

The Soviet Yiddish Press: *Eynikayt* During The War, 1942–1945

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The almost immediate association that comes to mind when the Soviet Yiddish press and the Holocaust are mentioned is the organ of the Soviet Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, *Eynikayt* (7 June 1942–21 November 1948), by then the only Yiddish newspaper and, as fate would have it, the most nationally-oriented Soviet Jewish periodical.

To be sure, between 1933 and 1941 a variety of Yiddish periodicals and dailies existed in the Soviet Union. A detailed study of the Soviet Yiddish press coverage of the rise of Nazism in Germany, the fate of German and Polish Jews and many other relevant issues of the pre-war years will uncover a complex interplay between the news *per se* and the ongoing Soviet ideological and political constraints conditioning, restricting or blocking their coverage (cf. Greenbaum 1979: 213). The same, of course, applies to any form of public Jewish expression in the Soviet Union since the 1930s.

The ultimate, eventually fateful results of these constraints were becoming evermore conspicuous by the end of the 1930s. The central Soviet Yiddish daily *Der Emes* that appeared in Moscow since 1920 was closed down in 1938 after its editor Moishe Litvakov was imprisoned in 1937. He perished in 1939. The pre-Soviet Yiddish press in the parts of Poland, the Baltic States and Romania that were annexed to the USSR between September 1939 and July 1940, underwent a rapid process of liquidation and overwhelming sovietization (Levin 1989: 137–146). According to Dov Levin (1989: 146) about nine Yiddish dailies appeared in the annexed territories, of which only one, the new Soviet *Bialistoker Shtern*, existed for 20 months until the German invasion in June 1941.

The only surviving daily in the whole of Lithuania between February and June 1941 was the Kovno-based *Der Emes* (see Levin 1977).

As for the Yiddish press in the Soviet Union proper, the two dailies—*Oktyabr* in Minsk and *Shtern* in Kiev (both established in 1925)—were running on borrowed time until the invasion in the summer of 1941. Even *Birobidzhaner Shtern* in Birobidzhan, hardly the most likely region to be reached by the rapidly advancing German Army, ceased publication in the years 1941–1944 (see Shmeruk 1961: 345, No. 3567).

Until 1939, the general Soviet press reported on the inside pages on the fate of Jews in Germany, while the same coverage was allocated a significantly more prominent place on the frontpages of the Soviet Yiddish press (see Altshuler et al. 1993: 208, no. 12; cf. also Pinchuk 1976). However, after the 23 August 1939 Soviet-German pact this coverage as well as any public criticism of the Nazi policies was stopped. It has, therefore, become customary to refer to the years 1939–1953—i. e. the years between the Molotov-Ribbentrop Agreement and Stalin's death—as “The Black Years of Soviet Jewry” (Gilboa 1972; Pinkus 1986: 249–340).

And yet, the establishment of the Soviet Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee with its newspaper *Eynikayt*, in the wake of the German invasion into the Soviet Union, was a major development in the public life of Soviet Jewry. In line with the Slav and other public pressure-group committees, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was brought to life to serve the immediate and vital propagandistic and military needs of the Soviet Union during the critical first years of the War. The name of the Committee's official organ, *Eynikayt* (Unity), is very significant (cf. Gilboa 1972: 37). It encapsulates the call of the Soviet Jews to all Jews abroad (primarily in the USA and Britain) to unite in a common struggle against the Nazis by providing every possible material, moral and political assistance to the Soviet Union. Six years later, in the wake of the so-called *Zhdanovshchina* which started in 1946 and within the Cold War context, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was conveniently treated as the principal nest of dangerously hostile nationalistic “anti-Soviet” activities, which had to be eradicated, paving the way for the ultimate solution of the Jewish question in the Soviet Union (on the ‘liquidation’ of the Central Yiddish Publishing House “Emes” in 1948, see Y. Kerler 1977: 43–48; on *Eynikayt* and the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee's archives in today's Russia, see Sandler 1995).

The establishment of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was a pragmatic de-facto reversal of the classical Stalinist perception of Jews. It also sharply contrasted with the situation in which Soviet Jews found themselves since the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Agreement. This complete about-face may be summed up with the Yiddish proverb "*az me darf hobn a ganev - nemt men im arop fun der tliye* (when a thief is needed, he's brought back down from the gallows)."

The first issue of *Eynikayt* appeared on 7 June 1942. Its last, 700th issue is dated 20 November 1948 (cf. Shulman 1991). At first it appeared every ten days in Kuibyshev where at the time the central Government offices and agencies were stationed. In July 1943 *Eynikayt* moved to Moscow where it became a weekly. Later, from 24 February 1945, the newspaper appeared three times a week.

As for circulation, there are indications that the supply and distribution inside the USSR did not match the demand. In early 1943 only 2,000 copies were available for retail sale in the whole of the Soviet Union (Redlich 1982: 48). In July 1943 *Eynikayt* announced that the newspaper's production quotas for the year 1944 were filled up, therefore no new subscriptions for the next year could be accepted (3/7/44, 91, p. 4). After the War the circulation was estimated at 10,000 copies, "of which a considerable quantity was sent abroad." At the same time the number of potential buyers in the USSR alone was estimated at over 50,000. Yet from the very beginning *Eynikayt* received a significant amount of readers' mail, more than 16 letters a day on average. During the first year (June 1942—March 1943), a total of 5,112 letters were received (15/3/43, 28–29, p. 3; Litvak 1966). They arrived from readers in various parts of the Soviet Union including many from soldiers in the Red Army.

