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Saturday, April 3, 2004

Chaim Weizmann's letter to Mr Churchill, September 10, 1941

[Source: Weizmann Archives, Rehovot, Israel].

TRANSCRIPT OF SEPT. 10, 1941 LETTER FROM CHAIM WEIZMANN TO WINSTON CHURCHILL THAT ASSERTS THAT "THE JEWS" HELPED TO PUT THE U.S. INTO WORLD WAR I AGAINST GERMANY, AND WOULD BE KEEN TO DO IT AGAIN | [[ORIGINAL FACSIMILES](#)]

Dated: 10th September, 1941

Addressed to : The Right Honorable Winston S. Churchill, P.C., M.P.,
10 Downing Street, SW1

Greeting: Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I wish to thank you for the very kind message which you sent me through Mr. Martin. I deeply appreciate it. Still, our position has become so serious (nay, critical), that I feel I must lay the facts before you by letter if I cannot do so personally.

Two years have passed since, on the outbreak of the war I offered to His Majesty's government, on behalf of the Jewish people, the fullest active support of Jews in Palestine and throughout the world. A whole year has elapsed since you gave your personal approval to our offer to recruit the greatest possible number of Jews in Palestine for the fighting services and to form "Jewish military units abroad for service in the Middle East or elsewhere. But during these two years our readiness to serve has earned us only rebuffs and humiliations. Even in Palestine, where the need for ur service was acknowledged, our most zealous endeavours have not received a single word of public acknowledgement. Ten thousand Palestinian Jews have fought in Libya, Abyssinia, Greece, Crete, and Syria. But our people are never mentioned; our name is shunned, all contact or co-operation with us is kept dark as if it were compromising.

In March last, before I left for the United States, I was given, in a letter from the Colonial Secretary, the assurance that the formation of the Jewish fighting force was reluctantly postponed - but surely postponed at the utmost for six months. I know with what enthusiasm the announcement that it is to be formed at last would be received by

our people in Palestine and throughout the world. But this is not to be, even now. Even in Palestine, our people, for whom the defence of their country and of the British position in the Middle East may be literally a matter of life and death, are permitted to serve only under humiliating limitations and conditions.

Tortured by Hitler as no nation has ever been in modern times, and advertised by him as his foremost enemy, we are refused by those who fight him the chance of seeing our name and our flag arrayed against him.

I know that this exclusion is not in your own intentions and spirit. It is the work of people who were responsible for the Munich policy in Europe and for the White Paper in Palestine. We were sacrificed to win over the Mufti of Jerusalem and his friends who were serving Hitler in the Middle East; whereas the only thing which can secure the Arab is British strength in the Middle East, as has been clearly shown in Iraq.

But are the Jews so utterly unimportant as the treatment meted out to them suggests? I have spent months in America, traveling up and down the country, and clearly searching the American scene. Forces over there are finely balanced; the position is uncertain. There is only one big ethnic group which is willing to stand, to a man, for Great Britain, and a policy of "all-out-aid" for her: the five million American Jews. From Secretary Morgenthau, Governor Lehman, Justice Frankfurter, down to the simplest Jewish workman or trader, they are conscious of all that this struggle against Hitler implies.

It has been repeatedly acknowledged by British Statesmen that it was the Jews who, in the last war, effectively helped to tip the scales in America in favour of Great Britain. They are keen to do it - and may do it - again . But you are dealing with human beings, with flesh and blood, and the most elementary feeling of self respect sets limits to service, however willing, if the response is nothing but rebuffs and humiliations. American Jewry waits for a word - a call - from His Majesty's Government. The formation of a Jewish fighting force would be that signal. Equipment cannot be the determining factor; there will always be some alternative use for whatever equipment is available; and fresh recruits are all the time being called up in the British Commonwealth by their hundreds of thousands, while we are being told to wait for one single division because of lack of equipment. If the spirit of American Jewry is roused, the influence which this will exercise on America's rather sluggish production will return to you that equipment with manifold gains.

Let me feel, Mr. Prime Minister, that our friendship is not spurned on the British side, nor our name obliterated at a time when Hitler is endeavouring to obliterate our very existence.

Yours very truly

Initials: C W

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