

Zion Protectorate

History

The smallest member state of the Free Worlds League, the Zion Protectorate borders the Tikonov Free Republic, Styk Commonality, and the Marik-Stewart Commonwealth. Once a bone of contention between House Marik and House Liao, the then-Zion Province became a major port of entry between the two nations in the 31st century. Increased industrial investment brought factories to Asuncion and nearby Bernardo in the 40s and 50s, giving their shattered economies something to rebuild around. As the 60s passed, they were having good times. But all good times do come to an end, and Zion's boom was no exception.

When the Word of Blake struck in 3067, the Zion Province was shocked to see the bulk of the 3rd Free Worlds Guards declare for the Word and begin to attack the uncontracted Berrett's Fusiliers. With nearly half her forces shattered, Nikita Barrett lead her command into the Gapston Mountains to seek protection as General Ricardo Catere-Jones tried to regain control of his command. In the end he was caught by the Word of Blake and hung for his "crimes against the people."

Word of Blake then claimed Zion as Word property, left behind their attached armor and infantry regiments to control the world, as well as the young ruler Vanessa Sian-Marik, and left with the BattleMech and AeroSpace forces to deal with the Marik Commonwealth. They never returned home. On Zion, word of the loss of the League fleet shattered what hope the people had of rescue, and word of Thomas' true identity destroyed what little other hope they clung to. And then the official offer came down from the Word of Blake. Renounce House Marik or die.

Duchess Vanessa Sian-Marik, with a Blakist gun resting against her temple, declared that the Zion Province would remain a true friend to the Word of Blake and leave House Marik to burn for their "crimes against the people." She later repeated her statement on live holofeed to the other worlds of the Zion Province, without the gun in the picture. On the surface she was the perfect picture of a docilely cowed leader and she talked to the other nearby military units, the 3rd Free Worlds Legionnaires and the 10th Marik Militia. They agreed publicly to support her stance, though the naval guns over their heads at the time might have been one reason.

Under the surface though, they all began making plans to remove the Blakist stain from their worlds. Duchess Sian-Marik also sought out Colonel Barrett to obtain her support in removing the Word from Zion and, more than willing to help avenge her dead and captured men and women, the mercenary commander agreed to help. Sitting back in the Gapston mountain range, what was left of her command had disappeared into the hills after scattering their machines into hundreds of small caves and burying them so the Blakists couldn't find them. With the Duchess supporting them under the table, they had the supplies they needed to survive and train. With the Word of Blake taking all production from the Asuncion and Bernardo plants, except for the aid they allowed to be

sent to Styk, it was difficult to build up their forces, but the Duchess arranged for a few machines a month to be “lost” and as time past the Fusiliers slowly rebuilt and recruited new warriors to replace the ones lost to the Blakists.

When word came in via smugglers of the Regular victory over Atreus in 3070, Duchess Sian-Marik sent the order out to the Zion worlds to begin the fight. Smaller militia units throughout the Zion Province exploded into action as the Fusiliers, 10th Marik Militia, and 3rd Free Worlds Legionnaires came to attention and stopped supporting the Word of Blake. In the time span of a week, the Zion Province exploded into rebellion.

Berrett’s Fusiliers hit first with a force of IndustrialMechs modified with machine guns and missiles. Running on internal combustion engines that didn’t set off neutrino detectors, the IndustrialMechs hit without warning, spraying the infantry and armor barracks with inferno jell and machine gun bullets. Those who weren’t burned died of terminal lead poisoning. At the same time, a handpicked unit of infantry loyal to the Duchess attacked and destroyed the neutrino detector on Zion, allowing the Fusiliers to move without being localized. The next day, Berrett’s Fusiliers stormed out of the Gapston Mountains and crushed what resistance remained. Zion was free again.

With the Word of Blake’s attention fully engaged by the Regulans, Oriente, and Marik fleets, they put up little more than a token resistance on the other worlds of the Zion Province and on Bernardo. On December 21, 3070, Duchess Vanessa Sian-Marik officially formed the Zion Protectorate and began working to replace the losses incurred during the fighting, and to return all three military formations to full operating order. During the Word of Blake velvet occupation spare parts had been in short supply even for the “friendly” 10th Militia and 3rd Legionnaires, forcing her to spend most of her resources simply repairing numerous minor but annoying malfunctions that had cropped up.

The Zion Protectorate stayed out of the rest of the Jihad, simply sitting back while slowly picking up nearby systems as they tried to keep from making any waves. Small enough to avoid interest by any of the major powers, the Jihad passed the Protectorate by, much to the approval of the populace. As 3078 came to a close, the Word of Blake finally shattered on Terra, League representatives came to Zion and asked Duchess Sian-Marik to return the Protectorate to the League. Reluctant to give the League another chance to destroy her world, she still agreed to give them a chance to talk. After five hours of discussions, she agreed to give the League another chance.

Since then, Zion parliament members have continued to support keeping the League government weak, taking the position of enlightened self interest in all matters. No one knows how they will vote from one time to another, but they firmly believe that Zion comes first. The League can burn as far as Zion is concerned, as long as it doesn’t bring the Protectorate down with it.

Ever since the formation of the Styk Commonality, Zion has sent them many resources, especially BattleMechs built on Asuncion and now Bernardo. Wanting to keep Styk as a shield to protect them from Capellan and Sarna aggression, Duchess Vanessa has long

worked to keep Styk alive with generous loans and spare parts kits. Unfortunately, the ascension of Premier Chelsea Montog-Chandler-Riel has hurt Zion greatly. Taking nearby Yunnah in 3095, raiding squadrons have hit Zion regularly in the five years following that assault. Lacking any WarShips to support their DropShips and fighters, Zion has been unable to stop the raiders. Repeated pleas have been sent to the League Parliament to send aid but the majority of the Free Worlds Guards are currently engaging the Capellan Confederation between Oriente and Andurien so nothing has been sent yet.

Also sharing a border with the Tikonov Free Republic, the Duchess has spent many long years keeping on the good side of the Ridzik brothers. Word has it she is even working to see if she can purchase a frigate to support her DropShip fleet against Sarna raiders, but nothing seems to have come out of those talks at this time.

Military

Cheetah fighters purchased from Imstar Aerospace on nearby Marik dominate the Zion AeroSpace forces, supporting whatever DropShips the small nation can obtain on the open or not-so-open markets. The *Crusader* BattleMech is the standard heavy BattleMech of the Zion military, while most medium units are built around *Falcon Hawks*. *Fleas* round out the lighter end of the Zion military, giving them a good fast fighter to complement the slower *Crusaders*.

Berrett's Fusiliers, still under the command of Nikita Barrett, have long been considered a part of the Zion military. A generation of their children have grown up in the Protectorate, been granted full citizenship, and made friends in the small nation. Few doubt that Fusiliers will continue to remain in Zion for a long time, or at least as long as Nikita and Vanessa remain friends. The former 3rd Free Worlds Legionnaires and the 10th Marik Militia, now called the 1st and 2nd Haganah Legions, comprise the rest of the Zion Defense Force, though each world of the Protectorate sports at least one Palmach, a youth organization meant to train volunteers too young to serve in the way of the military. Most Palmach veterans enter the Haganah Legions after coming of age.

Factories

Asuncion – Earthwerks, Incorporated – *Flea*
– Kallon Industries – *Falcon Hawk* and *Crusader*

Bernardo – Earthwerks, Incorporated – *Flea*
– Kallon Industries – *Crusader*

Systems

Information currently being compiled