The establishment of the newspaper was of course a reviving breath of life for many Yiddish writers, journalists, scholars, educators and other "linguistically unassimilated" members of the Jewish intelligentsia. During the first year the paper managed to attract 300 correspondents comprising both Yiddish and some Russian journalists and writers whose articles appeared in the newspaper. Moreover, according to Shimon Redlich's examination, the number of special *Eynikayt* reporters in 1942–1945 rose from 9 to 95; of these about a third "were military ones, reporting from all parts of the Nazi-Soviet front" (Redlich 1982: 195, n. 21; a partial list of these reporters in Redlich 1987: 83–87). The editorial

board of the newspaper consisted of some of the most prominent personalities of Soviet Yiddish culture who also played a vital role in the work of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, including: Dovid Bergelson (1884–1952), Yekhezkl Dobrushin (1883–1953), Shmuel Halkin (1897–1960), Shloyme Mikhoels (1890–1948), Leyb Strongin (1896–?), Itzik Fefer (1900–1952), Leyb Kvitko (1890–1952) and Aron Kushnirov (1890–1949). The editor-in-chief was Shakhno Epshteyn (1883–1945) and, after his death, Hersh Zhitz (1903–1954) was appointed to this post.

The major issues covered in the paper during the War were:

- news from the front
- mobilization of world Jewry to ensure the Red Army's victory over the Nazis (including reports on the work of the Soviet Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee)
- prominent featuring of the Jewish participation in the Red Army and the partisan movement
- reports on the mass murder of Jews in the Nazi-occupied territories
- Jewish life and culture in the Soviet Union
- Soviet life
- international news
- Jewish news from abroad and especially from the Nazi-occupied Europe

It is difficult to say with certainty what prominence was given to each of these major issues. We have, however, an important thematic list of communications and correspondences with which *Eynikayt* and the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee supplied the foreign press and media during its first year (15/3/43, 28–29, p. 3; Litvak 1966: 223). This list and the number of items for each topic seem to reflect the overall news-coverage practices of the newspaper itself (see Table 1 below).

Obviously this list cannot include certain topics which appeared in the newspaper, such as the news from the front (provided by the main Soviet news agency), and the foreign-news items many of which were about Jews abroad especially in Nazi-occupied Europe. Moreover, it covers only the first year of the *Eynikayt*'s activity. However, both the listing of the main topics and the number of items that were sent out are also characteristic of the coverage and reporting that appeared on the pages of

Table 1: List of communications and correspondences sent by *Eynikayt* and the Jewish Anti-Fascist committee to the foreign press and media, June 1942–March 1943.

	Items
1. Participation of Jews in the Red Army and their heroism	— 568
2. Jews in the partisan movement	— 108
3. Life and work of the [Soviet] Jewish people in the hinterland	— 275
4. Jewish culture [<i>yidische kulturboyung</i>] in the Soviet Union	— 256
5. Fascist atrocities [<i>akhzoryesn</i>] against the Jewish population	— 426

(Source: *Eynikayt* 15/03/43, 28–29, p. 3)

the newspaper throughout the War. Prominent featuring of Jewish heroism in the Red Army and (somewhat later on) the partisan movement was the paper's clear policy from the very beginning. The first issue of *Eynikayt* concludes with a call to its readers to gather and forward information on the heroic participation of Jewish soldiers in the war against the Hitlerite occupants. Reports, portraits and articles on this topic were often given under the heading "Our Heroes" or "Our Sons and Daughters". The prominence given to this issue was a clear-cut refutation of the persistent rumors that the Jewish contribution to fighting was negligible for "Jews were hiding in the deep hinterland." These rumors were usually attributed to the Germans. One wonders, however, to what extent, if at all, they were refuted in the general Soviet press.

In 1942 Shakhno Epshteyn "was planning to write a book on the contribution of Soviet Jews to the armed struggle against the Nazis" (Redlich 1982: 198; *Eynikayt* 5/7/42, 4). In March 1943, after it was announced that 32,067 Jews had received military awards, Ilya Ehrenburg (1891–1967) suggested that statistics alone were not enough, and around that time a plan surfaced to prepare a special collection in Russian on the Jewish participation in the Red Army and the partisan movement, dubbed the *Red Book* (cf. Pinkus 1986: 320–321; 1988: 188; Altshuler et al. 1993: 218, n. 38). The book never materialized, yet *Eynikayt* itself provided rich material for such a collection. (It is possible that some new information on the *Red Book* project can be found in the archive collection of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in "The Russian Republic State Archive" in Moscow, see Sandler 1995; on the participation of Soviet Jews in the war against Nazi Germany, see Arad 1994.)

