

# SOVIET JEWS AT WAR

by  
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Illustration on the cover: General Lev Dovator, killed in action with his Cossack unit on the Moscow Front, early in 1942.

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## **Soviet Jews at War**

by

PROFESSOR H. LEVY.

Esther Lapitskaya is a frail-looking Jewish girl from Byelorussia. She is a telephone operator at a railway station not far from the front line.

As she sat at her work, she could clearly hear the noise of battle. She thought of her mother, murdered by the fascists, and worked resolutely on.

One day, the rat-tat-tat of the machine-guns became louder as the battle drew nearer. The building shook. The Germans were only two kilometres away. All around, preparations were being made for evacuation.

At midday, the stationmaster, arm in sling, told her that instructions had been received to clear the station, and to move to the next junction. "But," he said, "the telephone must continue to work for at least another two hours. It's important to supply the command point with exact information as to the progress of the battle. You understand, Esther, you must remain here for a while yet. Naturally, I shall stay with you."

Esther looked at his wounded arm, and replied: "You are wounded. I'll stay here. You had better see that the station is evacuated in time. I promise I shall not fail you. I'll stay until the last minute."

Calmly, Esther reported the activities of the enemy. "Can you hear me?" she called. "Their machine-guns are firing at the engine depot warehouse—automatic gunners are firing from behind the gates—there are about thirty of them. Can you hear me?"

"Yes, we hear you."

"Germans now raiding station—they are in the refreshment room—bullets just hit window in my room—two Germans coming—"

For a few minutes, there was silence. At the command point, they sat listening tensely.

Then, suddenly the voice came over the line again.

"I'm O.K. They made for the station-master's room. They're firing heavily now. Two tanks are moving up towards the station. And an armoured car with about 100 machine-gunners. They're breaking into my room—goodbye."

At the command point they thought she must be dead. But two days later, when the Red Army recaptured the town, they found Esther Lapitskaya, alive and well. She had escaped through the window and had lain hidden in a barn.

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When the Soviet Union was attacked in June, 1941, there were many wise people to tell us that in a matter of weeks it would all be over, and the Soviet Union would be little more than a memory, perhaps a bad dream from which the Nazis had given the poor Russians a rude awakening.

Among the "experts," not the least emphatic were those who based their predictions on the alleged fact that the Soviet Union was honeycombed with nationalities and national minorities, eagerly awaiting the first opportunity to free themselves from the Bolshevik yoke.

Curiously enough, a united people rose as one man to defend the motherland, standing firm behind their Government and their Red Army. The world gazed in astonishment at this phenomenon. Their astonishment increased when they saw the simple folk of Leningrad, Moscow, Sevastopol, Odessa, Kiev, Stalingrad or Voronezh, transformed into heroes, throwing themselves body and soul into the struggle to check the brutal invaders. Only the closest possible link between the front and the rear, and the total unity between the many nationalities in the Soviet Union made it possible of achievement.

In this tremendous struggle the Jews of the Soviet Union, as one of these national groups, played an heroic part. The fact is of profound significance. For history shows that one of the surest barometers of the social stability of any country is provided by its treatment of its minorities and, in particular, of its Jews. Certainly, a population divided against itself by antagonism among or against national minorities, cannot present a united front against external aggression. Racial and national hatreds and prejudices undermine the morale of a people, and are a source of

weakness and confusion. The history of anti-semitism is the bitter story of the fomenting of one example of such race hatred and its exploitation for political ends.

Such, for example, was the policy of the ruling class of Tzarist Russia, the country which rightly was regarded as the Prison of Nations, the classical country of pogroms and persecutions. It is not surprising that Jews fled from it as from a pestilence. Now witness the contrast. Today the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany are locked in deadly struggle. In the U.S.S.R. every nationality has taken up the challenge and has thrown itself wholeheartedly into the fight. In Nazi Germany, with its domination already stretched across the whole of the mainland of Europe, members of subject nationalities have been driven unwillingly to the slaughter. The Soviet Union's five million Jews, enjoying full political and social equality as Soviet citizens, are eagerly fighting and working to rid the world of the Nazi menace. In Nazi-land, the Jews are all but exterminated, for anti-semitism has been integrated with fascist policy as one of its cardinal weapons. It is all too clear that the victory of the forces of fascism spells annihilation, and the victory of the democratic forces spells freedom for Jewry as for all peoples. Is it surprising therefore that the Jews of the Soviet Union have thrown themselves into this struggle with all the energies of which they are capable, resolved, side by side with their non-Jewish comrades, to defend the Motherland, which was their home for so many centuries, and regain the conquered territories from the spoilers? For the Jew has been transformed. He is no longer a shrinking figure, helpless and defenceless, but is striking back, blow for blow, Bar Kochba and the Maccabees, great warrior figures in Jewish history, live again in the deeds of Jewish Red Army men.

No more impressive picture of this new type of liberated Jew can be conveyed than by noting the large proportion of decorations and medals awarded to Jewish Red Army men for bravery in battle. Among Red Army men who received such recognition in the first 15 months of war, Jews were represented to the extent of about 50 per cent. higher than average of the general population, and almost equal in numbers to that of the Byelorussians, the third largest nation of the Soviet Union. In fact, estimated in proportion to population, the Jews head the list for outstanding deeds achieved by their sons and daughters.

This change in the Jew is a reflection of the dramatic

change that has come over Russia. The days of the Black Hundreds and pogroms ceased with the Revolution. Formerly a people doomed to frustration, the Jews of Russia have become a people of free men and women for whom the same prospects and opportunities exist as for any other Soviet citizen.

From the day of its formation, the Soviet Government has insisted that the "Declaration of Rights for the Peoples on Russian Territory"—one of its first proclamations—be carried out in letter and spirit, including its application to the Jews.

The "Jewish problem" of Tzarist days has been completely solved. The U.S.S.R. is the only country in the world where anti-semitism is a crime against the state, and where no "Jewish problem" occupies the minds of men because its main basis, economic inequality and social crises, has been banished.

Nevertheless, it was no easy matter to deal with the "Tzarist heritage," the "Jewish problem." It took years of arduous work for the Jews themselves to adapt themselves to the new conditions of Soviet life and to avail themselves of the new, and unexpected, possibilities which it offered.

By 1935, about one-third (29.8%) of the Jewish population were engaged as workers in various branches of Soviet industry (before the Revolution only four per cent. of Jews were workers, and those only in small industrial enterprises); almost another third (30%) were State employees, and 6.7% were Collective farmers.\*

Before the revolution 23.4% of Jews were regarded as unemployed; in 1935 there were no unemployed Jews, as unemployment had been abolished in the course of the first Five Year plan.

Not only the economic aspect of the Jewish problem has been resolved in the Soviet Union, but cultural and national problems as they have manifested themselves among the Jews of Eastern Europe, found in the Soviet Union a final and constructive solution. A people previously confined within ghetto walls suddenly found itself encouraged and assisted to

\* According to the last census, taken on January 17, 1939, the social groups among Jews within the frontiers of the Soviet Union at that date were composed as follows:

Workers and State employees ...	71.2%
Collective Farmers ... ..	5.8%
Co-operative handicraft ... ..	16.1%
Not-co-operated handicraft ... ..	4.0%
Various others ... ..	2.9%
Sum ... ..	100%

revive and develop its national culture, and by setting up a Jewish Autonomous Soviet Republic within the Soviet Union, to assure its future existence as a national entity.

In 1934, the Birobidjan District in the Soviet Far East was proclaimed a Jewish Autonomous Province which, in the course of economic development, according to plan, should become the Jewish Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic. The Jewish Autonomous Province is, in accordance with the Soviet Constitution, represented by its deputies in the Supreme Soviet, the highest legislative body in the Soviet Union. In addition there existed, before the Nazis temporarily seized these territories, three Jewish National Districts in the Ukraine and two in the Crimea.

