

Kaczerginskas: Vitenberg (1)
Partizner - mąsz (2)
fid, du partizner (13)
Warshe (14)

JEWISH PARTISANS
of Lithuania and Byelorussia:
THEIR HISTORY AND MUSIC FOLKLORE

by
Dov Levin

.....
A member of the Kovno ghetto underground and later a partisan fighter in the forests of Lithuania, Dov Levin is the author of Fighting Back: Lithuanian Jewry's Armed Resistance to the Nazis, 1941-1945 (Holmes & Meier, New York, 1985). Professor Levin is currently Director of the Oral History Division of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

During World War II many European Jews defied their Nazi oppressors by actively taking part in an underground war of resistance. This partisan warfare, carried out by clandestine, irregular forces operating inside enemy territory, was particularly widespread in the dense forests and nearly impassable marshlands of Eastern Europe.

In Lithuania and Byelorussia the call to resist first rang out in the summer of 1941, when German forces swept deep into Soviet lands. With help from their local henchmen, the Germans soon enclosed the Jewish inhabitants of these territories into ghettos, subjecting them to an ongoing process of mass murder. Yet despite brutal conditions and the constant threat of death, underground resistance cells were formed in many ghettos. And, once outside the ghetto, a Jew could attempt to join the partisans. Real dangers and ordeals awaited those escaping the ghettos to the partisans' strongholds in the forests. Many nonetheless made the effort, though only a few succeeded. These, as was the case with everyone desiring to join the partisans, were required to supply their own weapons. However, for a Jew trapped in the ghetto, acquiring a weapon was no simple matter: it involved not only considerable risk and effort, but also jeopardized family, friends, neighbors, and, perhaps, the entire community. In addition, Jews typically were town-dwellers lacking the knowledge and skills needed to survive in the partisan forest, such as combat experience, familiarity with the land, and a trusting relationship with the rural population—the partisans' most important ally.

Often, too, a Jew who managed to escape the ghetto, and—at terrible risk—reach the forest with his own weapon, would be forced to retrace his steps and return to the ghetto.

Such experiences owed to the sad fact that even within the resistance movement, antisemitic elements could not be held in check. This regrettable state of affairs deterred many Jews from fleeing to the forests.

Certain changes for the better began in the summer of 1942, when the Supreme Partisan Headquarters in the Soviet Union extended its authority over the majority of partisan units in Eastern Europe. For example, an ever-increasing number of "family camps," to which Jewish partisans were admitted with their households and relatives, were established throughout Byelorussia. Such arrangements, which saved several thousand helpless Jews—women, children, the elderly, and the sick—were maintained until the region was liberated by the Red Army in the summer of 1944.

These changes, however, came too late: the vast majority of the Jewish population already had been annihilated by mid 1942. The facts speak for themselves: when many Jews yet remained alive, they could not find partisan camps to which to escape. And once such camps existed, few Jews had survived to join them. Consequently, the number of Jewish partisans in the forests of this area never exceeded 15,000.

For them, partisan warfare served both national and personal objectives. On the one hand, it contributed to the active role European Jews played in the international war against Nazism. On the other hand, it fulfilled their desire to avenge the murders of their families and fellow Jews. Facing endemic antisemitism and the scorn of their non-Jewish comrades-in-arms, they yearned to prove themselves on the field of battle. Indeed, many distinguished themselves, derailing enemy trains, blowing up bridges, and engaging in hand-to-hand combat. A considerable number earned decorations for heroism and valor. No ribbon or medallion, however, could ease the sense of isolation often experienced by Jewish combatants serving in predominantly Byelorussian, Lithuanian, or Russian battalions.

X The Jewish fighters' combat potential found its ultimate expression in the wholly Jewish partisan units. Established in 1943, these included mostly former members of Zionist and other youth movements, which had been reorganized in the ghetto underground. Led by talented commanders, virtually all of whom evidenced a degree of Jewish national consciousness, these units maintained a remarkable sense of Jewish identity. This was characterized by use of the Yiddish language for military communication, as well as for cultural and folkloric expressions, such as poetry and song.

Cultural activities continued even after the Jewish units were disbanded or absorbed, for political reasons, into nationally-mixed partisan units. Here, as in the all-Jewish units, the

combatants found many and varied ways to express their individuality. One example is the time spent in the evenings around the campfire. The atmosphere of comradeship there facilitated the expression of the participants' feelings and hopes through the medium of song. Lyrics focused mainly on themes such as homesickness, concern for family still in the ghettos, grief for murdered loved ones, and the desire to take revenge.

This writer, who came from the Kovno ghetto to an integrated Soviet partisan unit, *ert nemetskim okupantam* (Death to the German Invaders), remembers very well his first evening spent by the campfire in the center of the partisan camp:

It was particularly touching to listen to a whole repertory of Yiddish folk ballads, some of which were probably brought to the camp by Jewish parachutists from regions in the interior of the Soviet Union. Even more exciting was to listen to two Hebrew songs, *Harmonika* (Accordion) and *Sovevuni* (Circle 'Round Me), which in the ghetto assumed the status of anthems of the Zionist underground, and were brought by members of the Zionist movements *HaShomer HaTzair* (The Young Guard) and *Dror* (Freedom).

One night, while awaiting a parachute drop of Soviet weapons and equipment at an improvised airfield in the forests of Rudniki, this writer met partisans from the Vilna ghetto, and, for the first time, heard them sing *Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg* (Never Say That You Have Reached the Final Road). This song, by the Vilna poet and underground fighter Hirsh Glik, later became the general anthem of the Jewish partisans.

Sometimes an evening's musicale would be provided by professional entertainers, such as the troupe *Gop so smykom* ("Jump for Joy"; depicted on booklet cover). An ethnically-mixed ensemble attached to the Gorki Unit of the Markov Brigade, this troupe gave frequent recitals of popular songs and dances in the forest. However, as was the case among most underground fighters, Jewish partisans preferred above all songs related to the ongoing battle. Naturally, the vast majority of these were in Russian, but some—the product of skilled translators—were sung by Jewish combatants in their native Yiddish. Of many dozens, only a few have survived, and those only thanks to outstanding individuals such as Shmerke Kaczerginski.

Born in 1908, Kaczerginski had been known as a gifted poet and songwriter even before the war, both in his hometown of Vilna and beyond, distinguishing himself with his songs about the oppression and struggles of the working class. He continued writing in the

Vilna ghetto and later for the *Fareynikte partizaner organizatsie* (FPO, United Partisan Organization), the ghetto underground unit to which he belonged. Naturally, many of his songs focused on the bitter lot of the ghetto Jews, but he also expressed his hope for change, and called for active resistance. Several of his original ghetto songs, as well as his translations into Yiddish of Russian wartime verses, were popular among the Jewish partisans. He also authored new songs in the partisan forests—composing lyrics even while he marched to battle.

More significant still were Kaczerginski's activities as a collector of folklore from the ghettos, camps, and partisan outposts. Appointed historian—along with the great Yiddish poet Abraham Sutzkever—of the Voroshilov Brigade (named for the commander-in-chief of the Soviet partisan forces), Kaczerginski began jotting down lyrics while the war still raged. His first publications appeared soon after hostilities ceased, in Warsaw, Paris, and New York. Kaczerginski eventually emigrated to Argentina, where he continued to publish personal and historical accounts of Jewish resistance during World War II. Having survived the war and its aftermath, he met his death in an airplane accident near Buenos Aires, in April, 1954. His work—his songs, memoirs, histories, and especially his collections of music folklore from the time of *Shoah*—will remain a monument to creativity in adversity, to the imagination and ingenuity of those held captive in the ghettos and camps, and, in the free forests, of the Jewish partisans.

notes:

¹ Tzvi A. Brown and Dov Levin, *The Story of an Underground – the Fighting Organization of the Kovno Jews during World War II* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1962), p. 287 and comment 122.

² Kaczerginski's 1948 anthology *Lider fun di getos un lagers* (Songs from the Ghettos and Camps) (New York: Congress for Jewish Culture) remains the unrivalled source for and guide to the music folklore of the *Shoah*.

Photo: Shmerke Kaczerginski, ca. 1950.
(Complete photograph and illustration credits are listed on page 37 of this booklet.)



Itzik vitnberg
YITZHAK WITTENBERG

Lyrics: Shmerke Kacerginski
Music: Matvey Blanter

*During the night of July 16, 1943, the Gestapo arrested Yitzhak Wittenberg, Commandant of the Vilna ghetto partisans. However, several ghetto fighters attacked the guards, cut Wittenberg's shackles, and freed the prisoner. The next day, the Gestapo issued an ultimatum: deliver Wittenberg alive, or the ghetto would be annihilated. Although Wittenberg felt certain that his arrest was only a pretext—that the Nazis intended to liquidate the ghetto in any event—he did not want to cause friction between the ghetto inhabitants and the partisans, whose ultimate goal was to stage a rebellion in the ghetto. Nor was it Wittenberg's desire that other Jews should perish as a result of his actions. He therefore delivered himself to the Gestapo of his own free will, and died a hero's death in their torture chamber on July 18, 1943. (Kacerginski, 1947)**

*Sources for Kacerginski's works cited in these notes may be found on page 36 of this booklet.