Far better known is the *Black Book* project of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (Kon 1967–8; Gilboa 1972: 51–54; Kermish 1980; Smolyar 1981; Yelin 1984; Pinkus 1986: 319–320; Pinkus 1988: 187–188; Altshuler and Ycikas 1992). It was often referred to in *Eynikayt* and this remarkable collection, together with a wealth of other material which was not included in the original version, survived both the long delay in publication in Israel and the Soviet regime itself (see Grossman and Ehrenburg 1980; Arad and Altman 1993). Though it was readied for press, the *Black Book* was never allowed to be published in the Soviet Union.

To reiterate: the many publications that appeared on the pages of *Eynikayt* provided some of the earliest descriptions, testimonies and details on the mass murder of Jews in various localities of the occupied Soviet Union and its “new” territories that were annexed between 1939 and 1940.

The fate of the *Black Book* is analogous to the remarkably different attitudes to the reporting of the Holocaust by the Yiddish paper on the one hand and by the general Soviet press on the other hand. With a few exceptions the Soviet Russian press skillfully avoided direct references to the mass annihilation of the Jews, referring when needed to “the innocent” or “peaceful, civilian Soviet population.” Pinkus (1988: 187, cf. also 1986: 318–319) explains this in part by the unwillingness of the Soviet authorities to be too closely identified with the Jewish cause thereby upholding in the eyes of its citizens the Nazi equation between Jews and Communists. However, in the case of *Eynikayt* the authorities had to concede even if only for temporary political and vital propaganda reasons. Hence, a degree of hitherto unprecedented freedom in Yiddish. Soviet as it was, *Eynikayt* was for a time given enough rope to become the most Jewish-oriented of all Soviet Yiddish periodicals.

In the earlier mentioned list of press-communications forwarded by *Eynikayt* to the foreign media, the issue of Nazi atrocities against Jews appears last. However, the number of items forwarded by March 1943 (426 items) makes it the second most reported topic. The same logic by which the mass murder of the Jews had to be referred to in order to mobilize world Jewry for a common struggle, also allowed for a focused and unmediated reporting of the terrible events in the Nazi-occupied Soviet territories. There was also substantial reporting on the Jews in other parts

of occupied Europe, both as news in-brief given under such general headings as "From the Fascist Hell," "Jewish News from Abroad" (sometimes simply "Jewish News" or even "From Abroad"), as well as in longer foreign press communications (e.g. "Di englishe prese vegn dem oysrot funem yidishn folk mitsad di hitleristn," 27/12/42, 21, p. 4). The first description of the Warsaw ghetto uprising (April, 1943), which appeared on 15 May 1943 (No. 35, p. 4) provided a remarkably detailed account written by Ber Mark, whose later book (in its various editions) on the subject bore the same title, "Der ufshtand in Varshever geto." Also noteworthy are his other articles devoted to Jewish resistance in Lodzh ("Der ufshtand in Lodzher geto," 30/12/43 (60), p. 2), Bialystok ("Letster kamf fun Bialistoker geto," 01/06/44 (82), p. 2) and Luninets (West Belorussia, "Ufshtand fun di Luninetser yidn kegn di daytshishe talyonim," 17/07/43 (40), p. 2). A number of signed articles describing or referring to the fate of European Jewry under the Nazis can be found among the many contributions by such authors as Bergelson (eg. "Af tsepukenish," 15/08/42 (8), p. 2; "Dos hobn geton di daytshn," 17/08/44 (93), p. 5), Ehrenburg ("Faran far vos nekome tsu nemen!," 17/12/42 (20), p. 4) and Fefer ("Rotskhisher epos," 01/05/43, 33–34, p. 5).

The importance of these reports and references for gauging the newspaper's and its readers' awareness of the pan-European scale of the Holocaust is self-evident. However, the bulk of reports, bylines and detailed accounts of eyewitnesses was devoted to the Soviet Union, Poland and Lithuania. It is noteworthy that the photos published in *Eynikayt* provided these reports with some of the earliest and most gruesome evidence of persecutions and mass murder. A future systematic index of *Eynikayt* should also include a detailed list of its photographic materials [the earliest ones appeared in the following issues: 17 June 1942 (2), p. 2; 28 June 1942 (3), p. 4; 25 July 1942 (6), p. 2; 25 September 1942 (12), p. 2; 17 December 1942 (20), p. 2; 27 December 1942 (21), p. 2].

The sharp contrast between *Eynikayt* and the Soviet press in referring to the Holocaust can be detected in the Yiddish newspaper itself, for it also published many official Soviet or Soviet-approved communications and press releases on the Nazi policy of mass murder of the "peaceful population." The important press communication of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs published 27 December 1942, perhaps one of the frankest official Soviet references to the Holocaust, it was

released in conjunction with the joint allied Governments' statement condemning the mass murder of the Jews. Yet, one need not be a great stylist to detect that even here, in a press communication devoted entirely to the subject, there is a strong tendency to keep references to the Jewish identity of victims to a minimum. It is therefore hardly a surprise that *Eynikayt* had to print in boldface the document's first reference to Jews as the principal Nazi-victims—a reference which appears half-way down the second paragraph. When the Red Army began the fight for Vilna, on 13 July 1944, *Eynikayt* published on its front-page an article by Iustas Paletskis, the Chairman of the Upper Soviet of the Lithuanian Soviet Republic, entitled "Teg fun groyser freyd." Describing Nazi atrocities in the Lithuanian capital, Paletskis also mentions the 100,000 "inhabitants of Vilnius" [=vilnyuser aynvoyners] shot to death by the Germans. Compare it with Avrom Sutskever's article "Tsu der bafreyung fun Vilne," that appeared a week later, where the Yiddish poet and partisan says:

