an interest in Michigan Jewish history and in supporting the goals of the organization. Income of the Society is derived entirely from the annual dues and is used for publishing the journal and related projects.

Members of the Society are invited and encouraged to submit articles, pictures, or reminiscences for future issues of the journal. Such items need not be lengthy, but should relate to the Detroit or Michigan historical scene. Material can be sent to the Editor, 21721 Parklawn Avenue, Oak Park, Michigan 48237.