Kacerginski's poem dates from shortly after the underground resistance group to which he belonged, the *Fareynikte partizaner organizatsie* (FPO, United Partisan Organization), withdrew from the Vilna ghetto to the forested area nearby. It is common practice among folk composers to attach new lyrics to the melodies of already familiar songs. For *Itzik vitnberg*, Kacerginski borrowed the melody of *Partizan Zhelezniak*, a 1935 Soviet song celebrating the exploits of a hero of the Russian Civil War.

perfect fit + Hirsch Lefkowitz

6

S'ligt ergets fartayet,
Der faynt vi a khaye,
Der mauzer er vakht in mayn hant,
Nor plutsem gestapo,
Es firt a geshmitn—
Durkh fintsternish dem komendant.

Di nakht hot mit blitsn
Dos geto tserisn,
"Gefar!"—shrayt a toyer, a vant.
Khaverim getraye
Fun keytn bafrayen,
Farshvindn mit dem komendant.

Di nakht iz farfloygn,
Der toyt far di oygn,
Dos geto es fibert in brand.
In umru dos geto,
Es drot di gestapo:
"Toyt,—oder dem komendant!"

Gezagt hot dan itsik—
Un durkh vi a blits iz—
"Ikh vil nit ir zolt tsulib mir //
Darfn dos lebn
Dem soyne opgebn"—
Tsum toyt geyt shtolts der komendir!

Ligt vider fartayet,
Der faynt vi a khaye,
Vakhst vider, mayn mauzer, in hant,
Itst bist mir tayer,
Zay du mayn bafrayer,
Zay du itster mayn komendant!

Somewhere, he lies waiting,
The foe, that wild creature;
My Mauser keeps watch in my hand;
Suddenly, the Gestapo
Appears with a captive:
Through darkness we see our Commandant.

With lightning the night
Tears our ghetto apart,
"Look out!"—danger lurks everywhere;
True comrades and friends
Have freed from his chains
And vanished with our Commandant!

The night has flown by,
And death stands before us,
The ghetto is boiling with dread;
In turmoil, the ghetto;
Proclaims the Gestapo:
"It's Death—or it's your Commandant!"

Then Itzik responded
As quickly as lightning:
"I won't let myself be the cause
Of your giving up
Your lives to the tyrant."
So, to death proudly walked our Commander!

He still lies in waiting,
The foe, that wild creature;
Hold steady, my Mauser, in hand.
Now you are my cherished,
Now you are my savior,
Now you are my sole Commandant!

7

Soviet

Tsayt-lid
SONG OF THE TIMES

Lyrics: Nakhum Yud
Music: Elye Taytelboym

The year in which New York-based Yiddish journalist Nakhum Yud (1888-1966) created this poem is not known, nor is the route by which it reached the Jewish community in Eastern Europe. What is certain, though, is that Yud's lines resonated forcefully in the Vilna ghetto, where members of the resistance adopted them as their own. Composer Elye Taytelboym (1910-1967), who created several of the melodies heard on this recording, worked in his native Vilna as a choir director, opera conductor, and music educator. He escaped to the Soviet Union during the war, afterward remaining in the Byelorussian capital of Minsk, where he served as director of the Russian Theater Orchestra.

Shtil kumt um der umbashitster,
Ale shvaygn sha. . .
S'iz a dor a beyzer itster,
Un a tsayt aza.

Yogn khmares, shvartse khmares,
Iber barg un tol,
Do a homen, dort a pare,
Erger vi amol.

Oykh di eygene fareter
Tsindn on di velt,
Velkt dos folk azoy vi bleter,
Un vi hey in feld.

X Zayt nit ophentik in vinkl,
Yeder mit zayn payn,
Kol-zman s'tut a funk nokh finklen,
Vet nokh likhtik zayn.

Nor oyb shoyen umkumen iz beser
Heldish tsu fargeyn. . .
Oysshtrekn dem haldz tsum meser-
Neyn, o keynmol neyn!

In silence the defenseless die,
Silence all around. . .
This is an evil generation,
And these are evil times.

Clouds are racing, dark black clouds,
Over valley and hill,
Here, a Haman, there, a Pharaoh:
Worsening ever still.

Traitors also of our own
Set fire to the world;
The people wither like dry leaves,
Like dry grass in the field.

Don't withdraw into a corner,
Each with your own pain;
As long as one small spark still flickers,
Light can shine again.

But should death come, it is far better
To die a hero's death;
Stretch out our necks to meet the knife?
Never, oh never again!

song by choir
not memorable

Tsum besern morgn
TOWARD A BETTER TOMORROW

Lyrics: Kasriel Broydo
Music: Anonymous

As producer, director, writer, and actor, Kasriel Broydo (1907-1945) had a hand in virtually every aspect of theater life in the Vilna ghetto. While Broydo did not himself belong to a resistance organization, certain of his works, in their forthright optimism and barely veiled calls to action, reveal his sympathy for the partisan cause. One such piece is *Tsum besern morgn*, which Kaczeriginski recalls "was written in the spring of 1943, at a time when military offensives by the Red Army made it seem that soon Vilna ghetto would, at long last, be liberated." Months before the Soviets finally reached Vilna in July, 1944, however, Broydo had been deported to the Klooga labor camp in Estonia. He lost his life in January 1945, when the ship he and hundreds of other prisoners had been forced to board was deliberately scuttled by the Germans near the Baltic seaport of Königsberg.

In tsayt fun vintn groye, shvere,
Ven shturem hersht oyf gor der velt,
Helft nit dos fargisn treyn,
Helft nit veynen "s'iz bashert."
S'iz a vint vos rayst oys gantse glider,
S'iz a vint vos voyet in gebeyn.
Mir boygn zikh nor, veln oyfshteyn vider,
Mir muzn vayter shpanen, vider geyn!

Mir shpanen tsum besern morgn,
Mir geyen tsu andere teg,
Un khotsh s'iz di freyd nokh farborgn,
Dokh tsit zikh foroys undzer veg.
Es shmeykhlt fun vaytn,
A velt a banayte,
Tsetsoybert, tseblit un tseblumt;
Mir zaynen di gloyber
In oto dem tsoyber-
Mir veysn oyf zikher: es kumt!

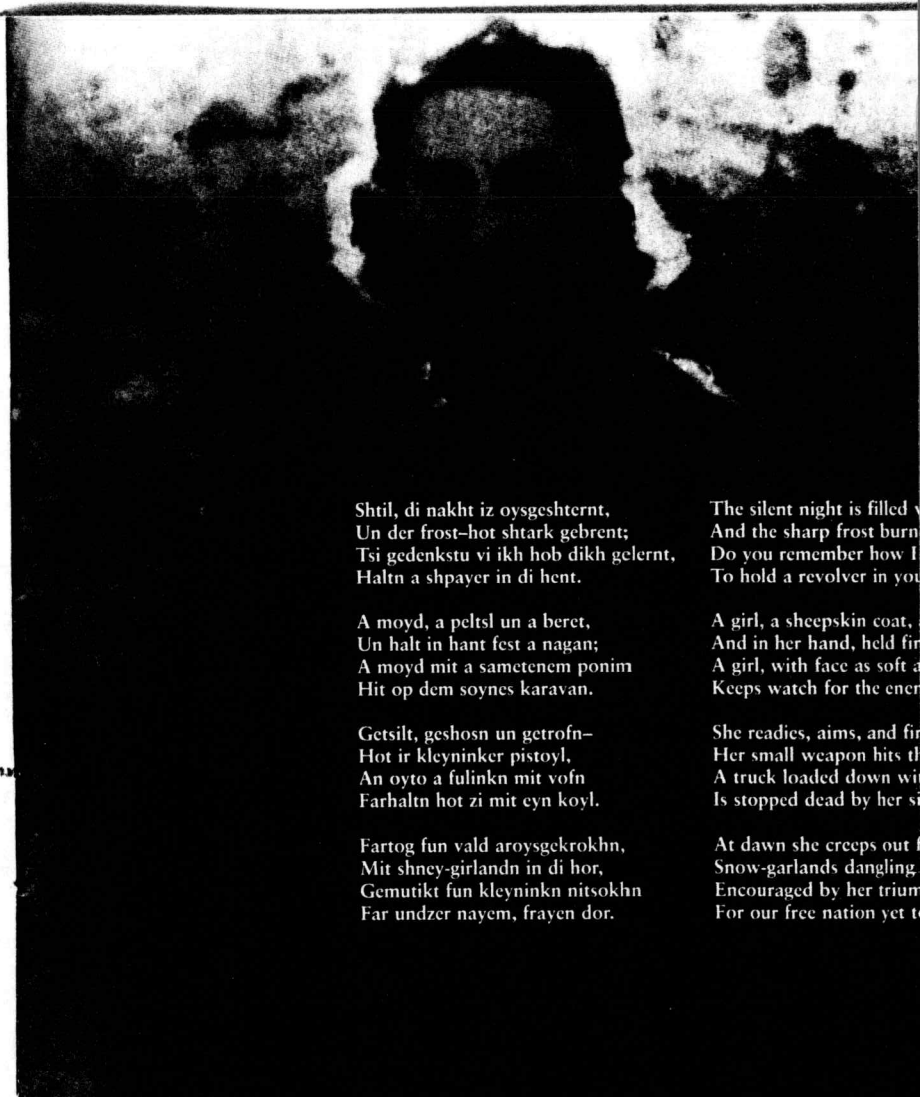
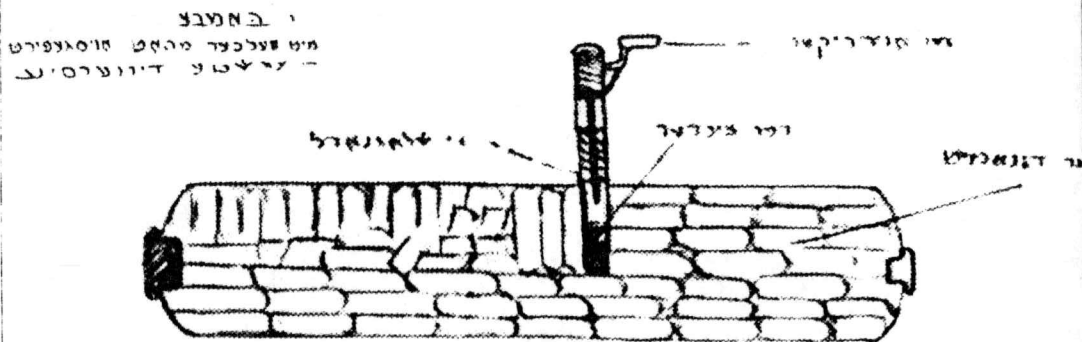
In times when harsh gray winds are blowing,
When wild storms rage throughout the world,
It won't help to shed hot tears,
And it won't help to say "it's fate."
It's a wind that pulls and tears the limbs,
It's a wind that howls within the bones.
But we only bend so to rise up once again-
We must stride further, always ever on!

