

formed the nucleus of the various Allied Contingents in the Middle East, details of which are given below:

(a) *French.*

After a short stay in Palestine, it was decided to bring the French contingent to Moascar. There they have been reorganised into:

- (i) A motorised infantry battalion.
- (ii) A squadron of Spahis.
- (iii) A training depot.

One Company of the Infantry Battalion was put under the command of 7th Armoured Division on 8th September, 1940, and has taken its part in operations in the Western Desert. The remainder of the battalion was sent to Daba on 23rd October, 1940, for further training before joining the first Company.

The Spahis were sent to the Sudan a week later, and it is hoped that they will shortly be engaged in active operations on the Abyssinian frontier.

In Cairo there is a very active French National Committee under the presidency of Baron de Benoist. The Chief of the Cabinet Militaire is Commandant des Essars, who has very ably carried out the responsible duties of General de Gaulle's military representative in the Middle East. He has recently been appointed Chief of Staff to General Catroux, the new Delegate General of Free France in the Middle East. Commandant des Essars is in close touch with the situation in Greece (where there is a strong French Committee), in Syria and in French Equatorial Africa.

(b) *Polish.*

The Polish Brigade was originally stationed at Latrun in Palestine, but early in October it was moved to Egypt to take up a defensive position on the Western outskirts of Alexandria. A reserve Depot was left at Latrun and here new arrivals from the Balkans are equipped and trained before joining the Brigade.

The flow of recruits from the Balkans fluctuates with the political situation; according to a recent estimate by the Military Attaché at Ankara, the maximum rate we can expect at present is 100 per week. The Brigade is still over 1,000 under strength in other ranks, but has a surplus of officers. It has now been decided (at General Kopanski's suggestion) to form these surplus officers into an Officers' Legion for garrison duties in Alexandria. It has also been decided that the Brigade should ultimately be organised on a British W.E.—as and when equipment becomes available.

(c) *Czechoslovak.*

The Czechoslovak contingent is stationed at Gadera in Palestine; it consists of an Infantry

Battalion (on British W.E.), a training depot and a small contingent headquarters. At present there are some 35 surplus officers, but the contingent is nearly 600 under strength in other ranks.

The chief source of supply for Czech volunteers is S.E. Europe. Owing to German pressure and to the fact that there are no Czech legations in the Balkan countries, the Military Attaché Ankara considers that the maximum flow from the Balkans and Russia will not exceed 100 per month. There are at present over 600 potential Czech volunteers in Russia; but owing to financial difficulties few have as yet arrived.

General Gak, the Chief of the Czechoslovak Military Mission in the Middle East, arrived in August, and he and his staff are responsible for co-ordinating the recruiting of Czech volunteers from Egypt, Palestine, Iran and the Balkans.

(d) *Spanish.*

There is no separate Spanish contingent. Spanish volunteers, who are ex-members of the French Foreign Legion, are accepted for training at the Free French Depot. When a party of twenty-five has been collected, they are drafted into a Commando after formal enlistment and attestation into the British Army. There are at present some fifty Spanish volunteers serving with 50 (ME) Commando.

(e) *Belgians.*

Owing to the comparatively small size of the Belgian communities in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East, and to the fact that many men were already serving with the Belgian Army prior to the French collapse, it was not possible to form a separate Belgian contingent. Individuals with special qualifications, however, have been accepted for service in the British Army—notably as officers in the British Arab Force. Recently a small party of Belgian volunteers left to join the Belgian forces in the U.K. It was decided, for the present, not to accept offers of service from Belgian units or individuals in the Congo, as they could best help the common cause by maintaining the situation in Central Africa.

(f) *Greeks.*

Negotiations are now in progress with the Greek authorities for the raising and training of units of the Greek Army in Egypt. It is proposed to form as soon as possible technical units initially for service with the British Army. In addition, it is proposed to organise a training depot with a view to the ultimate formation of a Greek Brigade Group, when more equipment is available. The Greek Government is prepared to send a liaison mission of 15 officers and 20 cadets to assist in training. Colonel Oeconomopoulos has already arrived as Chief Liaison Officer.

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