The idea of setting up the Jewish Autonomous Province, be it noted, did not arise merely as a means for solving a Jewish economic problem but, primarily—after the economic problem has been solved as the result of the Socialist reconstruction of the Soviet Union—as a means to assist and safeguard the future existence of the Jews as a people with its own national culture developing within a Socialist framework. This is, primarily, the meaning of Birobidjan. Kalinin, President of the Soviet Union, pointed this out in a speech to a delegation of Moscow factory workers, in 1934, in reply to a question regarding the significance of a Jewish territory. The Jews, he said, unlike every other nationality of the Soviet Union, are the only national group, numbering (then) about three millions, without a territory of their own to serve as a centre of their national and cultural life. The Jewish Autonomous Province, that is to say, has come into being to realise the full equality of Jewish citizens and to assure their future existence as a people.

Yiddish, the language of most Jewish people in the Soviet Union, is officially recognised for national purposes and is on the same footing as all other languages of Soviet peoples. Where Jews form a certain percentage of the population, they have of course the right to establish schools where teaching is in their native language. Such schools of every grade, are established in all districts with a Jewish mass population. In addition there exist a great number of Jewish cultural institutions, such as Jewish state theatres, choirs, libraries and museums. The Jewish publishing houses bring out many books in Yiddish, the work of Jewish authors and poets, whose works are also made known among the other peoples of the Soviet Union by translation. The works of

authors of other nationalities, Russian, Ukrainian, and so on, are translated into Yiddish. These publishing houses do not only publish new writing. They also re-publish the works of outstanding Jewish authors of the past and of other countries. The Soviet Union has, indeed, become the most important cultural centre of Jewry. The production of books in Yiddish, published in the Soviet Union, exceeds in quantity as well as in variety the total production of Jewish books of all other countries in the world, including such countries as Poland, which, before the war had, approximately the same number of Jews as the Soviet Union, or the United States which, before the war, had a larger Jewish population than that of the Soviet Union.

In 1938, the number of copies of Yiddish books printed in the Soviet Union reached the figure of 1,351,000.

Soviet Jewry is fully conscious of the significance of this great progress. The second great conference of representatives of Soviet Jewry since the Nazi attack on Russia held in Moscow on May 24, 1942, addressed the following message to Premier Stalin.

"We who have gathered at the second meeting of representatives of the Jewish people in this time of grave trial for all peoples, address our first word of greeting and love to you, dear Joseph Vissarionovich.

"During many centuries of history, the Jewish people have experienced much grief and suffering, much persecution and humiliation, but all the horrors of the past are eclipsed by the black deeds of the ferocious Fascist beast, the crimes of the Hitlerite hangmen and murderers. However, while the pogrom-mongers of previous epochs found our people helpless, and perpetrated with impunity bloody massacres on our forefathers, now, in the course of our great patriotic war, the enemy has found us in the ranks of the Red Army, well-armed and ready to resist him. The finest sons of the Jewish people, soldiers of the valiant Red Army, are full of courage and valour, and daily replenish the galaxy of heroes of the patriotic war.

"In ancient times the bloodthirsty predecessors of Hitler and Mussolini deprived us of our native land. After endless persecution and painful wanderings, we have once again acquired our native land. A quarter of a century of life under the Soviet Government has not only healed the wounds of many ages but inspired our people with fresh force, youth, and creative power. The Soviet country is our native land. We take pride in our right to fight for her freedom, and for the inviolability of her frontiers and the peace and happiness of her peoples. A great honour has fallen to our lot, the honour of defending her to our last breath against enemies, who in their insolence wished to convert her peoples into

slaves, the great honour of fighting against the lawlessness and arbitrary power of pogrom-mongers and murderers.

"For the first time in the last 2,000 years a wide road of courage and achievement has opened before the sons of our people, and our brothers and sons have taken to this road. The Jews of all countries view with happiness their Soviet brothers who have this right and honour of building their life on an equal footing with all peoples of our native land. Oppression and misery, persecution and pogroms, have become a sad story of the past. And he who tries to return to this terrible past and convert trees into gallows, orchards into graveyards, and our native land into a prison for the peoples, will be wiped off the face of the earth.

"We vow to do everything, not sparing our lives, to execute your Order of the Day of May First, together with the great Russian people and all peoples of the U.S.S.R. to rout the German Fascist troops in 1942 and clear our native Soviet soil of the Fascist invaders. We assure you, dear Comrade Stalin, that we shall do everything for the annihilation of the hateful foe of humanity, for the triumph of truth and justice, for victory. Death to the Hitlerite scoundrels!"

At this meeting, they appealed to the Jews all over the world, to raise their war effort to greater levels, to unite without reserve behind the governments of the United Nations and to make the fighting alliance of the United Nations the most effective instrument of speedy and complete victory over the common enemy.

"Nine months ago we appealed to you," they said,— "to join in the fight against the enemy of all mankind, the enemy of all freedom-loving peoples, the enemy of the Jewish people—German Fascism. Since then the Hitlerites have massacred thousands of our people. To the Hitlerites all peoples except the Germans are of an inferior race.

"Nine months ago we called on you to join a united struggle against a base and cruel enemy. Then, Hitler's armies were advancing. Together with the sons of the other Soviet peoples, the Jews to a man rose to defend our great country. Side by side with all the Soviet people they fought for the great Land of Soviets.

"It is with pride we Soviet Jews say to Jews throughout the world: here free man has shown his superiority over the soulless Fascist murderers. Hitler's army has been dealt an irreparable blow. But it is still strong. It still holds ten European countries in subjection. It still occupies large sections of the Soviet Union. It is still making attempts to break through and consign more districts to the flames. We are on the eve of decisive battles, and we representatives of the Jewish people, assembled at this meeting in free assembly, address our call to Jews throughout the world—'To Arms.'

"Brother Jews of Great Britain and America! In this war, waiting leads nowhere. From Johannesburg to Montreal, from Alexandria to San Francisco, Jews every-

where—join in the struggle! We Jews of the Soviet Union have shown an example. Not an hour's, not a minute's delay. If all freedom-loving nations follow the example of the Soviet people Fascism will soon be routed.

"Brother Jews of Great Britain and the United States! Together with the other peoples of your countries deal a crushing blow at Fascism. The Red Army is showing an example to mankind.

"Jewish workers of the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Palestine, South Africa, and Australia! More aeroplanes are needed to crush the German murderers. More tanks and planes are needed to liberate the nations overrun by the Hitlerites.

"Join the armies of the anti-Hitler coalition. Remember that your place today is in the vanguard of the fighters against German Fascism.

"At a time when the Jews of Paris and Rome, of Amsterdam and Salonika, Warsaw and Riga, Lvov and Kiev, Minsk and Odessa are being hounded, exterminated and tortured to death by the foul Hitlerites, we, citizens of the great Soviet people, assembled in the capital of our sacred native land, solemnly say to you: 'Fight to the last drop of blood! The hour of victory is nigh! Under the banner of freedom, against Hitler! To arms!'"

Just as the Red Army shows itself as a flaming example of how the fight against the fascist enemy must be waged so the Jews of the Soviet Union issues its call to world Jewry to rally wholeheartedly to the struggle.

In a message to the Jews of Great Britain, sent to a Conference of representatives of British Jewry which had been convened in London on August 29, 1942, to answer the Appeal of Soviet Jewry, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in the Soviet Union stated:

"The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee sends ardent brotherly greetings to the Conference of representatives of British Jewry.