We stride toward a better tomorrow,
We move toward another, better day,
And though our happiness is hidden,
Steadfastly, we march on our way.
In the distant horizon,
A new world is smiling,
And magically bursts into bloom;
We truly believe
In this magic dream-
We know it will happen, and soon!

Shtil di nakht iz oysgeshternt
THE SILENT NIGHT IS FILLED WITH STARS

Lyrics: Hirsh Glik
Music: Anonymous

Best remembered as the author of the *Partisan Hymn* (*Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg*; track 17), Hirsh Glik (1921-1944) was a rising poet at the time German armies occupied his hometown of Vilna. His literary output during the war included many songs, poems, and theater pieces—most of them unfortunately now lost. An active member of the underground, Glik created *Shtil di nakht* to commemorate the partisans' first successful act of sabotage: the May 1942 derailment of a German military train near Novo-Vileyka, Lithuania. The act, which resulted in the deaths of some 220 Nazi soldiers, was carried out by three FPO operatives: Vitke Kempner, Izie Matskevitch, and Moshe Brauze. (Glik chose, however, to focus solely on Kempner, the female member of the team.) Resistance fighters Matskevitch and Brauze fell during subsequent anti-German campaigns. Kempner later married partisan leader Abba Kovner; both emigrated to Palestine after the war.



Shtil, di nakht iz oysgeshternt,
Un der frost-hot shtark gebrent;
Tsi gedenstu vi ikh hob dikh gelernt,
Haltn a shpayer in di hent.

The silent night is filled
And the sharp frost burns
Do you remember how I
To hold a revolver in your

A moyd, a peltsl un a beret,
Un halt in hant fest a nagan;
A moyd mit a sametenem ponim
Hit op dem soyne's karavan.

A girl, a sheepskin coat,
And in her hand, held firm
A girl, with face as soft as
Keeps watch for the enemy

Getsilt, geshosn un getrofn—
Hot ir kleyninker pistoyl,
An oyto a fulinkn mit vofn
Farhalten hot zi mit cyn koyl.

She readies, aims, and fires
Her small weapon hits the mark
A truck loaded down with
Is stopped dead by her sight

Fartog fun vald aroysgekrokhn,
Mit shney-girlandn in di hor,
Gemutikt fun kleyninkn nitsokhn
Far undzer navem, fraven dor.

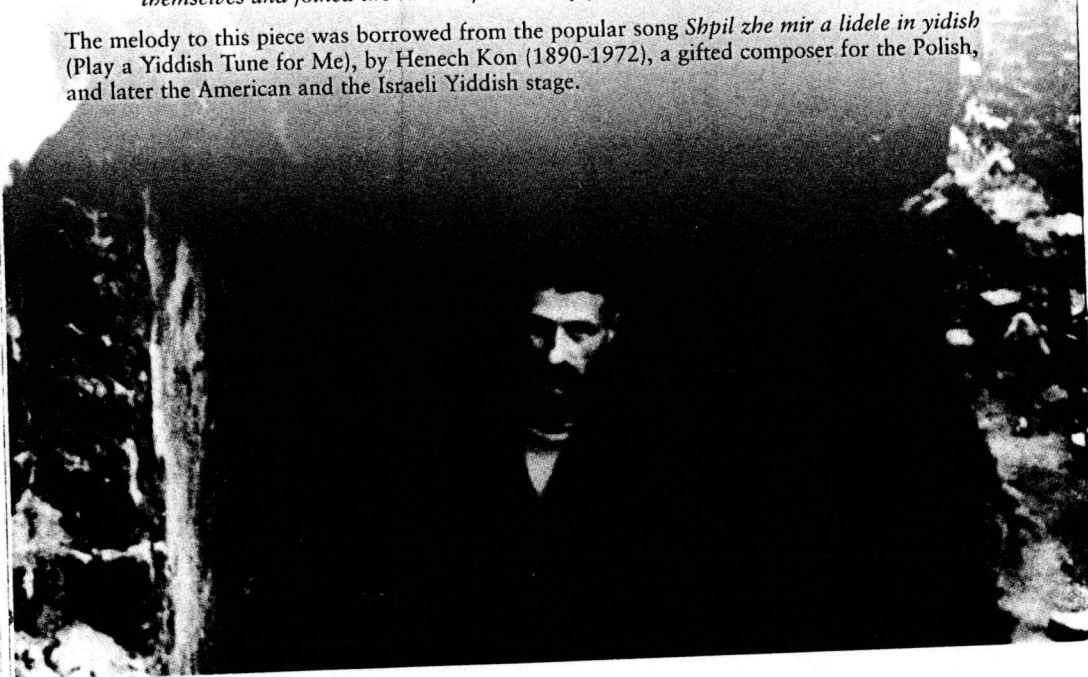
At dawn she creeps out
Snow-garlands dangling
Encouraged by her triumph
For our free nation yet to

In kriyuvke
IN A HIDEOUT

Lyrics: Elye Magid and Dovid Gertsman
Music: Henech Kon

Among the Jews hiding out in the forests, a number were Polish army recruits who had managed to escape from German prisoner-of-war camps. The authors of the present song belonged to this category. Once in the forests, such fugitives would dig trenches and camouflage the surface with greenery. In the region of Miedzyrec [Poland; where the song's authors went into hiding], these shelters were known as kriyuvkes. At night, the Jews would venture from their places of concealment to beg food from the local farmers. During these excursions, many were captured by the enemy, or were handed over by the farmers to the Germans. Later, the Jews armed themselves and joined the ranks of the newly-formed partisans. (Kaczerginski, 1948)

The melody to this piece was borrowed from the popular song *Shpil zhe mir a lidele in yidish* (Play a Yiddish Tune for Me), by Henech Kon (1890-1972), a gifted composer for the Polish, and later the American and the Israeli Yiddish stage.



Terrible song!

Ikh zits mir in kriyuvke un ikh trakht zikh:
Ikh bin shoyn mid az dos oyg farmakht zikh,
Ikh bin geblibn aleyn, ikh bagis zikh mit geveyn-
Tsi veln mir fun danen aroysgyn?

Shpilt, shpilt, strunes fun payn,
Shpilt zhe mir a yidishn nign.
Shpilt, shpilt, strunes fun payn,
Tsi veln mir derlebn dem fridn?

Mir zaynen a folk mit moykhes,
Fun tsures hobn mir shoyn nit keyn koykhes,
Yedn folk iz gut; es gist zikh yidish blut-
Oy, helf undz, got, in itstiker minut.

Shpilt, shpilt . . .

Far dem krig hobn mir gelebt in fridn,
Iz gekumen hitler un oysgemordet ale yidn,
Gevezn zaynen mir ruik, mit ale felker glaykh
In vos bashteyt undzer zind, freg ikh bay aykh?

Shpilt, shpilt . . .

Ikh hob gelebt in hofenung, in shtrebn,
Ikh bin nokh yung, es vilt zikh mir nokh lebn;
Gevezn bin ikh kleyn, bay mayn mamen in der heym,
Un haynt bin ikh a bandit in vald aleyn.