Un in bren fun ot der heyliker freyd fargesn nit di toyznter un toyznter Vilner zeyer tifn troyer, vos ot di barimte shtot zeyere, a shtot mit a groyser yidisher alt-ayngezesener un hoykh-kulturel-er bafelkerung, iz durkh di daytshn farvandlt gevorn in eynem fun di shreklehkhte masn-kvorim far undzere brider un shvester.

[And in the midst of the great holy happiness, felt by thousands of Vilnerites they also sense a deep sorrow, for their city with its age-old and highly-cultured Jewish population was turned by the Germans into one of the most horrible mass graves of our brothers and sisters.]

(*Eynikayt*, 20/07/1944, 89, p. 2)

The press release by Polpress on Majdanek of 19 August 1944 was published 24 August. Its first paragraph reads:

In the vicinity of Lublin, in the death-camp Majdanek, the German occupants annihilated Soviet POWs as well as Poles, Frenchmen, Czechs, Jews, Belgians, Hungarians, Serbs, Greeks and people of other nationalities from Europe, who were kept imprisoned in this camp.

(*Eynikayt*, 24/08/1944, 94, p. 2)

Two days before the Polpress press release, *Eynikayt* published Dovid Bergelson's article "Dos hobn geton daytshn!" devoted to Majdanek. Throughout this article Bergelson focuses on the German perpetrators and on Majdanek as the most brutal and vicious affront to humanity. However, in the concluding paragraphs he turns to the question of the victims' identity saying the following:

Iz ver ken den in aza moment avekshteln zikh tseyln, vifl por shikh af ot dem feld hobn gehert tsu yidn, un vifl hobn gehert tsu polyakn, tsu rusn, tsu ukrayiner, tsu grikhn, tsu frantsoyzn, tsu holender, tsu norveger un tsu serbn?

Undz yidn? . . .

Kimat biz eynem hot er oysgerotn undzere brider in di okupirte gegntn. A pust ort hot er undz gelozt dort, vu gelebt un geshafn hobn poylishe, litvishe, letlendishe yidn un mit a vildn tsinizm hot er arayngeshribn in ot der pustkayt:

— Vilne on yidn!

— Kovne on yidn!

— Varshe on yidn!

Un dokh, nit mir aleyk kenen zayn bekoyekh optsutsoln far undzer groysn brokh, un nit bloyz undzere aleyk iz di plog, vos heyst "daytsh,"—zi iz di plog fun a gantser velt.

[So who can in such a moment turn to calculations, to endeavor to count how many pairs of shoes on this particular field belong to Jews and how many to Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, Greeks, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Norwegians or Serbs?

How many belonged to us, Jews? . . .

Almost to the last one he murdered our brothers and sisters in the occupied regions. He left us a hollow place where once Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian Jews lived and created. And with wild cynicism he engraved in this hollowness:

— Vilna without Jews!

— Kovna without Jews!

— Warsaw without Jews!

And yet, not just we alone are capable of avenging our great disaster, and not just ours alone is the affliction whose name is the German. This is also the plague of the whole world.]

(Eynikayt, 17/08/1944, 93, p. 2)

The discrepancy between the two attitudes—between the official Soviet and Jewish reference to the same events—is self-explanatory. Small wonder then, that many, if not most of Ilya Ehrenburg's articles on Jews, that were published in *Eynikayt* and possibly in other languages abroad, *did not* appear in their original in the Soviet Russian press.

Surprising as it may sound to an outsider, the Holocaust in the Soviet Union is a relatively little researched area. Yitshak Arad's important article, entitled "On the Holocaust of the Soviet Jews," which is in many respects a pioneering study, appeared quite recently, in 1991 (see also Altshuler 1983). A systematic collation, comparison and analysis of various testimonies on this subject still appear to be "a matter of the future" (cf. Reuven Shapiro's study on the relevant *Yizkor-bikher*, Shapiro 1995). Therefore, many testimonies and eyewitness accounts that appeared in *Eynikayt* during and immediately after the War sometimes furnish vital information on particular events and localities. Thus, Dovid Bergelson's article "Gedenkt!" of 5 September 1942 (No. 10, p. 2) provides us with the earliest recorded eyewitness account on the annihilation of the Jews in Vitebsk. There is, to my knowledge, only one other testimony on Vitebsk (see Arad 1991a: 113–114). However, even if the same events and details can be found in other sources, the importance of testimonies and reports published by *Eynikayt* for the study of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, eastern Poland and the Baltic countries cannot and should not be overlooked (for more details see Appendix I).