"We are convinced that the noble task about to be undertaken by your conference to render the maximum material aid to the Red Army will receive universal support from every Jew in your great country. Today, when on the battlefields of the Soviet Union, the fate of all nations, the Jewish nation as well, is being decided, there is no greater and more sacred task.

"From your personal experience, you know that the Fascists stop at nothing to enslave the entire world and destroy human civilisation. It is impossible to describe the sufferings and tortures to which the Hitlerite monsters subject the entire Jewish population in temporarily seized Soviet territories and in occupied countries. All the inquisitions of the past ages are mere child's play in comparison with the savageries perpetrated by the Fascists on our enslaved brethren.

"The most trying task in the struggle against the vicious enemy of our countries and of our people has fallen upon the Red Army. We are proud that in this fierce struggle for freedom and happiness of mankind, thousands of Jewish fighters are distinguishing themselves in battle by their fearlessness, courage and valour. Among the heroic warriors decorated by our Government, Jews occupy an honourable place. These are our modern Maccabees who are covering the names of the Jewish people with unfading glory. Their example should be followed by Jews throughout the world in order not to fall a victim to Fascism, and to save themselves from extinction.

"Our second meeting in Moscow, held in May, called upon the Jews throughout the world to alleviate the heroic struggle waged by the Soviet people, and help to bring about a speedy victory over Fascism by presenting the Red Army with a thousand tanks and five hundred bombers. You Jews of Great Britain, together with the Jews of Palestine and Cuba, were the first to respond to our call. This goes to prove that you correctly understood the superhuman efforts made by the Soviet people, regardless of nationality, to free the world forever from this Brown Pestilence. We regard such understanding of our mutual vital interests as a guarantee of your determination to do everything in your power to live up to your urgent national duty before the Red Army. This demands your unremitting support in the further growth and consolidation of the combat, alliance of our countries during the war, and after the war in the interests of a just and lasting peace based on unshakeable friendship of peoples.

"The historical meeting between your Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, and the leader of the Soviet Government, J. Stalin, very clearly stressed that our countries will do their utmost to achieve final victory, over Fascism. We must continue to work and fight hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder! Our victory is your victory! In the name of the Soviet Jewry, we wish you much success in this great historical task which you took upon yourselves. We hope that by its concrete decisions your conference will render maximum material aid to the Red Army and will unfold a bright new page in history of a mutual understanding between Jews and other peoples of our Allied countries. It will also serve as a brilliant example and as a stimulus to Jews of the United States, South America and other countries.

"Through your conference, we appeal to the Jews of Great Britain:

"Brothers and sisters! Show yourselves as worthy citizens of your fighting country, as true sons and daughters of our people, as genuine friends of the Soviet Union. We expect that you will fulfil with honour the decisions adopted by your representatives at the conference.

"Let your tanks and bombers, on which will be inscribed the names of historical personalities of our people, and driven and piloted by able hands of our Red Army fighters, ruthlessly exterminate the contemptible fascist murderers and enslavers.

"Unity in action and unity in struggle— herein lies the guarantee of our victory!

"The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in U.S.S.R.; Professor Solomon Mikhoels, People's Artist of the U.S.S.R., Order-Bearer, Chairman; Shakhno Epstein, critic, publicist and editor, Executive Secretary; Major General Jacob Kreiser, Hero of the Soviet Union; Lieut. Captain J. Fisanovich, Submarine Commander, Hero of the Soviet Union; Khaim Diskind, Artillerist, Hero of the Soviet Union; Professor Order-Bearer V. Vovsi, head therapist of the Red Army; Colonel F. Mikhlín, Orderbearer; A. Hushnirov, poet and playwright, Order-Bearer and Red Army volunteer; Professor Falkovich, philologist, Order-Bearer and Red Army volunteer; J. Yusim, Director of one of the largest military plants, Order-Bearer; S. Shimiliovich, head doctor of Moscow Botkin Hospital, Order-Bearer; Ilya Ehrenburg, novelist and publicist, Stalin Prizewinner, Order-Bearer; Poets, Order-Bearers, Itsik Feffer, Leib Kvitko, Samuel Halkin, Peretz Markish; novelist and publicist, David Bergelson; Professor Dobrushin, playwright and literary critic, Order-Bearer; Sculptor, Sabsai, Stalin Prizewinner; Academicians Lina Stern and A. Frumkin, Stalin Prize-winners; composers A. Krein and L. Pulver, Merited Workers of Art, Order-Bearers; V. Zuskin, People's Artist of the R.S.F.S.R., Order-Bearer; Artist A. Tishler, Order-Bearer; Professor David Oistrach, Laureate, International Violin Competition, Order-Bearer; M. Zilberstein, Chairman, Council Jewish Autonomous Province; David Shchupak, Chairman Jewish Collective Farm Nailehen, Order-Bearer.

**"Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee."**

Jews all the world over may well be proud of the great achievements and the heroic deeds of their brothers in the Soviet Union. They must seek to understand the way in which the Soviet Union has sought a solution of the Jewish problem, at the very period when the cold-blooded policy of the extermination of Jews by the Nazi gangsters has raised it again to world-wide importance. While anti-semitism hits back on Jew and non-Jew alike, the Soviet Union shows that the solution of the Jewish problem reacts to the benefit of Jews and non-Jews alike, and for the strengthening of the progressive forces of mankind.

To non-Jews it should now be clear that Jew-baiting, racial hatred and prejudice are only the instruments of the darkest and most reactionary forces in each country, to conceal and divert attention from their hidden purposes, to enslave peoples and retard material, and social progress.

No one could have stated it more clearly than Hitler himself in the following statement quoted by Hermann Rauschning:

"My Jews are a valuable hostage given to me by the

democracies. Anti-semitic propaganda in all countries is an indispensable medium for the extension of any political campaign. You will see how little time we shall need in order to upset the ideas and criteria of the whole world—simply and purely by attacking Judaism. It is without doubt the most powerful weapon in my political arsenal."

Contrast this with Lenin :

**"It is not the Jews who are the enemies of the working people . . . . Among the Jews there are workers, labouring folk. They constitute the majority. They are our brothers in oppression . . . . Shame on those who sow enmity towards the Jews, and hatred towards other nations!"**

Bound together by ties of friendship and understanding, as equals one with another, the peoples of the Soviet Union are daily proving their determination to cleanse their country of the fascist horror. For us in Britain it becomes an urgent necessity to see to it that the front in Europe is opened as soon as possible, in order to ensure the full and final victory of the United Nations. A victory achieved in this way will strengthen the friendship between our people and the peoples of the Soviet Union, and will make easier the task of rebuilding the world after the war and securing lasting peace for all peoples.

It is well that Jewry the world over should appreciate what is being created in energy and sacrifice by their own people in the U.S.S.R.

"This most justifiable of all wars," says Shakhov Epstein, "this great patriotic fight for liberation, has transformed the most tragic chapter in the history of the Jewish people into one of Jewish heroism. There is not a weapon used in the air or on the ground, in the water or under it, there is not a tool in agriculture or industry with which Jews are not making important contributions, inspired by the defence of their country. The Jews of the entire world should show their pride in these new Bar Kochbas."

Only a few examples of the deeds of these Jewish warriors and workers can be given here. And these are not exceptional, but typical. They demonstrate the vitality of a Jewry united within itself and with the peoples of the multi-national Soviet State. This unity embraces soldiers, farmers and factory workers, intelligentsia.