Shpilt, shpilt . . .

In my hideout I lie low and think things over,
So exhausted that I can't keep my eyes open,
I'm entirely alone, and tearfully I moan-
Will I ever leave this wretched place?

Play, play, strings full of pain,
An old-time Jewish tune, please play for me;
Play, play, strings full of pain,
Will I survive to see a time of peace?

We're a people known for our brain-power,
So worn down from misery, we've no strength now,
Other people have it good, while Jewish blood is spilled-
Help us at this desperate time, oh God!

Play, play, strings full of pain . . .

Before the war we lived in peace together,
Then came Hitler, all the Jews to murder;
We were quiet then, the equal of all nations,
So tell me, please: just wherein lies our sin?

Play, play, strings full of pain . . .

Once I lived with hopes and aspirations,
I am still young, I want to go on living!
Back when I was small, I lived with mother, in our hom
Today, an outlaw in the forest, all alone.

Play, play, strings full of pain . . .

Partizaner-libe
PARTISAN LOVE

Lyrics: Yosl Kotler
Music: Elye Taytelboym

Partizaner-libe reflects the impact of Soviet political rhetoric on the rhetoric of Yiddish song. Yet for all its prominence, the propaganda element here is handled with a remarkably light touch. Lyricist Yosl Kotler (1896-1935), who spent most of his life in the United States, was noted for his radical leftist Yiddish marionette theater, in which this song (later adopted by the Jewish partisans) most likely had its origins.

Haynt libe marion,
Trefn mir zikh do baym rand fun kanon,
Un cyder vos-ver,
Nem di sher,
Sher op dayne tsep,
Tu on dem mantl mit di soldatske knep.
Gib a kush, nem arum,
Khap di biks un kum.

Oyf der kanone veln mir zikh bagegenen,
Unter der kanone veln mir zikh gezezenen,
Koyl tsu koyl veln dunern un shisn,
Biks tsu biks veln zikh tsekushn.
Oyf der kanone,
Oyf der kanone,
Biks tsu biks.

Earnem dayn ort
In der ershter rey,
Mit dayne bloye oygn
In undzer army,
Harts tsu harts
Un fayer tsu fayer,
Mit freyd fun undzer libe-
Di sovyetn tsushtayer!

Oyf der kanone veln mir zikh bagegenen. . .

Un ven du gefinst mikh
A toyt azoy in dem shney,
A toyt badekt
Mit a binteley,
Dan zolstu nisht makhn
Kayn vayberish geshrey-
Nor zolst nemen a tsveytn
Fun der royter army.

Oyf der kanone veln mir zikh bagegenen. . .

Marian, my love, today,
Let's meet down by the artillery,
Before you go there,
Grab the shears;
Get your long braids cut,
Put on the jacket with the military buttons,
Give a kiss, get a hug,
Grab your gun-and come!

By the cannons, there we'll meet,
By the cannons, there we'll part,
Bullet to bullet will fire and thunder,
Rifle to rifle will kiss one another,
By the cannons,
By the cannons,
Gun to gun!

Position yourself
In the very first row,
With your two blue eyes
In our army now;
Heart to heart
And fire to fire,
In the joy of our love-
And for Soviet power!

By the cannons, there we'll meet. . .

And if you should find me
Lying dead in the snow,
A dead man all covered
With grass in a meadow,
You won't want to let out
Any feminine cry-
Just take another lover
From the great Red Army!

By the cannons, there we'll meet. . .

lead singer trained in German

Partizaner-marsh

MARCH OF THE PARTISANS

Lyrics: Shmerke Kacerginski
Music: Hanns Eisler

Composed for the partisan unit *Itsik vitnberg* (named in honor of the martyred *FPO* Commandant), Kacerginski's text dates from August 1943, when the resistance fighters mobilized out of the Vilna ghetto. The song was adapted from Hanns Eisler and Bertold Brecht's 1934 *Einheitsfrontlied* (Song of the United Front)—a popular anthem of the international communist and socialist movements. Traces of the political sentiments of the original may be heard in Kacerginski's reference, in the refrain, to "the fight for a workers' state."

Der veg iz shver, mir veysn,
Der kamf nit laykht, keyn shpil.
A partizan zayn lebn leygt in shlakht,
Farn groysn frayhayts tsil!

—Hey, FPO!
—Mir zaynen do!
Mutik un drayste tsum shlakht.
Partizaner nokh haynt
Geyen shlogn dem faynt,
Inem kamf far an arbeter-makht.

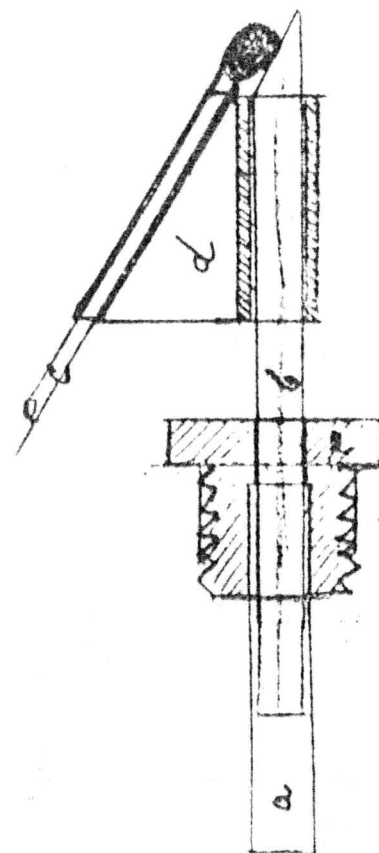
Es zaynen fest di glider,
Gemuskt in shtol un in blay,
Mir geyen bloyz oyf haynt funem geto aroys—
Kedey morgn aykh tsu brengen di fray!

—Hey, FPO!
—Mir zaynen do! . . .

Baym blut fun shvester, brider,
Mir shvern tsu kemfn biz van—
Mit hitlers yeder glid baputst vet zayn,
Di vofn fun partizan.

—Hey, FPO!
—Mir zaynen do! . . .

16



The road is rough, that's certain,
The war's not fun, it's no game;
A partisan in the fight will lay down his life
For the cause of liberty!

Hey, FPO!
We are here!
In battle, courageous and bold.
The partisan's only goal
Is to clobber the foe,
In the fight for a worker's state!

Our limbs are strong and sturdy,
And braced with steel and lead;
Only for this day, from the ghetto we've strayed—
Tomorrow, it's freedom we bring!

Hey, FPO!
We are here! . . .

By the blood of our sisters and brothers,
We swear to make war, every one,
Till the day Hitler's limbs adorn the weaponry of
The fighting partisans!

Hey, FPO!
We are here! . . .

17

Dos zangl
THE CORNSTALK

Lyrics: Hirsh Glik
Music: Anonymous

Conscripted by the Germans soon after the occupation of Vilna, Hirsh Glik worked as a turf digger in the nearby forced-labor camp of Biala Vaka. There, despite ill-health, he continued to create poems and songs to help raise the morale of his fellow prisoners. Among these is the playful love lyric *Dos zangl*, which, Kacerginski recalled, "enchanted and delighted Glik's admirers." The song dates from early 1943, just before Biala Vaka, a camp notably friendly to the partisans, was liquidated and its inmates transferred to the Vilna ghetto.

Blond bistu vi a zangl,
Sheyn vi der zun-fargangl,
Fir mikh durkh barg un toil,
Un ikh-dikh nokhamol,
Biz mir veln zikh sheydn.

Un volt ir zen baym sheydn,
In roze-shkie beydn,
Lipn, vi merelekh,
Oygn ful trerelekh,
Un-beser gornit reydn.

Her, meyd, mayn farlangl,
In rozn zun-fargangl,
Shver mir baym zunen-shayn,
Az du vest mayne zayn,-
Un zi hot im geshvorn.

Un zi hot im geshvorn,
Purpur iz er gevorn,
Purpur vi der farlang,
Purpur vi zun-fargang,
Hinter di blonde korn.

In pastekhs fayfl-klargl,
Lesht zikh der zun-fargangl,
Un in di himlen tif
Di livone-a zegl-shif-
Iz shoyne aroysgegangen.

Zi iz zey nokhgegangen,
Un shtern oysgehangen.
Un shtern iber di tsvey-
Un beymer tsvishn zey-
Shteyen vi khupe-shtangen.

You are blond as a cornstalk,
Lovely as a sunset,
Lead me past valley, hill,
And I shall follow, till
The moment we must part.

And would you see them, when they part,
In the fading, rosy sunlight:
Her lips, like tiny carrots,
Her eyes, brimful with tears-
Best to say nothing at all.

Maiden, hear my heart's request,
In this rosy, glowing sunset:
Swear to me by light of sun,
Swear to me that you'll be mine-
And this she pledged to him.

And this she pledged to him-
He blushed, his face turned crimson,
Crimson, as his desire,
Crimson, as sun's last fire,
Behind the field of blond corn.

With the sounding shepherd's pipe,
The sun gives out its final light,
And, in the deep sky floats
The moon-a sailboat,
Rising to begin its journey.