It is, however, important to note that by far not all valuable materials on the mass murder of Jews or Jewish resistance found their way to one of the four pages of the only Soviet Yiddish newspaper. One of the *Eynikayt* reporters was the Yiddish poet Naftole-Herts Kon (= Cohen, 1910–1971; see Ravich 1945: 215–217, Lengil 1978). A man of tragic fate who was many times imprisoned in three countries (in Romania, and twice each in the Soviet Union and Poland, cf. Altshuler 1993: 59–60, n. 51). As a reporter of the Soviet Yiddish newspaper, Kon, until his second Soviet imprisonment in 1948, traveled across Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldavia and other parts of the USSR, where he managed to find Jewish survivors and non-Jewish eyewitnesses and record their accounts (see Redlich 1982: 48 and 195 n. 23; 1987: 79). Some of these accounts appeared in *Eynikayt* (eg. "Di lebngelibene dertseyln," 27/03/1945 (134), p. 3); others were sent to the compilers of the *Black Book* (see Arad

and Altman 1993: 203–207, Nos. 35 and 36). Later, his records were confiscated and subsequently "lost" during his 1948 imprisonment. Nevertheless, Kon, thanks to his previous "experiences," had decided to copy his records and hide them (Kon 1973: 205–206). As a result he managed to save some of these survivor and eyewitness accounts, which are now kept in Yad Vashem (see Klibanski 1990: nos. 961–964, 966–971) together with the manuscript of his memoirs on the *Black Book* (Kon 1967–8). In Israel, where he lived from 1965 until his death, Naftole-Herts Kon managed to fully restore and publish (in Hebrew) only one of these accounts concerning "passive and active resistance by Jews in the forests of Eastern Galicia" (Klibanski 1990: no. 969; see Kon 1973).

Of course, *Eynikayt* is first of all a source for gauging Soviet Jewish public reaction to the Holocaust in a short period of optimal ideological ease. To be sure, the usual Soviet-type constraints remained in force and since the 1930s every Soviet Yiddish author knew or at least thought he knew the fundamental rules of the game, whereby many central issues still remained off limits or could be dealt with only in a certain officially endorsed way. Moreover, certainly not every writer and journalist was a closet dissident and some trusted "old-guard" engineers of human souls skillfully followed and managed various curves and turns of the Soviet "general line" (official policy). The best example of such a "politically correct" and "ideologically responsible" worker was the first editor-in-chief of *Eynikayt*, Shakhno Epshteyn, who was also the Secretary of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (see some of his articles, especially the programmatic "Dos vidergeburt fun a folk," 8 November 1944, 105–106; cf. Litvak 1966, Redlich 1982; on Epshteyn see also Vaksberg 1995). However, the most important articles which *Eynikayt* published were by **Dovid Bergelson**, one of the great Soviet Yiddish novelists; by **Ilya Ehrenburg**, the influential Soviet Russian author and poet, who foresaw the Holocaust in his famous novel *Khulio Khorenito* in 1922; and by **Itzik Fefer**, one of the leading and ideologically most faithful Soviet Yiddish poets. These articles together with the printed speeches of **Shloyme Mikhoels** are the most emphatic and moving examples of the outspoken public Soviet Jewish response to the greatest catastrophe of European Jewry. Many of them also take pride in Jewish resistance and in the substantial Jewish contribution to the military war against the Nazis. They were read by many thousands in the USSR and abroad, and their message

was communicated by word of mouth to thousands of other Jews in the Soviet Union. Many of these articles, as well as a number of those written by Perets Markish, Der Nister, Avrom Sutskever and the Russian Jewish writers Vassily Grossman and Vl. Lidin, are important documents of enduring literary and historical value (for a partial list see Appendix II).

An annotated and critically selected collection of these articles (as well as the relevant speeches and articles by Shloyme Mikhoels) would be a most worthy and effective testimony to the real-time Jewish reaction to the Holocaust in the Soviet Union as well as to Soviet Yiddish literature mobilized to transgress the bounds of purely artistic expression in order to furnish moral support, comfort, and inspiration. Such a collection would also complement the Soviet Yiddish fiction and poetry on the Holocaust which began to feature prominently in the works of such masters as Der Nister, Dovid Bergelson, Perets Markish, Dovid Hofsteyn, Shmuel Halkin and others (many of which were included in the authoritative anthology of Soviet Yiddish belles-lettres *A shpigl af a shteyn*, Shmeruk 1964; see also Shmeruk 1968).

Despite its unprecedented Jewish outspokenness and its propagandistic role in mobilizing Jewish aid to the Soviet Union (appealing to international Jewish solidarity), *Eynikayt* was after all a Soviet newspaper. A number of overpowering restrictions and constraints were operative even in the more liberal years 1942–1945. Cautious formulations and lip-service was obligatory for most articles including a number of those written by the newspaper's principal literary contributors. Certain sensitive issues were bound to stay untouched. One can only guess how painful it must have been to keep silent on the role of the Lithuanian and Ukrainian collaborators. Particularly complex was the issue of foreign contacts, though the most extraordinary 1943 mission of Mikhoels and Fefer to the USA, Canada, Mexico and England was a remarkable success, which fed the illusion of enduring ties between Jews on both sides of the proverbial curtain (see Redlich 1982 and Vaksberg 1995). The official rather than pragmatic de-facto recognition of international Jewish unity was also a delicate matter, which was bound to undergo revision in Shakhno Epshteyn's articles in October–November 1945 and in many ensuing publications almost immediately after the War (including those by Itsik Fefer). The same of course applies to cooperation with, and official recognition of, the Zionist *Yishuv* in Palestine (see Epshteyn's article of 8 November

1944 [105–106], p. 2, and cf. Litvak 1966, Gilboa 1972, Greenbaum 1979, Pinkus 1986: 288–289, 1988: 163–164).