The spirit of these men is epitomised in the words of General Jacob Kreiser, Hero of the Soviet Union :

"For twenty-two years, I have been serving in the Red Army. When the war broke out, together with other sons of

the Soviet people, I went out to battle against the man-hater and gangster, Hitler. The Soviet Government has decorated hundreds of Jewish Red Army men, commanders and partisans, for heroic deeds in battle, for daring and fearlessness. A people that has raised such heroic sons cannot be enslaved. Such a people will not bow its head before the gangster Hitler. Together with all other peoples of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Jews will achieve victory over the Fascists.

"As a general of the Red Army, as a son of the Jewish people I vow not to put down my sword until the last Fascist has been destroyed."

#### **From Factory to FRONT LINE.**

Leizer Papernik, Hero of the Soviet Union, was a Jew who had been brought up under the Soviet regime. On June 22, 1941, the day that the Nazis began their attack on the Soviet Union, this 23 year old Ukrainian left the Moscow factory in which he was working to volunteer for service in the Red Army. Within a few weeks he was at the front, a soldier in Col. Orlov's detachment defending Moscow.

Papernik was not untrained. For some years, he had attended a glider training school. He was a qualified horseman, and just before the war broke out he had learned to drive a motor-cycle.

Papernik volunteered for every difficult and risky job, not caring that, as a Jew and a Red Army man, the Germans would torture him mercilessly if he fell into their hands. His one aim was to destroy the fiends who had invaded his beloved Ukraine, and who were murdering his Jewish and other Soviet brothers.

In the winter of 1942, he was a member of a ski detachment led by Capt. Lazniuk. Twenty-five strong, they were attacking the heavily fortified village of Khudnevo, in the Smolensk region, in which were entrenched 400 Germans.

These gallant Soviet men fought magnificently, killing the Fascists in the houses in which they had ensconced themselves. But the ranks of the skiers became thinner. Capt. Lazniuk was severely wounded; Commissar Yegortsev was killed. So then Leizer Papernik took over the command.

"Not one step back," was Papernik's order. Not one step back did any man take, until only Leizer remained alive. Alone, wounded, he fought on. The Germans shouted, "Heh, you Russian pig, you'd better surrender!"

"Better death than a Fascist prison!" cried Leizer, and hurled another grenade.

Finally, bleeding, he lay still, and the Fascists began to approach. Suddenly Leizer, mustering his failing strength threw a hand grenade among the advancing Germans, he too was killed by the explosion but his last act also sent many Fascists to their death. His deed was reported by some peasant woman hiding nearby.

When the title of Hero of the Soviet Union was posthumously awarded to Leizer Papernik, the director of the factory at which he had worked, said: "We are proud that our factory raised that brilliant hero, Leizer Papernik, this fearless son of the Soviet people. Papernik's exploits call men at the front to heroic battle, and us in the rear to self-sacrificing work for the front, and for victory."

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Yankel Cohen, tailor of Minsk, former Rabbinical student and now front-line fighter in the Red Army, has also won a place in the Soviet's roster of heroes.

Cohen's unit received orders to advance to the enemy's position, and occupy an important settlement. The Red Army men moved forward cautiously. Everything was quiet. When they got close to their objective, the enemy suddenly opened up with machine guns. "Lie flat," ordered their Commander. But it was soon clear that the unit was encircled. The enemy was stronger in men and guns.

In the furious and unequal battle, Cohen saw that most of his comrades had been killed and his commander mortally wounded.

The Commander uttered his last order: "Tell someone . . . run to headquarters and warn them the Germans are out to encircle our left flank."

By this time, the rattle of machine-guns had quietened. Only twenty men were still alive. Some thirty feet away, some Germans called to the surrounded Red Army men to surrender.

Cohen and his handful of comrades decided to fight on. "Better to die than surrender," they agreed.

Red Army man Pankov was ordered to make his way to headquarters. Before he could get away, a German grenade killed him.

A second Red Army man tried it. He too was killed. Cohen volunteered, and crept on all fours to the wood. On every side, grenades were exploding, but the knowledge that

the fate of the division was in his hands gave him courage. When almost out of danger and in the woods, Cohen was wounded about the head. When he came to, he found that he had been blinded.

Unseeing, he made his way along the woodland path he knew so well. Despite heavy enemy fire, he gained headquarters. His warning enabled the division to ward off the Germans' encircling movement.

In hospital Cohen recovered his sight. It is not as good as it was, but, as a Senior Sergeant, he is back at the front again. This is how Jews fight.

"It is one thing to kill defenceless Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto," Ilya Ehrenbourg has written, "but another thing to meet on the field of battle such Jews as Leizer Papernik, David Katz and Chaim Diskin. Hitler wanted to pin a yellow badge on every Jew, but instead he has given us an opportunity to prove our mettle as fighters. His war has brought us glory, his hatred, pride, for we Jews are distinguishing ourselves in battle."

Lt. Greenzweig was in charge of a company of mine-throwers near Stalingrad. For three days and nights, his men held on to their positions. When the infantry finally got through to their aid, Greenzweig and his men were no longer there. They had started a counter-attack. But let Solomon Karminsky, a Red Army man, tell you of the spirit that inspired them :

"I am a Jew, and proud of it. I am proud that the Jews are fighting together with the Russians, the Ukrainians, the Georgians, and the Tartars. I am ready to die, if need be, but I don't want to die yet. I first want to see some more Germans die. I have already sent a good many of them on their way, but there are many more with whom I want to settle accounts for Kiev, Odessa, and Kharkov. If I die, I shall die with an easy heart, knowing that my child will live as a free man, free from the terror of Nazi despotism, free under the Soviet power.

"My four-year-old son who, with my wife, has been evacuated to the interior, writes : 'Daddy, fight the Hitlerites, and bring me home soon.' I shall do what my son tells me to do. I want one day to tell him how in Kharkov, at 4, Sovnarkom Street, I killed a group of Fascists. There are still too many Germans in our country, but we shall kill them all, or drive them out."

Seven men, led by Senior Sergeant Alexander Nachmanson, were lying in an ambush in the woods. On their right ran a railway, on their left a main highway, both heavily patrolled by Germans.

All night his men rested, while Nachmanson remained on guard. When dawn came, he woke up one of his men to relieve him. Soon he was awakened. "Germans at close range," he was told.

The enemy attacked from all sides. Nachmanson was hit several times, but striving not to lose consciousness, he ordered all mines to be put outside the trench, and then climbed on to them.

When the Germans saw the wounded Red Army man, they stared at him in amazement. Apparently the Russian wanted to surrender. They ceased fire, slowly moved up to him. When they were quite close, Nachmanson quickly detonated the mines. There was a deafening explosion. Many Germans were blown to pieces together with Nachmanson. In the ensuing confusion the Red Army men escaped.

Writing from Stalingrad, Ezra Kornfeld, Soviet Jewish war reporter, has told the inspiring story of four Soviet Air Force men, Divichenko, Zhuravlev, Misikov and Yeshov.

These four members of a bomber crew were given the job of destroying an enemy aerodrome deep in the rear. Their plane got over the target safely, and began to unload its bombs. Suddenly, tongues of flame enveloped the port wing of the machine. But, despite flame and smoke they got on with their job. The port-engine cut out and steering became hard, but they carried on, and one attacking Messerschmidt after the other fell in flames.

The Soviet bomber was now slowly losing height. A Messerschmidt came heading straight towards it. It was clear that the bomber was lost. Divichenko therefore steered his machine straight for the enemy's oil storage tank.

"The Soviet people will never forget these four heroes who, until the last minute of their lives, fought for their Fatherland," said a Soviet Information Bureau communiqué.