The moon follows them close by,
And strews with stars the sky,
And the stars above the two,
And the trees between them, too,
Stand like a wedding canopy.

Troyer past nisht undzer ponim
SORROW DOES NOT SUIT OUR FACES

Lyrics: Itsik Fefer
Music: Elye Taytelboym

For its final performance in Vilna ghetto, the "Sholem Aleichem Academy" drew its theme from Itsik Fefer's song Sorrow Does Not Suit Our Faces. I enjoyed the introductory speaker, who illustrated this idea with selections from Sholem Aleichem's works, performed by theater actors and by children from the ghetto's Youth Club. Seated in the hall were dozens of partisans, who, together with the children on stage, joined in singing Fefer's refrain. (Kacerginski, 1952)

Soviet Yiddish poet Itsik Fefer (1900-1952) served at the front as a war correspondent and, in 1943, visited the United States on a fundraising mission for the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. A greatly skilled poet, Fefer was also a devoted party-member, many of whose works were made to order for Stalin's regime. Despite such conspicuous loyalty, Fefer was arrested during the antisemitic campaign of 1948, and later executed after the notorious "Yiddish Writers Trial."

Troyer past nisht undzer ponim,
Umet eghert un farpaynt,
Veynen? Zoln veynen sonim,
Lomir lakhn, mayne fraynt!
Lomir lakhn, lomir lakhn, mayne fraynt!

In dem blutikn gerangl,
In der zunikayt fun mi,
Vu di koyl ken nisht derlangen-
Der gelekhter tut a bri,
Der gelekhter, der gelekhter tut a bri!

Hert vi alte veltn krakhn,
Vi es kumt oyf zey di nakht,-
Lomir lakhn, lomir lakhn-
Der gelekhter helft in shlakht,
Der gelekhter, der gelekhter helft in shlakht.

Troyer? Past nisht undzer ponim,
Umet? Eghert un farpaynt,
Veynen? Zoln veynen sonim,
Lomir lakhn mayne fraynt!
Lomir lakhn, mayne fraynt!

Sorrow does not suit our faces,
Sadness tortures, stabs and stings;
Crying? The enemy should cry some!
Let us laugh, my friends!
Let us laugh, let us laugh, my good friends!

In this cruel and bloody struggle,
In the bright light of our toil,
Where the bullet does not know its target-
That's where laughter lifts the soul!
That's where laughter, that's where laughter lifts the soul!

Hear the old worlds crash and shatter,
As on them descends the night-
Let us laugh now, let us laugh now,
Laughter helps us in the fight!
Laughter helps us, laughter helps us in the fight!

Sorrow? Does not suit our faces!
Sadness? Tortures, stabs and stings!
Crying? The enemy should cry some!
Let us laugh, my friends!
Let us laugh, let us laugh, my good friends!

Tsum roytarmeyer
TO THE RED ARMY SOLDIER

Lyrics: Pesakh Binetski
Music: S. Grinfeld

This macabre lullaby speaks of the horrors of the war—and of the hope that some of its traumatized survivors might one day join the ranks of the Red Army. The song's lyricist, Bialystok-born Pesakh Binetski (1912-1966), was a political activist who had spent six years in a Polish jail before being compelled, after his release, to flee ahead of the German army to the Soviet interior. There, he contributed to the war effort by working in a munitions plant and writing militant verse in Yiddish. Binetski eventually emigrated to Israel, where he published several volumes of poetry.

Alye, lyulye lyu—
Vig im, vig im tsu. . .
Es iz a daytsh baynakht gekumen,
Un zayn tatn tsugenumen,
Hengt der tate oyf a boym—
Un er vigt in vint zikh koym. . .
Es iz dayn mame oysgegangen,
Unter shikure gezangen,
Naket, hoyl, in frost un shney,
Nor bagleyt fun kinds geshrey. . .

Alye, lyulye lyu—
Vig im, vig im tsu. . .
Un zayn shvesterl dos kleyne,
Hot shoyf oyfgehert tsu veynen. . .
Ligt dos shvesterl baym vig,
Mit a shtar-fargloztn blik.
Hert dos kind nisht oyf tsu veynen,
Gib a shmeykhl zol es meynen,
Es iz der tate tsurik gekumen,
Funem boym arophenumen. . .

Alye, lyulye lyu—
Vig im, vig im tsu. . .
Vil dos kind nisht vern shtiler,
Gib a lakh un zol es filn,
Vi s'dervakht di gute mame,
Fun dem toyt-grub oyfgeshtanen.
Es vet dos kind dokh vaksn, vaksn,
Un oyf zayne feste akslen,
Veln finklen goldene shtern,
Ven er vet a shlakhtman vern.

Alye, lyulye lyu—
Vig im, vig im tsu. . .

Ay-lu lu-lu lu,
Rock him, gently, do.
It was a German, in the night,
Took his father from his sight,
Hung him high up on a tree—
He sways gently in the breeze.
It was his mother, forced away,
Amid drunken revelry,
Naked, marched through frost and snow,
But for her child's screams, alone.

Ay-lu lu-lu lu,
Rock him, gently, do.
And his sister-dear, so tiny,
Now has finally stopped her crying,
In her cradle sister lies,
With vacant stare and glassy eyes.
The child's crying does not cease—
Perhaps it is a smile he needs?—
It is his father, now returned,
From the hanging tree unharmed.

Ay-lu lu-lu lu,
Rock him, gently, do.
Yet the child will not be still,
Laugh a little, let him feel
That his dear mother is awake,
That she has risen from the grave.
Soon that child will grow older,
And upon his firm strong shoulders
Golden stars will spark and shine—
When he is a fighting man.

Ay-lu lu-lu lu,
Rock him, gently, do.

Harmonika / ACCORDION
Sovevuni / CIRCLE 'ROUND ME

Lyrics: Moshe Rabinovitz / Music: Yosef Alkeyni
Lyrics: Yaakov Orland / Music: Mordecai Zeira

In the Introductory Essay to this album, Professor Dov Levin refers to the dance tunes *Harmonika* and *Sovevuni* as virtual "anthems" among Zionist youth in the Eastern European underground resistance movement. These two Hebrew songs, composed in Palestine during the late 1920s and early 1930s, are here performed as a medley.



Hey harmonika nagni li,
She-yirad kol tz'lil,
Et ha-hora she-rakadnu
Yachad ba galil.

Hora, hora,
Hora she-rakadnu yachad
Hora she-rakadnu
Yachad ba galil.
Od nizkora
Et ha-hora she-rakadnu
Hora she-rakadnu
Yachad ba galil.

Sovevuni, lahat esh bo'eret,
Rakeduni shir yahi'd,
Ze hazemer, ze ve-eyn aher od-
Eyn aher od-le-tamid.

Tov, tov, tov, tov, tov, tov!
Tov ha-zemer ad eyn so'f!
Lo yittam ve-lo yahalo'f!
Be-levavenu, ha-kode'ah,
Mitlamim u-miyarei-ach!

Layla, layla! Layla uvesheket,
Mitlakea'h ha-machol;
Kol hayenu, avuka doleket,
La-mahar ve la-etmol.

Sov, sov, sov, sov, sov, sov!
Sov nasova ad eyn so'f!
Lo yittam ve-lo yahalo'f!
Be-lelenu, ha-zore'ah,
Ha-maho'l ha-mitlakea'h!

Layla, layla! Layla uvesheket,
Mitlakea'h ha-machol,
Kol hayenu, avuka doleket,
La-mahar ve la-etmol.

Hey, accordion, play for me,
Our ancient notes will sound;
Once we danced the hora,
Together in Galilee.

Hora, hora,
Once we danced the hora,
Once we danced the hora,
Together in Galilee.
Remember the hora,
Once we danced the hora,
Once we danced the hora,
Together in Galilee.

Circle 'round me, flame of burning fire,
Dance this very song with me.
This song only, and no other song-
This song through eternity.

Good, good, good, good, good, good!
A good song's one that never ends!
Never dying, never changing,
In our fervent hearts still sounding,
From this plowed earth to the moon!

Nighttime, nighttime! In still of nighttime,
Quietly, the dance goes on;
All our lives are just like burning torches,
Always will be, always were!

Spin, spin, spin, spin, spin, spin!
Spin and turn, song, without end!
Never dying, never changing,
In our fervent hearts still sounding,
Quietly, the dance goes on.

Nighttime, nighttime! In still of nighttime,
Quietly, the dance goes on;
All our lives are just like burning torches,
Always will be, always were!

Shtey oyf tsu kamf
RISE UP AND FIGHT

Lyrics: Leah Svirski
Music: Anonymous

Teenage poet Leah Svirski created this song in the Kaisiadorys labor camp, near Kovno, in the spring of 1943. According to the author, its rousing lyrics inspired many Jewish prisoners to join the partisan fighters in the forests nearby. Born in the Lithuanian *shtetl* of Svintzion (present-day Svencionys), Svirski authored several songs and poems in a succession of ghettos and camps during the war. She presently lives in Israel.

