

From Speeches Delivered at the First Jewish Rally (August 24, 1941)

Mikhoels:

From the free Soviet Union, where Jews are building a new society and a new life, I appeal to you, Jews the world over.

Fellow Jews!

Hitler has sharpened his butcher's knife on you, on your sons and daughters. He has practiced his poisonous sting and his villainous ways on tens and hundreds of thousand of Jews.

Among his other evil deeds he has called for the total annihilation of the Jewish people.

There is no need to enumerate all the elaborate methods of unheard of, unprecedented, brutal, bloodthirsty cruelties with which the fascists have long since gone beyond the bounds of human fantasy.

But the hatred toward you, sons of an ancient and long suffering people, which Hitler and his watchdog-fascists declared as the basis of his program; antisemitism, which Hitler and his cutthroats have declared as their faith — has become both a bloody theme and a fiendish trick.

Hitler's savage nature was quickly unmasked, as was his appetite to devour the great Slavic peoples, all freedom-loving peoples, indeed, all humanity which respects and reveres the idea of freedom and democracy.

The fascist cutthroats cannot act without impunity. . . . That's why they use the foulest and most depraved cruelty precisely wherever

they meet the least opposition, where people are helpless, where the beasts encounter the least risk, hoping that brute force will make the people silently submit to their will.

Torture and violence against our mothers, sisters and little children; the revival of all the horrors of the medieval ghetto; humiliation and degradation which reduce man to a level lower than that of an animal — all this the butchers consider as the model of valor, and the ideal of courage.

Sick ravings about the Aryan race “Masters” — that’s what the prophets of hate consider as the source of their bestial rights.

The world is moaning under the drunken savagery of the insane murderers. And today, when the great Soviet nation, together with England and America, is waging war against the armed bands of fascist assassins; today, when the whole world has decided to stand up and defend nations which have been enslaved and oppressed by the raving fascists — you, the Jewish people, ancient and tried in persecution and humiliation — wherever your sons might be found, no matter where in the world beats the heart of a Jew — Listen!

We no longer have the strength and will to remain simply objects of violence, victims.

We must no longer mournfully bear our wounds to the world.

In the new, free Soviet country a totally different generation of people has grown up: a generation which has learned mankind’s great progressive ideas; a generation which has learned the great cultural riches of its people’s past and the past of all humanity; a generation which thoroughly understands what a homeland is, for the Soviet Union is the dear, beloved homeland of all Soviet peoples.

This generation does not know the meaning of fear. This generation cannot bear to feel itself a victim. Together with all citizens of our great country, our sons are engaged in battle, dedicating their lives and blood to the Great Patriotic War of liberation, which the entire Soviet nation is waging.

Our mothers themselves send their sons into the battle for justice, for the freedom of our Soviet homeland. Our fathers fight alongside their own sons and brothers against the enemy who is ravaging and annihilating the people.

And you, our brothers, remember that here in our country, on the fields of battle, your fate as well as the fate of your countries is being decided. Don’t be lulled by the thought that Hitler’s brutal savagery intends to spare you. Sneaky and deceitful, he is hoping to dull your vigilance.

Hatred toward him — that’s the duty of the nation, of all humanity. You must store up this hatred. You must turn this hatred into mighty weapons and acts of struggle. This hatred must become a grave in which fascism — the bitterest enemy of all peoples, of all humanity — will be buried forever.

Fellow Jews of England!

Your great democratic country is fighting together with the Soviet Union to destroy fascism. I believe that you will be in the forefront of this struggle.

Fellow Jews of the United States and all America!

The people of the United States of America are giving great assistance to the democratic countries fighting against the meanest enemy of mankind — German fascism. I am convinced that you will be numbered among the first to carry out this assistance as fast as possible.

Jewish mother! Even if you have only one son — bless him and send him to battle against the brown plague.

Fellow Jews!

Shoulder to shoulder we will rally around the Soviet Union in its great war of liberation.

Long live the liberation of all persecuted and oppressed freedom-loving peoples!

On to the struggle against fascism!