Several days passed; then Divichenko, Zhuravlev, and Misikov, exhausted and hungry, their clothes burnt, reported to their unit. This is Divichenko's story:

"We thought we had but a few seconds to live, but no one thought of baling out. We still had a few bombs left, and we looked around for a target. Suddenly I noticed a column

of cars, and we dropped a couple on them. Our machine was now flying very low. It was enveloped in flames. The bombs we still carried might explode at any moment, and we would die without killing any more Germans. From a height of about eight to ten metres, we dropped our last eggs, and heard a terrific explosion.

"I hardly remember what happened later. The explosion, it seems, flung our machine to one side. It flew on for a little and then crashed in a ravine. Somehow, I got out. I was bleeding badly, and my clothes were on fire. I rolled on the ground to put the flames out. Musikov and Zhuravlev did the same. Yeshov, unfortunately, died. Later, we made for the woods, where we rested a bit, and then walked about 120 kilometres back to our unit."

### JEWISH SAILORS.

#### **Ysaye Zelbst, Commander of a Submarine.**

He is a giant of a fellow, with a handsome, frank and sunburned face. He is the son of a Jewish worker from Irkutsk. The vast Siberian expanses from the days of his early childhood awakened in him a desire to do great things, and bred the will to overcome hardships.

Always, the sea had attracted him, so he volunteered for the Red Navy. The examining commission asked Ysaye which of the different naval schools he would like to join "Black Sea, Baltic or Pacific?" He replied "Pacific."

After having graduated from naval school, he chose to take a submarine course.

The beginning of the war found Ysaye in command of a Black Sea submarine. One day, Ysaye Zelbst received orders to make for a certain section of the enemy coast, to attack his shipping. Zelbst knew that he would have to get through two mine barriers, and that numerous enemy light craft were patrolling the coast.

It was a dark night when the submarine sailed, to carry out these instructions. So long as the vessel was still in the safety zone, the commander was able to leave the helm to his second in command and remained in his cabin working out his plans. At last the submarine neared the enemy's mined areas, and now she surfaced less frequently. Ysaye now stayed on the bridge. His vessel might be blown up any minute. At last the periscope showed a narrow black strip—the shore. They had safely passed through the mined areas.

Zelbst told the mate to take his place, leaving the bridge for the first time for forty-eight hours.

For several days the sub remained close in shore, surfacing at infrequent intervals. Along the shore enemy transport could be seen. To attack them would mean to lose the ship. His job was to attack the enemy and escape undamaged. Suddenly Zelbst noticed a large transport, heavily loaded. She was making full speed and hugging the shore. It was 2 a.m. Zelbst did some quick figuring and submerged. There were only a few minutes left.

The torpedo-firing mechanism was O.K. Volkhov, commander of the torpedo section, was sitting motionless. Zelbst was pale and nervous. A long minute passed, and then another. Then, Ysaye raised his hand and turned the signal handle. When the ship surfaced they saw the transport sinking fast, together with the Nazis and their weapons and stores. For a whole day, the German patrol-vessels and planes vainly sought the Soviet submarine. Dozens of depth charges were dropped in its vicinity. But Captain Ysaye Zelbst led his ship safely out of the mined waters. On the third day, the submarine reached a Soviet port.

\* \* \* \*

Lt. Reuben Himmelman was the 24 year old commander of an anti-aircraft unit on an army transport. Throughout an intensive air attack, he coolly continued in charge of his units operations, and brought down numerous Nazi planes. He saved the boat, but lost his life. The Order of Lenin, posthumously awarded, is treasured by his men.

\* \* \* \*

Naval surgeon Dr. Saul Marmarstein, a highly-skilled, untiring officer has received two government decorations. He is liked and honoured by hundreds of men of the Black Sea Fleet. One day, the Fascists furiously attacked the ship in which Surgeon Marmarstein was serving. Many sailors were wounded. Marmarstein fought his way through heavy fire to the injured, performed ten operations, and supervised the removal of the wounded.

#### AMONG THE GUERILLAS.

Jews are taking a very active part in the guerilla movement in temporarily occupied territory. As soon as the Germans invaded the Ukraine, many Jews of all ages, including Jewish veterans of the Civil War, joined the guerilla movement.

Yankel, a young flour-mill worker from Poltava, was working with a guerilla detachment behind the enemy lines. They were doing a great deal of damage—blowing up bridges, cutting telephone wires, and harassing enemy outposts and sentries.

Last December, a number of Jewish guerillas came to a village near Rostov, close to the second German line. They cut the enemy's telephone wires, and then went to rest in a peasant cottage. Two minutes later, a German officer came in. "Who are these men," he demanded?

The old Non-Jewish peasant woman who lived in the cottage, replied, without hesitation, "They are my sons."

The Officer was not convinced, and ordered them all to be arrested.

"If these men are Jews," he said, "you will all be hanged tomorrow."

There was no tomorrow for him, however. That night, the village was stormed and occupied by Soviet forces.

\* \* \* \*

Abraham Bresnyak is a Jewish "Pimpernel." He is the leader of a partisan detachment in the rear of the Nazi lines. This is one of his exploits.

Bresnyak was ordered to reconnoitre the approaches to the town of Smila in Kiev province. Dressed in peasant's clothes, with a saw in his hand and an axe in his belt, he made for the town.

On the road, a German staff car overtook him. In it were a German officer, several non-commissioned officers, two policemen, and an Ukrainian in civilian clothes.

"Where are you off to?" shouted the civilian.

"I am off to the town to chop wood to earn a kopek," replied Bresnyak.

The Ukrainian whispered into the officer's ear, and then, pointing to the axe, said, "You can kill Jews with that. Come on, get into the car. You'll get food and clothes for nothing from the Jews."

As they drove into Smila, Bresnyak saw gallows with five corpses dangling from the ropes.

"Give me some vodka, my throat is all dry; and I need a police card," he said. Bresnyak got his vodka and his card, and left them to search for the "partisan bandits" as they had asked him.

He roamed around the town, discovered the enemy headquarters, and learned that the few remaining Jews in

the town had been locked up, and were to be shot the next day.

At night, he approached the men guarding the Jews. "The partisans are gathering tonight near the mill," he whispered. "You had better try to capture them. I shall stay here to guard the prisoners."

As soon as the two men had left, Bresnyak called out to the Jews: "Forward march, or I'll break your necks."

He led them to a bridge on the other side of town from the mill. Challenged by a German sentry, he presented his police card, and added: "I have been ordered to take these dirty Jews to the woods, where they are to be hanged in the morning."

As soon as they had crossed the bridge, Bresnyak shouted: "Run into the woods, or I'll shoot you." One Jew cried out: "It's all the same to me. I am not going to run. Shoot!"

Bresnyak lost his temper, and replied in good Yiddish: "Idiot, run! There is still plenty of time to die."

\* \* \* \*

#### "Partisan Eli Factor."

Niel Martinovich, a Byelorussian peasant, spent about a year in the partisan detachment, which had been formed in the spring of 1941 by a Jewish carpenter, Eli Factor of Gorodk region, not far from Bobruisk. Eli Factor led the detachment for more than a year.

This is what Niel Martinovich, his comrade-in-arms, said about Factor:

"Eli was the life and soul of the detachment. He knew every one of us so well that in the darkness it seemed as though he could recognise men by just touching their hands or shoulders. We all loved and respected him. In the course of a year, we carried out numerous raids and operations, and Eli was always in the thick of the battle. Until once—

But first let me tell you about him—you see, it's so difficult for me to believe that he's really dead. I can see him now with his automatic in his hand in the woods near a railway line. The German ammunition trains are expected. Factor is teaching me how to lay explosives. 'We've very little,' he says 'Be economical.' And he tells me to run as fast as I can as soon as I light the fuse.

Then, when the train had been blown up, Eli told me to put on peasant clothes. He said we had received orders to

find out the location of German headquarters, and then to attack them and get hold of all documents.