Shtey oyf dokh tsum kamf, du yidish folk,
Genug unterdrikt shoyne gevezn;
Mir zaynen keyn knekht, mir fodern rekht,
Mir veln es keynmol nit fargesn.

Genug shoyne gevezn farshkluft, nidershlogn,
Funanderraysn muzn mir di keytn,
Vi heldn mit mut fargisn dos blut,
Nekome nemen eyner farn tsveytn.

A sakh hot der soyne genosn fun undz shoyne,
Un dokh iz er zat nit gevorn,
To shvaygt nit far dem un git zikh a nem,
Ver zagt, az dos glik iz shoyne farlorn.

Es zogn dokh ale, az trusn mir zaynen—
Lomir vayzn, az es iz nit rikhtik,
Tsum kamf gegn faynt aroystretn haynt,
Es zol shoyne der morgn vern likhtik.

Oyf tantsn un zingen nit itster di tsayt,
Nit itster di tsayt iz fun lakhn;
Shteyt oyf ver s'iz yung, a lof un a shprung,
Mit dem vet ir zikher beser makhn.

Dreyst on moyre faroyts lomir geyn,
In geto nito vos tsu zitsn;
Mir muzn in shlakht bakemfn di makht,
Dos blut fun dem soyne zol shpritsn.

Nor tomer der soyne vet shtarker fun undz zayn,
Men ken gornit helfn, farfaln,
Dan klert vos ir vilt, der kamf iz farshpilt,
Vi heldn in shlakht lomir faln.

Jewish people, rise up and fight!
Too long have we been oppressed;
We won't be slaves, our rights we will claim,
And we will never, never forget.

Too long we've been slaves, dejected, depressed,
We must tear apart the chains that bind us,
Like heroes so bold, our blood has been spilled,
Revenge we must take—one for the other.

The enemy has gained much profit from our work,
Yet, he is never satisfied;
Don't keep still about this—but get going, quick!
Who says that our good cheer has run dry?

Everyone says that we Jews are cowards,
Let's show them that this isn't right!
Now marching we'll go, to battle the foe,
So that our tomorrow will be bright.

Now is no time to dance or to sing,
Nor is this now the time to laugh;
You who are young, rise up! jump and run!
This will surely make things better fast.

Fearless and brave, we march, forward on,
In the ghetto, there is no more to do;
In battle we'll fight, and vanquish their might,
Let the blood of our enemy flow!

But should the foe's strength prove greater than our own,
And nothing will help, all is futile,
Then think what you must: that our cause has been lost,
Let us still die like heroes in the battle!

missing the 12th stanza

25

now embarrassed by Golem '3

Yid, du partizaner
THE JEWISH PARTISAN

Lyrics: Shmerke Kacerginski
Music: Anonymous

Set to the melody of a Russian folksong, Kacerginski's text dates from late 1943, during the author's term of service with the Voroshilov Brigade in the Byelorussian forest of Narocz. Because of its ostensible security and relative distance from the action, the partisans' stronghold near Lake Narocz had earned the name "America."

Fun di getos tfise-vent-
In di velder fraye,
Onshtot keytn oyf di hent,
Kh'halt a biks a naye.
Oyf di oyfgabes mayn fraynt
Kusht mir haldz un aksl,
Mitn biks kh'bin nit fun haynt
Fest tsunoyfgevaksn.

Veynik zaynen mir in tsol,
Drayste vi milionen,
Rayns mir oyf barg un tol
Brikn, eshelonen.
Der fashist fartsitert vert,
Veyst nisht vu, fun vanen-
Shturmen vi fun unter dr'erd-
Yidn-partizaner.

S'vort "nekome" hot a zin,
Ven mit blut farshraybst im,
Far dem heylikn bagin
Firn mir di shtraytn.
Neyn, mir veln keynmol zayn
Letste mohikaner,
S'brengt der nakht-di zunenshayn,
Der yid-der partizaner!

From the ghetto's prison walls
Into the free forests,
In place of chains around my hands,
I carry a new rifle.
On our rounds, this friend of mine
Hugs my neck and shoulder;
My rifle and I from this day
Will be as one, united.

Few are we in number now,
Yet bold as many millions;
We blast away at hills and valleys,
Convoys, columns, bridges.
The fascist trembles in his boots,
He can't guess where we come from;
We charge at him from out of nowhere-
Jewish partisans!

The word "revenge" means something
When it's written down in blood;
For our dawning, sacred day
We'll fight on and on.
No, one thing we will never be
Is "Last of the Mohicans";
Bringing sunshine to the night-
The Jew, the partisan!

Varshe
WARSAW

Lyrics: Shmerke Kacerginski
Music: Leon Wajner

Varshe was first recited by its author at a partisan gathering held January 18, 1944 in Narocz forest to commemorate the first anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. Soon after the liberation of Poland, Kacerginski asked composer Leon Wajner (1898-1979) to set his words to music. Wajner, born in the Polish city of Lodz, had spent the war years as a refugee in the Soviet Union; like his friend Kacerginski, he later settled in Argentina.

S'farshvindt nit di nakht un der tog kumt nit on,
A blutike koyl vert di erd shoyn;
A yid flatert oyf vi a shturmishc fon,
A fon inem tol fun di meysim.

In khurves dos geto, di yidn-in shlakht,
Der yid shprayzt durkh roykh un durkh flamen,
Nekome! Nekome!-es shturemt di nakht,-
Far kinder, far tates, far mames!

Der shney shit un shit un di erd vert nit vays,
Es halt nokh dos blut in eyn zidn,
Es ruft nokh nekome oyf shneyikn ayz,-
Dos blut fun di heldishe yidn.

Keyn tog vet nit zayn,-ruft der yid-un keyn nakht,
Mir veln di velt nit fargebn!
Di velkhe zaynen gefaln in shlakht,
Eybik in undz veln lebn!

Mir veln gedenken dem vey un dem mut,
Es fibert in gli di neshome,
Krits oys zikh in hartsn dray verter fun blut:
Nekome! Nekome! Nekome!

The night will not end, and the day will not dawn,
A vast, bloodied globe is the earth;
The Jew rises up, like a raised battle-flag,
A flag in the valley of death.

The ghetto, in ruins; the Jews-to the fight,
Striding through smoke and through fire;
Vengeance! Take vengeance!-the call rings through the night-
For children, for fathers, for mothers!

The snow falls and falls, yet the earth is not white,
It holds too much blood, blood that's seething;
It cries out for vengeance, through the snow and the ice-
The blood of the slain Jewish heroes.

The day will not come-cries the Jew-nor the night,
That we will ever forgive this!
Those of our comrades who fell in the fight,
Will always be living within us!

We will remember their courage and pain,
In our souls, burning and glowing;
And etched in our hearts are these words writ in blood:
Avenge us! Avenge us! Avenge us!

Dort baym breg fun veldl

THERE, BY THE EDGE OF THE FOREST

Lyrics: Anonymous

Music: Anonymous

Strange and wonderful is the picture before me: I see heroes made hard as oaks by life in the forest, strong men who wouldn't blink an eye when the time came to kill, slaughter, destroy. And here in the twilight, they turn sentimental as women, and pour their feelings of love and longing into songs they created themselves, or had refashioned from pre-war tunes. Vanya sang more passionately than the rest—although many had finer voices. From him, I learned a song that I now sing all the time. I even translated it, with slight changes, into Yiddish. Now our other comrades sing it constantly, too. (Kacerginski, 1952)

A Russian folksong later recast as a ballad about Soviet partisans, *Dort baym breg fun veldl* still later served as the model for a lyric popular during Israel's War of Independence, *Be-Arvot HaNegev* (On the Plains of the Negev).

Dort baym breg fun veldl,
Shteyt an alter boym.
Sheptshn zayne bleter,
Az men hert zey koyrn.
Sheptshen un dertseln
Vi es shtarbt a held,
Ven es faln koyln
Iber vald un feld.

Dort lebn boym fun veldl,
Ligt a partizan.
Bleter im farshteln,—
S'iz a krants faran.
Ligt er, hert nit, zet nit,
Dukht zikh shloft atsind,—
Vigt der vint a verbe,
Tulyet vi a kind.

Iber im, geboygn,
Zayn alte muter veynt,
Leyd in ire oygn
Un dos harts farshteynt:
"Ikhn hob dikh geboyrn,
Zikh mit dir gefreyt,
Ist iz alts farloyrn,
S'keyver dayns iz greyt."

"Kuk oyf mayne trern,
Fil vi s'harts tut vey,
Kh'vel shoyrn keynmol hern,
Dikh nit zen, o vey!
Host gehat a tatn,
Oykh geven a held,
Hobn shtil im bleter
Oykh farvigt in feld."

There, at the edge of the forest,
Stands an ancient tree.
Softly its leaves whisper—
They are scarcely heard.
They whisper, and they tell
Of a hero, how he died,
When bullets rained down on him
Over wood and field.

There, by the tree in the forest,
Lies a partisan,
Covered by its fallen leaves,
Like a wreath upon.
He lies there, does not see or hear,
He seems to be asleep;
A breeze blows through a willow,
Clinging like a child.