Especially unbearable was the inability to write openly about growing anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and the liberated territories. This issue is referred to obliquely (almost cryptically) in Epshteyn's editorial of 5 October 1944 in order to minimize or dismiss these "minor temporary difficulties" as rapidly disappearing "remnants of the Nazi occupation." The plight of the Jews (including survivors) returning to their homes was a major concern of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and it is well known that the Committee tried many times to intervene on this matter without any success (e.g. see Mikhoels' and Epshteyn's letter in Vaksberg 1995: 194; Arad forthcoming). These problems already began to surface in 1943, although no trace of them can be found on the pages of the newspaper until at least May 1945. (The fatal ideological tribulations and campaigns, as these were reflected in *Eynikayt* in the post-War years, are discussed in detail in Pinkus 1986: 259–265; 1988: 145–150.)

The first issue of *Eynikayt* opened with Shloyme Mikhoels's passionate call to mobilize direct financial aid that would pay for 500 bomber-planes and 1,000 tanks. By March 1943, in addition to their contribution to the general Soviet fund-drives, Soviet Jews had donated 3,294,000 rubles to the Red Army. In April 1944 the newspaper reported—to cite just the most significant sums—that about \$12,100,000 was raised in the USA, £10,000,000 in Great Britain, \$750,000 in Palestine, \$600,000 in South Africa (see *Eynikayt*, 13/04/1944 [75], p. 3). It seems that both financially and politically the Committee's and its newspaper's mission abroad was a tremendous success. At home very little, if anything, could be achieved to improve Soviet Jewry's plight in the wake of the Holocaust. The many attempts to intervene made by the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were later deemed by the authorities a "diversionist" anti-Soviet activity on behalf of American military interests. The Committee's suggestion to rebuild the pre-war Jewish region in Crimea in order to accommodate displaced Soviet Jews away from the growing anti-Semitism especially in Ukraine (cf. Altshuler 1993) was in 1948 conveniently interpreted, to use an anachronism, as a kind of a mid-1940s "Cuba-type-operation" in reverse. In January 1948 Shloyme Mikhoels, the Chairman of the Committee, was killed by KGB agents on direct order from Stalin (for some important details, see Vaksberg 1993 and

1995: 235–272, especially pp. 268–270). In November 1948 the Committee was closed down, and its members, among them six leading Yiddish writers of world-stature, one outstanding Yiddish actor and one distinguished Yiddish scholar, were imprisoned and all but one member of the Committee either died in prison before the trial or were executed on 12 August 1952 (see Vaksberg 1993 and 1995: 273–353, Shmeruk 1995a and 1996b, Naumov 1994). However, during the period in question and in fact until late 1948, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was seen by Soviet Jews and by many of its leaders and activists as their official representative institution.

The Committee's organ, *Eynikayt*, was the most nationally outspoken Soviet Yiddish newspaper, which chronicled the Holocaust of Soviet Jewry, the Jewish resistance and contribution to the War against Nazism, and the defiant creativity of Soviet Yiddish writers, actors, scholars, artists and scientists. It is of paramount value to the history of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union and of Soviet Jewry in the fateful interim period between the Nazi Holocaust and the Stalinist liquidation of Jewish and Yiddish culture in the USSR.

APPENDIX I

Larger Reports, Testimonies, Bylines, and Signed Articles on the Nazi Persecution and Mass Murder of Jews in *Eynikayt*, 7 June 1942–15 May 1945 (incomplete)*

Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe (other than Poland)