"So, late at night, we leave in the direction of German division headquarters. It turns out that they're located in the school building. Near the gates we hear the steps of a German sentry. Eli creeps up and hits him over the head. The German falls to the ground and we go into the building. In one of the rooms we see a German officer sitting at his desk, smoking a cigarette. Stealthily we enter. The officer jumps up. He goes to grab a Browning but Eli, quick as lightning, snatches it up and kills him. Hastily, we gather all the papers and maps from the desk and drawers, and leave. The documents proved to be of extreme importance.

"Factor's raids on the Germans were all equally daring and well-planned. Once we found a leaflet published by the German command, promising a reward of 5,000 marks for delivering up Factor, dead or alive.

"Well on June 6, 1942, near the village of Chervone Ozero, we are planning to hold up a German transport which is coming from a nearby town. There are eight of us partisans, and we take up a position on both sides of the highway. As the vehicles come along, we open fire. We kill forty Germans, 17 are wounded and five escape. Suddenly a German platoon appears. In the battle, I am seriously wounded. Factor is near me. He continues to throw grenades. 'Be brave, Niel, you'll be all right,' he shouts. This braces me up no end. Then suddenly a bullet hits Factor, and he staggers. I grab hold of him and his head drops on to my shoulder. 'Comrades,' I cry. 'Our commander has been killed!'

"We carry him to the forest near Bobruisk, where he is buried. We all vow to fight as bravely as him. A fine and splendid comrade was our commander, Eli Factor."

\* \* \* \*

Many lies about the Soviet Union have been exploded during the war. Not the least of these has been the assertion that no open practice of religion is permitted in the U.S.S.R. We know now of the freedom accorded to all faiths, and to those who disavow religious belief. Indeed many Rabbis have joined the partisans, angered particularly by the deliberate destruction by the Nazis of synagogues and of the holy scrolls of the Law.

### **Religious Fighters.**

Moshe Feigin, Chairman of the Jewish Kehilla in Kuibishev, has submitted to the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee a report in which the following matters are related.

Two barges, with evacuated old men, women and children, arrived in Kuibishev from Stalingrad. Among them were quite a number of Jews. When the barges reached port, a group of Jews was seen holding a large case covered with red velvet. It contained a number of Scrolls of the Law rescued by the Stalingrad Jews from the Stalingrad Synagogue.

This is what the Jews related.

One Saturday in September a German bomb hit the Stalingrad Synagogue and the building was enveloped in flames and smoke. Mendel Matlin, a 50-year-old Jew, one of the party now arrived in Kuibishev, rushed into the burning synagogue and at the risk of his life rescued the Torah, or Scrolls of the Law. Disregarding his burnt clothes and hands he returned to the synagogue again and brought out all the Scrolls.

Matlin comes from Piriatin, in the Poltava district, where he was manager of a flour mill. A year ago, when Piriatin was bombed by the Nazis, and many houses and the synagogue were set on fire, Mendel Matlin saved the Scrolls from the burning synagogue and brought them safely to Stalingrad, where he has now saved them a second time.

When the Stalingrad refugees landed at Kuibishev from their barges, the Jews formed a procession behind the Scrolls of the Law. Matlin himself could not help to carry them because his hands were so badly burnt.

One of the Scrolls was so badly burnt that it had to be buried in Kuibishev, according to the Jewish rites. A large number of practising Jews followed the coffin and took part in the interment of the damaged scroll. Mendel Matlin said Kaddish, the prayer of mourning.

### **From Rabbi to Guerilla.**

In one of the towns recently liberated by the Red Army, an elderly Jew came to headquarters, and asked to be sent to join a guerilla detachment in the rear of the enemy.

When he was asked what his occupation was, he replied : " I was once the Rabbi of this town. But for some years I have been engaged chiefly in gardening."

" And why, at your age, do you want to join the guerilla fighters?" the commander asked.

"I want to avenge the atrocities which the Nazis have committed against the Jews and against the Jewish Scrolls of the Law. These Germans are wild beasts. They kill people and they destroy our synagogues and desecrate our Torah. I shall not rest until I have taken vengeance on some of them," replied the volunteer.

Another Jew who came to join a guerilla detachment said: "Why do I want to join? Because I want to fight the Hitlerites. Either they will kill us or we must kill them."

This Jew also, when the local synagogue was set on fire by Nazi bombs, risked his life trying to beat out the flames, and saved the Scrolls of the Law.

#### **A Jewish Father keeps his son's Yorzeit.**

"The father is an engine-driver, named Gedalia Aranovich," says Captain J. E. Eisenstein, who tells the story. "His son, David Aranovich, was killed on November 27, 1941, in battle near Rostov. His last letter, addressed to his father, was dated November 26, one day before he died. 'Dear father,' he wrote, 'my tank has been damaged.' 'I am in it now with my comrades, as in a fort, surrounded by the Fascists, who seem to be trying to take us alive. But they won't. In the two days that we have been here we have killed over 50 of them. Give my love to mother and to my sisters. I shall write again tomorrow.'

"But he didn't reply again. Next day David Aranovich was killed by an enemy bullet, and this letter reached his father together with the news of his death, through his Commander."

"I was standing today," wrote Captain Eisenstein, "with the father, Gedalia Aranovich, on the footplate of the military train he drives, and he told me the story. 'Today is my boy's Yorzeit,' he said, and pulled out a portrait of his son. The fireman and I looked at the photograph, which showed a fresh-faced lad with bright smiling eyes. I looked at the father: the same keen eyes, the same expression, but the father's face was wrinkled, with hard lines round the mouth.

"All the time he kept his hand on the controls of the engine, and the train ran swiftly through the white snow-covered fields. Winds penetrated into the driver's cabin, and brought snow-flakes whirling into our eyes.

"What was your son before the war? I asked.

"He was a builder of the Jewish farm settlement Nailebn, in the Jewish Autonomous Province Biro-Bidjan, he answered. 'He built Nailebn. It was my son who built

it. I come from Biro-Bidjan myself,' the old man went on. 'It was in Biro-Bidjan I became an engine-driver. Many a train-load of building material have I brought to Biro-Bidjan. For seven years I helped to build up our Jewish life in Biro-Bidjan. Now I have joined up to help defend what we have built. I am carrying ammunition to the front in my train.'

"As we came closer to the front, we suddenly saw black specks on the horizon. We watched their movement through the window. They came swiftly towards us.

"'They are enemy planes!' cried Gedalia. And he stretched his hands towards the controls. He stood straighter and his expression became stubborn, his eyes cold. As I looked at him I thought of his son in his damaged tank, which he and his comrades had turned into a small fort, from which they had beaten off the enemy.

"The train flew faster. 'We've got to get through,' Gedalia said. Three German planes came in pursuit of our train. Our anti-aircraft gunners opened fire. A Soviet air squadron appeared from the woods. Bombs burst to right and left, and shells in all directions. Two Messerschmidts were brought down and a third turned back.

"I had gone out of the cabin to help the anti-aircraft gunners. When I came back, I found the fireman dead. Gedalia Aranovich with face and hands wounded was still at the controls, keeping the train moving.

"'You're wounded,' I said to him. 'I'm going to send a message through to have another driver replace you at the next station.'

"'Don't do that!' he cried. 'My David stayed in his tank till the end. I don't want to give up my post till I have brought the train safely to the Front. Today is my son's Yorzzeit. I am commemorating the anniversary of his death by bringing munitions to the front to supply the Red Army men, to help them avenge the death of our children.'"