Bending over, by his side,
His aged mother weeps,
Her old eyes are filled with pain,
Her heart is dead with grief:
"It was I who gave you birth,
With you I rejoiced,
But everything is lost now,
For your grave awaits."

"Look, my tears are flowing,
Feel my aching heart,
Never will I hear your voice,
Or see you more, alas!
Once you had a father,
He was a hero, too,
Now, blowing leaves will rock you both,
In the silent field."

Davai zakurim
Gib zhe khaver a roykher ton
LET'S SMOKE TOGETHER

Russian Lyrics: Ilya Frenkel
 Yiddish Lyrics: Shmerke Kacerginski
 Music: Modest Tabachnikov

We would often gather around Zundele, who had brought with him to the forest his most prized possession: an accordion. At such times, we would not even heed the call to supper. Zundele was a masterful performer. He knew just when to execute a forte, and when to play softly, piano. A raised eyebrow sufficed to let the fighters understand that they should now perform pianissimo. From the Russian, I translated a stanza of one of their favorite songs [Davai zakurim]. No one knew where the song came from, and no one cared. We only knew that the song was Zundele's. Not because he was its creator, but because the way he played it, and the way we sang it with him, could not be surpassed. (Kacerginski, 1952)

One of the most popular songs of wartime Russia, *Davai zakurim* was the creation of Ilya Frenkel and Modest Tabachnikov, both recruits in the Red Army. The suggestion "Let's smoke together," posed by tobacco-less soldiers hoping for a cigarette, became a catch phrase among servicemen during the war.



Teplyi veter duet, razvezlo dorogi,
 I na iuzhnom fronte ottepel' opiat',
 Taet sneg v Rostove, taet v Taganroge,
 Eti dni kogda-nibud' my budem vspominat'.

Ob ogniakh-pozharishchakh,
 O druziakh-tovarishchakh,
 Gde-nibud', kogda-nibud',
 My budem govorit'.

Vspomniu ia pekhotu,
 I rodnuiu rotu,
 I tebia, za to,
 Chto ty dal mne zakurit'.

Davai zakurim, tovarishch, po odnoi,
 Davai zakurim, tovarishch moi!

Nas opyat' Odessa vstretit kak khoziaev,
 Zvezdy Chernomor'ia budut nam siiat',
 Slavnuu Kakhovku, gorod Nikolaev,
 Eti dni kogda-nibud' my budem vspominat'.

Ob ogniakh-pozharishchakh. . .

Un amol oyf zikher, hitlern dermonen,
 Veln mir in vander ergets vu tsuzam,
 Un nisht nor in di bikher, veln zikh derkonen,
 Alte partizaner, mir brider fun ayn shtam.

Alte fraynt, un nisht fun haynt,
 Dermonen veln vi dem faynt,
 Men hot geyogt un zikh geplogt,
 Do di nakht un dort dem tog.

Un in blotes, shneyen,
 Zingendike reyen,
 Munterdik in gang,
 Flegt helfn dos gezang:

O gib zhe khaver, a roykher ton,
 Eynmol fartsien nor, zikh dermon!
 O gib zhe khaver, a roykher ton,
 Eynmol a tsi ton nor, zikh dermon!

A warm wind is blowing, roads have turned to mud,
 On the Southern Front now, the spring thaw has arrived,
 In Rostov, snows are melting, and in Taganrog town;
 One day, some day, we'll remember it all.

The camp-fires and the cross-fire,
 And our comrades, our friends;
 Somewhere, someday,
 We will reminisce.

I remember the infantry,
 And my own beloved platoon,
 And, especially, I remember you,
 Who offered me a smoke.

Let's smoke together, comrade, one smoke for each,
 Let's smoke together, oh comrade mine!

Once again Odessa welcomes back its masters,
 Over the Black Sea now, stars are shining down,
 Glorious Kakhovka, the city Nikolaev;
 One day, some day, we'll remember it all.

The camp-fires and the cross-fire. . .

And someday it is certain, we'll remember Hitler,
 Wherever in our wanderings we should chance to meet;
 And not from books alone will we recognize each other,
 Old partisans, old fighters, brothers from one tribe.

We'll recall old friends, not just today's,
 And we'll recall the enemy,
 Who chased us and who plagued us,
 Without mercy, night and day.

And through mud and snow,
 The columns singing go,
 Cheerfully in stride,
 It helped to sing along:

Hey, buddy, pass me a smoke,
 Just one more drag, to remind me what it's like!
 Hey, buddy, pass me a smoke,
 Just one puff, that's all, to remind me what it's like!

Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg
NEVER SAY THAT YOU HAVE REACHED THE FINAL ROAD

Lyrics: Hirsh Glik
Music: Dmitri and Daniel Pokrass

The ghetto buzzed with excitement when, over our hidden radio, we heard the news from the Polish underground: "Hello! Hello! The remaining Jews in the Warsaw ghetto have staged an armed rebellion against the Nazis! The ghetto is in flames!" Word of the uprising boosted our morale. We began to look proudly at the Nazis—and they soon understood what these looks signified. Doubtless many were thinking: "Perhaps I'll have to fight the Jews of Vilna! Perhaps I'll be killed!" On the evening of May first [1943], we staged a cultural event, "Springtime in Yiddish Literature." An innocent name, "Springtime." But the hundreds who came knew that their true purpose in attending was to celebrate May Day. Every aspect of the event was suffused with the spirit of Warsaw. [In the excitement,] I had not noticed Hirsh Glik standing by my side:

—What's new with you, Hirsh?
—I've just written a song. Do you want to hear it?

The next day, Hirsh stopped by quite early. "Listen closely," he said. He sang quietly at first, but with fiery passion. His eyes were ablaze. I wondered: Where does he find such unshakable faith? As his voice grew firmer, he began to hammer out the words, stamping his feet as if he were now on the march. I pressed his hand. "Wonderful, Hirsh, wonderful." Through his words, I felt the impact that the Warsaw uprising had made on him. Partisan Headquarters soon decided to designate Glik's song the official hymn of the underground fighters. But it was not necessary to wait for a decree: the song had already spread throughout the ghetto. (Kacerginski, 1952)

Four months after the memorable May Day event, Glik, attempting to mobilize out of the ghetto, was captured by the Gestapo and deported to a labor camp in Estonia. The following summer, he escaped to the forests. According to Kacerginski, "He was never heard from again. Presumably a band of German soldiers made an end of his young life."

Zog nit keynmol derives its melody from a march, *To ne tuchi, grozovye oblaka* (First Rainclouds, Then Stormclouds), featured in a 1938 Soviet film, *Syn' trudovogo naroda* (Son of the Working People).

*Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg,
Khotsh himlen blayene fashteln bloye teg!
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho,—
Es vet a poyk ton undzer trot-mir zaynen do!*

*Fun grinem palmenland biz vaysn land fun shney,
Mir komen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey,
Un vu gefaln s'iz a shprits fun undzer blut,
Shprotsn vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut.*

*Es vet di morgnzun bagildn undz dem haynt,
Un der nekhtn vet farshvindn mitn faynd,
Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun in dem kayor—
Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor!*

*Dos lid geshribn iz mit blut un nit mit blay,
S'iz nit keyn lidl fun a foygl oyf der fray,
Dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent,
Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent!*

*To, zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg,
Khotsh himlen blayene fashteln bloye teg!
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho—
Es vet a poyk ton undzer trot-mir zaynen do!*

Never say that you have reached the final road,
Though lead-grey clouds conceal blue skies above,
The hour that we've longed for now draws near,
Our steps proclaim like drumbeats: We Are Here!

From green, palmy lands and countries white with snow,
We come with all our suffering and woe;
And wherever any of our blood is shed,
Our courage and our valor rise again!

Tomorrow's sun will turn this day to gold,
And this dark night will vanish with the foe,
But should tomorrow's sun await the dawn too long,
Let this song ring out for ages yet to come!

Not with lead was this song written, but with blood;
It wasn't warbled in the forest by a bird!
But a people, trapped between collapsing walls,
With weapons held in hand—they sang this song!

So, never say that you have reached the final road,
Though lead-grey clouds conceal blue skies above,
The hour that we've longed for now draws near,
Our steps proclaim like drumbeats: We Are Here!

Undzer lid
OUR SONG

Lyrics: Shmerke Kaczerginski

With this poem, dedicated to Hirsh Glik, Kaczerginski pays tribute to the memory of his friend, to the legacy of Glik's celebrated song—and to the power of music to sustain the human spirit. The author's voice was recorded shortly after the end of the war.

"Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg!"—
Gezungen hot in geto, lager yeder yid,
"Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg!"—
Oykh haynt un morgn zingen mir dos lid.

O der veg, o der veg,
Vet undz firn, vet undz firn tsu der fray,
Mit dem veg, mit dem veg,
Kumen veln mir tsum morgn af dos nay!

"Dort vet shprotsn undzer gvure, undzer mut!"—
Gezungen hat in geto, lager yeder yid,
"Dort vet shprotsn undzer gvure, undzer mut!"—
Oykh haynt un morgn zingen mir dos lid.

