

Polonski, Abraham

(b. 1913), A founder of the French Jewish underground. Born in Russia, Polonski moved to Toulouse, France, where he worked as an electrical engineer.

The Germans invaded France in May 1940, and by June, the French army surrendered to them. Polonski responded to the dire situation by founding an underground military organization called *La Main Forte*, meaning "The Strong Hand." The organization's goal was to organize a worldwide fighting force that would conquer and take Palestine from the British.

In January 1942 Polonski and Labor Movement Zionist activists helped establish an underground Jewish militia called the *Armee Juive*, or Jewish Army. Polonski and another underground activist named Lucien Lublin led the Jewish Army, which was composed of the best or most promising of the Zionist Youth Movements. During the winter of 1943-1944, the Jewish Army's escape network helped some 300 of its members successfully flee to Spain, from whence most immigrated to Palestine.

Polonski and Lublin trained their soldiers as Partisans, who then fought in Toulouse, Nice, Lyons, and Paris. These soldiers attacked French informers who had collaborated with the Gestapo and helped liberate France in the summer of 1944.

After the war, Polonski helped Jews "illegally" immigrate to Palestine from France. (see also Jewish Army, France.)