#### **On the Factory Front.**

Hundreds of thousands of Jews are working in the defence industries, making weapons for the Red Army. Many of them are highly-skilled men and women engaged in work of great importance. In Moscow, for example, the factory of which B. Dubovy is director is producing precision instruments for the aviation industry, and for the navy. This is a huge electro-mechanical plant, which was evacuated from the Ukraine.

Julius Olevsky, head of its assembly shop, is a man of thirty. He came to the factory as an unskilled labourer, and today is head of one of the most important departments. He is the initiator of a Socialist Emulation campaign among the workers. His excellent work has been commended several times by Government organisations and by the Council of Defence.

Eva Shapiro, a biologist from Kiev, is working as a mechanic in the same factory. Her husband is a major in the Red Army, on the Voronezh front. Eva Shapiro is one of the best mechanics; she exceeds her norm by 200%. She also finds time to take care of a little girl she has adopted, whose parents perished at the hands of the Hitlerites.

H. Masalky is director of another Moscow factory, where engines and apparatus for bombers is produced. This factory employs some of the most highly skilled workers in the country. Many Jewish workers have proved themselves to be specialists in this field, as, for instance, Sioma Druz, head of the machine shop. Druz's shop has several times been awarded premiums for good work, and for serving as an example to other shops. Any time a shop flags in its production, Druz is called upon to help.

"Our aim is to produce such machinery as will never fail our flyers," says Sioma Druz.

Another factory produces great coats, tunics and other clothing for the Red Army. Seventy-five per cent of the workers are evacuees, the majority among them being tailors and seamstresses from Vitebsk, Kiev, Minsk, Berdichev, and other towns. An outstanding worker of this factory is Sonia Viadro, a splendid organiser, who knows how to stimulate the workers to carry out all government orders on schedule. Quiet and unassuming in manner, she is nevertheless full of energy and initiative. "We are producing uniforms and good underwear for Red Army men, to keep them warm in the cold weather," says Viadro proudly, "and we never fall behind time!"

Sonia Viadro is strict but comradely. Often she takes the shears in her hands, or sits down at the machine, to show the workers how to speed up or improve their methods. Viadro belongs to the Feskes family in Berdichev, a family well-known for the number of highly skilled shoemakers and tailors it has produced.

Alexander Wasserman, a high official of the trade union of the aircraft industry of the Soviet Union, was recently

interviewed, on behalf of Jews in other countries, with regard to the activities of Jewish workers in the aircraft industry. His replies, summarised, are as follows:—

“ I must say that this question is rather unexpected. I am myself a Jew and for many years I worked as a turner at an aircraft factory. In our trade union work, however, we never differentiated between nationalities. Of course, there are many Jews in the aircraft industry. Workers, engineers, factory directors, who devote all their energies to the production of planes, aircraft engines and so on, for the front. These Jews are known as excellent workers and staunch Soviet patriots.

“ Take, for instance, Schakhman, a turner. I have known him for ten years. He's one of the most energetic and skilled workers in a big aircraft plant. For fifteen years he's been working a very complicated machine, and he's been working wonders—especially since war broke out. Schakhman's a favourite among his fellow-workers, Russians, Ukrainians, Armenians, Jews. They call him 'Our Schakhman,' he's listened to with great attention. He's been elected deputy to the city Soviet and has been decorated by the government for exemplary work.

“ Or take, for instance, Israel Levin. In 1927, when Levin came to work in one of our earliest aircraft plants, he was still a youngster. He started as an apprentice and later became a turner. Levin showed great organisational ability and was appointed head of a turners' brigade, or team. Soon he was made a foreman. At about that time he was called up and assigned to an aircraft unit. There he increased his knowledge and experience of aeroplane building. He was later sent back to the factory and was assigned to very responsible work until he became assistant director of the factory—where he had begun as an apprentice. Later, he became director of factory number 292, which is in the front rank of Soviet aircraft works.

“ In the beginning of last May, all the aircraft factories joined in a competition to produce more and better planes. Factory 292 came out winner. A delegation of flyers from the front presented Levin with the gold-embroidered red banner as is usually awarded to the winner of a competition. Levin, in the name of all the workers, promised to continue the good work of the factory and try to retain the Red Banner.

“ In June, factory 292 again came out winner despite the fact there had been improvement throughout the aircraft

industry, and therefore factory 292 had had hefty opponents to face. The Red Banner still decorates the walls of the factory. Israel Levin has recently been decorated by the government with the Order of Lenin.

"I knew another Jew Natvei Schenkman, who was also a director of an aviation factory. Schenkman also began his career as turner. Later he studied and became an engineer. Schenkman was for some time in America, where he was sent to buy aircraft equipment for Soviet factories. There he studied American methods of aircraft production.

"Until his death, which he met in an aeroplane accident, Schenkman was head of the factory which was one of the best in the country. In the Autumn of 1941, during the German onslaught on Moscow, the factory was evacuated. Schenkman was in charge of the reorganising of the factory in its new location; and it soon began actually to produce more planes than before.

"In conclusion, I would like to mention the aircraft works headed by that young, but very able director, Mark Gurelick. Besides Gurelick, there are many Jewish workers, employees and engineers in this concern. This is because, before its evacuation, the factory was situated in one of our western towns with a large Jewish population. I recently paid a visit to this establishment. As an active trade union official and a Jew, it was a joy to see with what rhythm this factory works. All workers, Jews and non-Jews, work for but one object: to produce more and better weapons for the front and thus aid in the extermination of the Fascist murderers."

#### **Stakhanovites.**

The vicissitudes of war brought Israel Oksman to one of the big Volga towns. A former boilermaker, he now came to work as a sheet-metal worker. He had never done this type of work before, but soon he became one of the leading skilled workers. But the front needed still more ammunition. He now found a way of doubling his output of sheet metal. In August, he surpassed his quota by 27 per cent.

Oksman passed on his discovery to the other workers. The productivity of the shop grew tremendously, and soon there were a number of Stakhanovites there, producing over 200 per cent. of their norm.

Israel Oksman is largely responsible for the fact that this factory was among the winners in the All-Union Socialist

Emulation contest. He is a modest fellow, and never talks about it. But, in appreciation of his work, he has been elected a member of the shop committee.

#### **An All-Grandmothers Jewish Arms Workshop.**

"All the workers in this busy workshop producing arms for the front are Jewish grandmothers," writes D. Stonov, member of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Kuibishev.

"How long have you been working here?" I asked Nechama Ewigman, the Chairman of this co-operative workshop. "She is an elderly woman, with grey hair and fine dark eyes. She was a supervisor, moving swiftly from one machine to the other, examining the work and advising the other women. I had to wait a while before she could spare a few minutes to talk to me.

"This co-operative workshop was organised in January, 1942," she said. "Practically all our members working here live in the same street. I suppose you're wondering how it is that everyone of us is a grandmother. Well, you see, before the war we all knew each other; we would take our little grandchildren to the park round the corner, and sit there talking or resting while the children played together. Their parents, our sons and daughters, were busy working in factories and offices, and we attended to the house, and looked after our grandchildren. We were just grandmothers. We never thought we would ever be working like this. When the war broke out, our sons went to the front to fight the Germans. Our daughters went to work in the big war factories, in heavy industry, and as nurses in the military hospitals. So we grandmothers got together and talked it over, and we decided that we too could do something to help.

"It was in the winter of 1941, when the enemy was straining every effort to take Moscow, so we all joined up to help in the defence of the city. We helped to dig anti-tank pits, we filled sandbags, and we took part in the building of barricades.