- 25/11/42, 18 Fridrikh Volf [Wolf?], "Yidn in Marsel" [Marseille], p. 3
 27/12/42, 21 "Vi azoy di hitlerishe makht . . ." —see under USSR
 15/09/42, 11 Elye Vatenberg, "'Yidn shtarbn tsu langzam'," p. 2
 25/09/42, 12 Elye Vatenberg, "Dray yor 'naye ordenung' in eyrope," p. 2
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- 21/10/43, 50 S. Khaykin, "Di Shvedishe gezelschaftlekhkayt un di yidishe pogromen in Denemark (iberzikht fun der shvedisher prese)" [Sweden and Denmark], p. 4
- 13/01/44, 62 Kh. Esterman, "Der goyrl fun di Slovakische yidn" [Slovakia], p. 4
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- 15/07/42, 5 Henrikh Diamant, "A shvartser indzl" [on Warsaw ghetto], p. 2
- 15/10/42, 14 Elye Vatenberg, "Vi di natsis 'likvidirn' di yidishe getos" [Sabibor, Lublin, Lemberg, Stanislav, Zlochev, Bzhezhan, Zborozh, Pshemishlyan . . . , Vilne, Kovne, Baranovitchi, Cracow, Warsaw], p. 2
- 17/12/42, 20 Stefan Yendrikhovski, "Yidish-poylisher vidershtand kegn fashizm," p. 2
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- 18/01/43, 23 E. Sarin, "Yidn in Poyln vayzn aroys a vidershtand di fashistn," p. 2
- 25/03/43, 30 A briv fun Varshe: "Di hitleristn ayln zikh oysrotn di yidn in Poyln," [unsigned letter from Warsaw], p. 2
- 15/05/43, 35 B[er] Mark, "Der ufshtand in Varshever geto," p. 4
- 27/05/43, 36 "In der letster minut: Der ufshtand in Varshever geto flakert nokh," [p. 1]
- 07/06/43, 37 Elye Vatenberg, "Felker-frayntshaft tsebrekht geto-vent" [Warsaw ghetto, clandestine Polish and Yiddish press], p. 2
- 14/10/43, 49 "Di yidishe getos in Poyln un Lite 'likvidirt'" (includes: "Ufshtand fun poylishe yidn inem Tremblikar kontsen-tratsye-lager," "Vifl yidn zaynen nokh geblibn in Poyln," "Likvidirt' di geto in Bendin"), p. 2
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- 24/08/44, 94 "Di shoyderlekhe tragedye in Lublin" [Soviet-edited press release on Majdanek], p. 2
- 21/09/44, 98 Hersh Polyanker, "Der genem af der velt" (fun undzer front-korespondent) [on Treblinka], p. 3
- 01/02/45, 117 Yefim Hekhtman, "Tsvishn di khurves fun Varshe" (fun undzer militerishn korespondent), p. 2
- 15/02/45, 119 Y. Doresman, "Di blutike tragedye fun der yidisher geto in Lodzh," p. 2
- Ibid. Dovid Notkin, "Af di vegn kin Berlin" [also about ghetto Lodzh], p. 2
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- 20/07/44, 89 A[vrom] Sutskever, "Tsu der bafreyung fun Vilne," p. 2
- 27/07/44, 90 Ilya Erenburg, "Der veg keyn Daytshland" [with the Red Army in Minsk, Rakov, Smorgon, Vilna; Ponar, meeting the young Jewish partisans in Vilna], p. 3
- 17/08/44, 93 L. Shaus, "Af di khurves fun Kovner geto," p. 2
- Ibid. A. Molotkov, "Geratevete kultur-oystsres (a briv fun Vilne)," p. 2
- 31/08/44, 95 "Lebn geblibene dertseyln" [from a collection of letters that arrived from the liberated Lithuania to the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee: the murder of rabbis of Lithuania; Stoklishki; the mass murder in Utyan; who helped (to save Jews)], p. 2

- 19/10/44, 102 B. Hertsbakh, "Dos kapitl Rige (farshribn loyt di dertseylungen fun yidn vos zaynen antlofn fun Rige)" [cf. the same author's contributions to *The Unknown Black Book*: see Arad and Altman (eds.) 1993: 325 and 332], p. 2
- 22/02/45, 120 Sh[merke] Katsherginski, "800 yidishe froyen geratevet fun Toruner kontsetratsye-lager," p. 2

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- 17/06/42, 2 Vl. Lidin [= Vladimir Gamberg], "Yidishe pleytim," p. 3
- 15/07/42, 5 "Ot azoy rot Hitler oys di yidishe bafelkerung" [from the materials received by the JAC; Belorussia, Ukraine, Crimea], p. 2
- 15/08/42, 8 [Sofia Ozerskaya,] "Di hitlerishe inkvizitsye in Minsk" (dretseylt fun der lerern Sofia Ozerskaya, vos hot zikh geratevet fun Minsk, farshribn fun S. Rodov), p. 2
- 15/08/42, 8 L[eyb] Kvitko, "Vos der partizaner Yakov Uzdinski dertseylt" [mass murder of 800 Jews in Leltshits (Mozyr), and 500 in Yelsk; the partisan movement in Mozyr-Turov area], p. 3
- 05/09/42, 10 Dovid Bergelson, "Gedenkt!" [on Vitebsk; cf. also Arad 1991a: 113–114], p. 2
- 15/09/42, 11 "Shoyderlekhe masn-shkhite iber yidn in Velizh" [Vitebsk region; information received by the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee], p. 2
- 15/10/42, 14 Ilya Erenburg, "Gebentshte erd" [Kharkov, Pervomajsk, Babi Yar, Urechye, Chkalov, Lubni; mostly based on information and documents found on German POWs], p. 2
- Ibid. S. Kikitiev, "Mir veln nit fargesn un nit fargebn" [digest from a small book published in Kalinin right after its liberation, includes testimony of the annihilation of Jews in Kalinin, April 1942], p. 4
- 25/10/42, 15 L[eyb] Kvitko, "Der ufgeshtanener fun keyver dertseylt" [Kerch, Yosif Vayngortn's testimony; see the same account also in *Dos Shvartse Bukh*, Grossman and Ehrenburg (eds.) 1984: 295–299], p. 2
- 25/10/42, 15 Kuzma Tsharni, "Di daytshn hobn oysgerotn di yidishe bafelkerung in Vaysrusland," p. 2