Undzer mut, undzer mut,
Vet der tsveyfl nit fargiftn mit zayn sam.
Undzer mut, undzer mut,
Vet tsebroyzn zikh vi khvales afn yam!

"Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor!"—
Gezungen hot in geto, lager yeder yid,
"Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor!"—
Oykh haynt un morgn zingen mir dos lid.

A parol, a parol,
Fun nekhtn biz dem haynt un morgn af der fray,
Der parol, der parol,
Ruft in verter dray bloyz: "*Am Yisroel Khay!*"

Un fun yidn mit naganes in di hent—
Gezungen hot in geto, lager yeder yid,
Un vu nor yidn mit naganes in di hent,
Mit zey tsuzamen zingen mir dos lid.

In di hent, in di hent
Di naganes haltn greyte mir tsum krig,
Un dos lid, un dos lid—
Vet derbrenge undz tsum groysn, heldn zig.

"Never say that you have reached the final road!"
They sang this song in camps and ghettos—every Jew.
"Never say that you have reached the final road!"
We sing this song today, and tomorrow.

And this road, and this road,
Will lead us, will lead us yet to freedom.
With this road, with this road,
We will reach a new tomorrow.

"Our courage and our valor rise again!"
They sang this song in camps and ghettos—every Jew.
"Our courage and our valor rise again!"
We sing this song today, and tomorrow.

And our courage, and our courage,
Will be poisoned not by doubt;
And our spirit, and our spirit,
Will shatter doubts like waves upon the sea!

"Let this song ring out for ages yet to come!"
They sang this song in ghettos, camps—every Jew.
"Let this song ring out for ages yet to come!"
We sing this song today, and tomorrow.

Like a watchword, like a watchword,
From yesterday, today, and from a free tomorrow,
A watchword, a watchword in three words:
"*Am Yisroel Chai!*"—The Jewish People Live!

Jews who fought "with weapons held in hand"—
They sang this song in ghettos, camps—every Jew.
And like Jews who fought "with weapons held in hand,"
We join with them in singing this, their song.

In our hands, in our hands,
We hold weapons, ready now to fight!
And this song, and this song—
Will lead us to heroic victory!

THEODORE BIKEL
with
Daniel Kempin, guitar
Zoltan Racz, accordion

FRIEDA ENOCH
with
Dov Weitman, guitar; Zoltan Racz, accordion; Alex Gakner, mandolin; Bruno Nasta, violin

ROBERT DECORMIER
conductor
NOBLE VOICES

John Clewett, Ron Davies, Louise DeCormier, Elke H. Gordon, Joseph S. Gordon,
Michael Lewellen, Lisa J. Sommers, Brad W. Spencer, Lindsay Spiller, Ann M. Stahmer,
Nadine P. Wethington, L. Billie Witte
Pronunciation Coach: Alex Gakner

Producer: Bret Werb
Recording Engineer, Editor, Tone Master: Victor Fonarov
Choral and Choral/Instrumental Arrangements: Robert DeCormier
Guitar/Vocal Arrangements (for Mr. Bikel): Daniel Kempin
Translations and Annotations: Bret Werb
(except Russian verse translated by Michael Gelb and Hebrew verse translated by Scott Miller)
Booklet and Package: Chris Noel Design
Project Coordinator: Ann M. Stahmer

sources for Shmerke Kacerginski's writings cited in these notes:
Kacerginski 1947 *Dos gezang fun vilner geto* (The Song of Vilna Ghetto).
(Paris: Publishing House of the Vilna Jews in France.)
Kacerginski 1948 *Lider fun di getos un lagern* (Songs from the Ghettos and Camps).
(New York: Congress for Jewish Culture.)
Kacerginski 1952 *Ikh bin geven a partizan* (I Was a Partisan).
(Buenos Aires: Printed by Friends of the Author.)

additional sources: Central Committee of Jews in Poland, *Undzer gezang* (Our Song) [Shmerke Kacerginski, ed],
(Warsaw: Office of Culture and Propaganda, 1947). Shmerke Kacerginski, *Khurbn vilne* (The Destruction of
Vilna), (New York: Congress for Jewish Culture, 1947). A. E. Lukovnikov, *Druz'ya-odnopolchane* (Our Brother
Soldiers), (Moscow: Order of the Labor Red Banner Military Publishing House/U.S.S.R. Ministry of Defence, 1975).

of related interest: Shoshona Kalisch, *Yes, We Sang* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985); Isaac Kowalski, ed.,
Anthology of Jewish Resistance, four vols. (Brooklyn: Jewish Combatants Publishers House, 1986-91); Eleanor
Mlotek and Malka Gottlieb, eds., *We Are Here* (New York: Workmen's Circle, 1983); Josh Waletzky, producer,
Partisans of Vilna (film: Washington, DC: Ciesla Foundation, 1986; recording: Flying Fish CD 70450).

photographs & illustrations: Booklet front cover: *Soviet partisan music troupe* "Gop so smykom," Narocz forest,
Byelorussia, ca. 1944. Standing in top row are Hana Posner (seventh from left), her father, Mordecai Posner
(fourth from left), and Yechiel Burgin (sixth from left). Courtesy Hana Posner Shafraan and the Organisation des
Partisans Combattants en Israel. Page 5: *Shmerke Kacerginski*, ca. 1950. Courtesy Liliane Cordova-
Kacerginski. Page 10: *Diagram of bomb deployed by Vilna ghetto partisans against German army convoy in*
May, 1942. Reprinted from A. Sutzkever, *Vilne geto* (Vilna Ghetto), Paris: Publishing House of the Vilna Jews in
France, 1946. Page 11: *Vitke Kempner, partisan*, ca. 1944. Courtesy Moreshet Archives-Givat Chaviva, Israel.
Page 12: *Shmuel Kaplinski, partisan*, ca. 1943. Courtesy Jewish State Museum, Vilnius, Lithuania. Page 14:
Rokhl Sacher Rudnitzki, partisan. Photograph by Ilya Ehrenberg. Courtesy YIVO Institute for Jewish Research,
New York. Page 17: *Diagram of hand-grenade from partisan's notebook.* Courtesy YIVO Institute for Jewish
Research, New York; Sutzkever/Kacerginski Collection. Page 22: *Members of Soviet partisan music troupe*
"Gop so smykom," ca. 1943. Courtesy Hana Posner Shafraan and USHMM Photo Archives. Page 24: *Jewish*
Partisans, survivors of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, Wyzskow forest, Poland, 1944. Courtesy YIVO Institute for
Jewish Research, New York; Bund Archives Collection. Page 28: *Three Jewish partisans,* Wyzskow forest,
Poland, 1943-1944. Courtesy USHMM Photo Archives. Page 30: *Soviet partisans smoking cigarettes,* 1944.
Courtesy YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York. Booklet back cover: *Partisan Berl (Boris) Yochai plant-*
ing dynamite on a railroad track, vicinity of Vilna, ca. 1943. Courtesy YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New
York; Sutzkever/Kacerginski Collection.

Thank you for your contribution

Dr. Yitzhak Arad, of Yad Vashem, Jerusalem; Professor Dov Levin, of The Hebrew University, Jerusalem;
Professor Solon Beinfeld, of Washington University, St. Louis; Professor Dorothy Bilik, of the University of
Maryland, College Park; Eleanor Mlotek and Dina Abramowicz, of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research,
New York; Herman Taube and Lee Goldberg, of Yiddish of Greater Washington; Ruth Schoenberg, of
CUNY/Brooklyn College; Liliane Cordova-Kacerginski; Rakhele and Abraham Melezin; Hana Posner Shafraan;
Lilly (Leah) Svirski-Holtzman; Marta Wassertzug; Rita Bikel. *Thanks to USHMM personnel:* Vadim Altskan,
Benton Arnovitz, Arkady Barsky, Duane Brant; Wesley Fisher, Peggy Frankston, Michael Gelb, Genya Markon
and Photo Archives Staff, Barbara Milewski, Scott Miller, Carl Modig, Beth Redlich, Jerry Rehm,
Nava Schreiber, Cynthia Smith, Galia Steinbach, Shari R. Werb, and Founding Director Jeshajahu Weinberg.
Special thanks to Mr. Julius Schatz.

THIS ALBUM IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF SHMERKE KACERGINSKI.

Recorded August 1995 and July 1996 at the Rebecca and Joseph Meyerhoff Auditorium,
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC.

Sovevuni by Y. Orland and M. Zeira courtesy ACUM Ltd., Tel Aviv.

choral and choral/instrumental arrangements ©1995 Robert DeCormier
guitar/vocal arrangements ©1995 Daniel Kempin

entire contents © and ©1996 by Bret Werb

All rights reserved. Unauthorized duplication is a violation of applicable laws. A product of the United States Holocaust Memorial
Council, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW; Washington, D.C. Printed and manufactured in the United States of America.

A how 4 Jew writers who feel
@ have no Jew. writers
sense of obligation to Jew writers
require body of lit / learning
to know what came from
Really Really it of fashion &
Respected center of gravity
confers privilege & place
& obligation
2 center writes culture