"Then one of my neighbours, Frieda Halpern, suggested we start making warm clothes for the Red Army. But we decided that we could do even more important work than that. One of my sons had worked in an arms factory in our town, which had been evacuated to the East. But one workshop had been left here, and continued production. We sent a few of us as a deputation to see Vladimir Vigelov, the chief engineer of the factory, and he advised us to organise this

co-operative workshop. He helped us to do so. He gave us the machines, showed us how to instal them and gave us instructors to teach us how to work them. None of us had ever done any work like this before. But we soon learned. And now we are filling our quota and turning out satisfactory work, and we are happy to know that we are doing our bit."

#### **Trekking Eastwards.**

When the flames of war reached the Ukraine, the Jewish collective farm "Emes," one of the best dairy farms in Dnepropetrovsk province, decided to evacuate to the East. But all the trains were over-crowded with evacuees, with moving factories and plants and raw materials. Dozens of cars were required to move the cattle and the farm machinery of the "Emes" farm.

It was decided not to wait, but to transport the cattle on the hoof. Under the roar of guns, and the flare of fire in the sky, they started eastwards by road. It was a difficult journey. The highways were occupied by Red Army units moving forward, so the collective farm folk had to resort to by-ways. The herd had to be fed, and the cows milked. On the fourth day the calves began to lag behind. Someone suggested they should kill them; but the majority disagreed. They decided to bring all the cattle safely to their destination. But what their destination was, they still did not know. The men went without food and sleep, ignoring their own fatigue, but they carefully tended every calf, carried the weak ones in their arms or on trucks.

The "Emes" collective farmers covered more than three thousand kilometres in their long trek. They journeyed ever eastward, when the sun was blazing hot, and it was hard for man and cattle to continue. So they walked at night, and during the day rested in the shade of the woods, feeding themselves and their cattle. After two months, they reached Alma Ata, capital of Kazak S.S.R.

When the collective and state farms of Kazakhstan learned that the famous "Emes" collective dairy farm from the Ukraine, which had so distinguished itself at the agricultural exhibition in Moscow, was coming to their territory, they made arrangements for a welcome. They repaired houses, stored products and assigned special pastures and barns for the new cattle.

The "Emes" collective farmers adjusted themselves splendidly to their new environment. The farm has since considerably extended its scope, and also its experimental

work. The local collective farmers received the Jewish farmers cordially. The Jews are paying back the Kazakh farmers for their warm welcome by sharing their knowledge and experience with them. The front, also, was greatly benefited from this friendship between Jewish and Kazakh farmers; the army is receiving more dairy produce than ever before, from this source.

#### **"Jewish 'Millionaire' Collective Farm in Ubekistan."**

The Kaganovich collective farm in Samarkand province ranks among the most prosperous collective farms in Uzbekistan. It is what they call a "millionaire farm." Its membership is cosmopolitan; the majority consists of Jews, though there are many Uzbeks, Tadjiks, Armenians, Russians and others. Quite a number of Jewish evacuees from the Ukraine joined this farm. When harvesting was at its height the two brigade-leaders, Shisanov and Kysayev, brilliantly organised the field work. The rest of the workers acquitted themselves magnificently. The farm filled all its government assignments for the year.

Among the evacuees were many Stakhanovites. Tarnow, a former Minsk farmer, working on sugar beet, surpassed his norm by 150 per cent. Leah Kapstan of Odessa, wife of a Red Army commander, was top of the list in fruit-picking.

At a meeting held on this farm, Prof. Baturinsky spoke on the work of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee of the Soviet Union. The farmers pledged themselves to contribute 130,000,000 roubles for tanks and bombers for the Red Army.

#### **From the Far East.**

From Biro-Bidjan comes the news that the republic has contributed 23,000,000 roubles to the state fund. It has despatched up to now 2,000 collective gifts and 60,000 individual parcels to Red Army men at the front, apart from 65,000 articles of warm clothing.

One of Biro-Bidjan's most promising young writers, A. Vergilis, has been commended as a fearless member of the parachutist troops.

Biro-Bidjan's factories have a greater output than ever before, owing to the number of shock-workers which the war has produced. Shloima Milgraum, a worker in a big Biro-Bidjan armaments factory, over-fulfilled his quota by 250 per cent. Hersh Zaslavsky can boast of 300 per cent. in excess of schedule in his bread bakery. Feige Tuteneik, Paula Feiner and Fanya Zippermann working in a garment factory,

exceeded their quotas by 200, 250 and 300 per cent. respectively.

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Why do we reproduce accounts? Not because they are more outstanding than many deeds performed by many thousands of others who fight or work for freedom. We give them here because the vicious libel has been circulated that the Jews are not the kind of people who will take their place in the field of danger. They are a timorous race, it is said, whatever they may have been thousands of years ago.

Hitler has declared war on the Jews, a peace loving people. Hitler has made anti-semitism and the extermination of the Jews part of his programme.

The Jews therefore must be in the forefront of the fight against Fascism. There can be no future for them in a Fascist world. Whosoever has a drop of Jewish blood can have no place in the so-called New Order.

But these stories have a deeper significance. They show the fighting spirit of the Jewish people when the social setting in which they find themselves provides them with an adequate outlet for their energies.

The Jews are a strong and hardy people; they have an intellectual heritage of which they may well be proud. They are an emotional and sensitive people, also. Tossed hither and thither for generations in a hostile environment, used as pawns in the political game, the scapegoat for anger and irritation whenever social stress has reached its climax, they have been cramped and thwarted in their powers of self-expression. Their culture, distinctive as it is, bears the mark of an oppressed and a repressed people.

Today, in the Soviet Union, a new society has come into being that accords to the Jew a social status without qualification, equal to that of every other citizen; that recognises the historical disabilities from which he has suffered, as a people, in his divorce from agriculture and industry. In rectifying these historical injustices, the Soviet Union has created a Soviet Jewry that manifests itself in a new outburst of energy, in cultural activities and in social construction. When the period of stress has come, Anti-Semitism no longer raises its hideous head. Instead, the Jew steps with his non-Jewish comrades to the forefront of the struggle.

#### SOVIET JEWS AT WAR

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RUSSIA TO-DAY SOCIETY, April, 1943.

# HAVE YOU MET ANY JEWISH HEROES?

"Have you met any Jewish heroes?," Alexander Beziminsky, a Russian poet who has been at the Front since the beginning of the German-Soviet war was asked. "Indeed I have," he answered. "I have met many Jews at the Front who have proved themselves heroes. I remember them all. I have met so many on the different fronts, artillerymen, flyers, snipers. The Jewish people may justly be proud of the Jewish fighters in the Red Army."

The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Kuibishev, which transmitted this and many other messages of the same kind to the Jewish Fund for Soviet Russia, calls upon the Jews of Great Britain to make a special contribution as Jews to the Jewish Fund for Soviet Russia.

It is not enough for Jews to contribute to Russia. Jews must help Russia, but so that their contribution shall be known as a Jewish contribution.

"Jews of Great Britain, Jewish mothers, Jewish boys and girls, members of Synagogues, members of Trade Unions, what have you done as Jews to aid our common cause?" This is the question asked by the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Kuibishev. "What have you done as Jews to strengthen the hands of the Red Army, who avenge the blood of your kith and kin? The Jews of the Soviet Union, who, together with all the other Soviet peoples are giving their lives, their property, all they possess, in the struggle, call upon the Jews of Great Britain, over and above what they do as citizens in their own countries, to make a special Jewish contribution to the Funds for helping the Red Army with medical supplies, comforts, etc."

Jews! Send your Jewish contribution to—

**LORD NATHAN OF CHURT,**

Appeal Chairman,

Jewish Fund for Soviet Russia,

(Affiliated to Mrs. Churchill's Red Cross  
Aid to Russia Fund,

Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940.)

43, Russell Square,  
London, W.C.1.

Name .....

Address .....