- 21/11/42, 18 L[eyb] Kvitko, "Bentshik lebt!" [continuation of Yosif Vayngortn's testimony, see L. Kvitko 25/10/42, 15], p. 3
- 17/12/42, 20 M. Sivolobov, "In Bobruisk," [reprinted from "Pravda," the article is dated: White Russia, October-November 1942], p. 2
- 27/12/42, 21 "*Vi azoy di hitlerishe makht firt durkh dem plan fun oysrotn di yidishe bafelkerung fun Eyrope*": "*Der folkskomisaryat far oysern-inyonim hot in zayn reshus absolyut zikhre informatsye, vos bavayzt, az af di teritoryes fun di lender fun eyrope, velkhe zaynen okupirt durkh di daytshish-fashistishe farkhaper, iz di letste tsayt umetum tsu merkn a naye farshtarkung funem hitlerishn rezhim fun blutike masn-hariges iber der fridlekher bafelkerung. [...] Di hitleristn un zeyere mitfarbrekher firn derbay durkh mit intensive tempn zeyer spetsyeln plan fun oysrotn ale biz eynem di gantse yidishe bafelkerung af der okupirter terityore fun eyrope.*" - emphasis in the original; Jews from the rest of Europe brought for annihilation into Poland, the situation in Poland and occupied Soviet territories at the end, signed: Informbyuro fun folkomoysern), p. 2
- 25/03/43, 30 Itsik Fefer, "Der eydes Rokhl Kuznets" [Usviat, Smolensk region], p. 2
- Ibid. Dovid Bergelson "Heysblutike brider" [Jews of Bessarabia], p. 2
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- 25/06/43, 38–39 Mire Zheleznova, "Blut far blut" [Legoyok, 28 July 1941], p. 6
- 17/07/43, 40 B[er:] Mark, "Ufshtand fun di Luninetser yidn kegn di daytshishe talyonim" [Western Belorussia], p. 2
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- 09/09/43, 44 H[ershl] Polyanker, "Di dray shkhites iber di yidn in Oryol," ["from our military correspondent"; cf. the official press release—16/09/45, (45), "Di retshikhes fun di daytshis-fashistishe farkhaper in Oryol un Oryoler

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- 21/10/43, 50 S[emyon] Rabinovitsh, "Di shoyderlekhe shkhite in Tatarsk" [Tatarsk, Mohilev region; "from our military correspondent"; incl. official testimonial/ "akt"], p. 3
- 28/10/43, 51 Dovid Bergelson, "Dnepropetrovsk," p. 2
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- 18/11/43, 54 Yankl Yosade, "Lebn geblibene" [Jewish survivors in small towns and villages in White Russia (?)], p. 2
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- 10/02/44, 66 Y[ekhiel] Falikman, "Der lebediker eydes" [on the German attempt to destroy the evidences of mass murder in Babi Yar; dates: January 1944], p. 3
- 23/03/44, 72 B. Shokhat, "Rokhele Yankovski" [Western Belorussia, a Jewish girl from Velizh saved in Simonyata; hundreds and thousands of Jewish soldiers in the front liberating Belorussia; finds in Simonyata a bundle of *Eynikayt*], p. 2
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- 01/06/44, 82 B[er] Mark, "Letster kamf fun Bialistoker geto," p. 2
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- Ibid. Leyzer Katsovitch, "Minsk - mayn heymshtot," p. 3
- 27/07/44, 90 Ilya Erenburg, "Der veg keyn Daytshland"—see under Baltic States
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- Naftole Nakht in *Dos Shvartse Bukh*, Grossman and Ehrenburg (eds.), 1984: 129–142], p. 2
- 21/09/44, 98 D. Stonov, “Kayn yuden gibn zikh nit unter” [liberation of Simferopol], p. 3
- 29/09/44, 99 Avrom Kahan, “Moyshe Kaharlitski un zayn mish-pokhe” [a Jewish family from Kiev saved], p. 3
- 19/10/44, 102 Leyzer Katsovitch, “Bagegenishn in Minsk” [Jews saved by non-Jews and Soviet POWs rescued by Jews], p. 2
- 19/10/44, 102 Y[ekhiel] Falikman, “Yanover lager” [in the suburb of Lvov/Lemberg], p. 3
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- 27/03/45, 134 N. H. Kon [Naftole-Herts Kon], “Di lebngelibene dertseyln” (“fun undzer Tshernovitser korespondent”) [Bogdanovka, Pervomajskij Rajon], p. 3

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Why didn't the press shout? : American & international journalism during the
Holocaust / edited by Robert Moses Shapiro; introduction by Marvin Kalb.
p. cm. —

Papers of a conference held in 1995 at Yeshiva University.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-88125-775-3

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)—Press coverage—United States—Congresses. 2. Public
opinion—United States—Congresses. 3. Jews—Persecutions—Europe—Foreign public
opinion, American—Congresses. 4. Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)—Press coverage—
Europe—Congresses. I. Shapiro, Robert Moses.

D804.19.W49 2002

940.53'18—dc21

2002075257

Manufactured in the United States of America

KTAV Publishing House, 926 Newark Avenue, Jersey City, NJ 07306

Email: info@ktav.com

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