

MAY, 1947

The Jewish Veteran



We KNOW why HE fought—to protect his loved ones and his human rights—to rid the world of bombs . . . bullies . . . bigots.

FOR THE SOLDIER WE KNEW . . . WE CARRY ON!

MEMORIAL DAY—1947

By Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn



MEMORIAL DAY • 1947

By RABBI ROLAND B. GITTELSON, National Chaplain

It is easy to succumb to the trimmings and trappings of an occasion like Memorial Day—to feel our hearts beat a bit faster as we don our uniforms again, to recover the old excitement of parades—and to forget almost completely the real significance the day ought to have. Even those of us who lost our own flesh and blood in combat are often guilty of remembering only their physical presence each year on this occasion.

But remembering the individual loved ones or friends whom we have lost is not enough. We need no special day for that. To remember them, every day is Memorial Day. The special significance of this one day is—or ought to be—our remembering the things that we and they fought for, which means the goals for which they gave their lives.

Not the least tragedy of war is that in the very act of waging and winning it, we are so prone to forget the high ideals for which we set out to fight it. How many times when I asked one or another of my boys on Iwo Jima what they were fighting for, did I receive an answer like: "To kill Japs . . . to save my neck . . . to take that cave . . ." Nothing about Fascism or democracy. Nothing about respect for human personality. Nothing about a decent measure of economic security for every person willing to work.

Perhaps there is some excuse for such forgetfulness in the hectic heat of battle. But after the battle is over and our nerves have cooled and we find time for sober inventory, surely then forgetfulness is unforgivable. Then it is time to ask whether we, who through no virtue

or merit of our own, survived the nightmare in which others perished—whether we have continued the good fight on the home front.

What does it really mean to memorialize our departed heroes of war? It means to build now the kind of brotherhood we said then we were fighting to achieve. "Whoever of us lifts his hand in hate against a brother, or thinks himself superior to those who happen to be in the minority, makes of this ceremony and of the bloody sacrifice it commemorates, an empty, hollow mockery." It means to respect other nations even as we would be respected by them. "We shall join hands with Britain, China, Russia, in peace, even as we have in war, to build the kind of world for which you died." It means to achieve for the least of our citizens a full freedom from want. "We promise by all that is sacred and holy, that your sons, the sons of miners and millers, the sons of farmers and workers, will inherit from your death the right to a living that is decent and secure."

That man—veteran or not—who spreads the poison of hate, who sees unmitigated evil in everything that Russia does and untarnished good even in our own wickedness, who condones the soaring profits of industry alongside the diminished real wages of workers—that man has lost the real meaning of the war and the true significance of this day.

Let us remember then. Let us remember not only those whom we loved and who have left us, but even deeper and clearer, let us remember the kind of world for which they died. And in remembering, let us move forward mightily to build it.

Post Pourri

THE JEWISH VETERAN

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J. GEORGE FREDMAN, Editor

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MEMBERSHIP . . . The cure for all JWV problems, and so easy to acquire these days. Trouble? Each comrade just won't bring in even one member . . . Am. Legion doing wonders with its membership drive through formation of "Hoot Owl Club." Every Legionnaire who brings in 5 delinquent or new members eligible to be a "Hooter" . . . Every post can stage interesting contests. If we don't expand now, we never will . . . Who is the champion "member-getter" of JWV? Contestants please apply . . .

PUBLIC RELATIONS . . . the art of getting to the public JWV activities, by newspapers, periodicals, radio and movies . . . You conduct a worthwhile public affair, 200 or 500 or even 1,000 are personally present. If you broadcast it or get it into the daily press, thousands upon thousands learn of the affair . . . That's why public relations are so important. Unfortunately so many units neglect it completely . . . Why not a post Public Relations Chairman? Why not release material regularly to the press? Why not a monthly or semi-monthly local radio program? Why not a post publication? . . . Otherwise you're missing good bets . . . Publications welcomed: Haverhill No. 52; Communique, Louisville No. 179; Epee, Stanley T. Gober Post No. 123; Hoffman Post No. 94, and Kings County Veteran . . . Keep them coming, more and better!

PERSONALS . . . Col. Harry Henshel, JWV Finance Chmn., is also UJA Chmn., Jewelers' Div. . . Sol Masch, NVC, is new President Washington Heights Community Center . . . Rabbi A. Chill, P. N. Chaplain, is Pres. of Rabbinical Assn. of Rhode Island . . . Is it true that LeRoy Diamond, Jewish Guadalcanal hero of Brooklyn, whose exploits were dramatized in a movie, can't find either a job or a home for himself, wife and kiddies? Shame! We deeply regret the untimely decease of Henry Monsky, President of B'Nai B'Rith, one of Jewry's "great" leaders . . .

ACTION . . . On May 18, May 30, June 14 and July 4. YOU fill in the occasions, but more ACT on them . . . Quite a few posts observed anniversary of decease of the late Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Chodikoff Post comrades placed a wreath on his tomb at Hyde Park . . . 14 No. 10 (J.C.) comrades brought in more new members on Hebrew Orphans and Aged drive than any other organization . . . Massachusetts Dept. Essay contest in public and parochial schools received wide public commendation and several fine editorials. Of four prizes, 3 won by Gentiles . . . Natl. Com. Richman feted by Hartford post and breakfasted by Mayor Curley of Boston . . . Dept. of N. J. endowed Lou Freeman Memorial Scholarship at Rutgers College is awarded annually to best essay on Americanism, or American Citizenship . . .

LEGISLATION . . . Bills for JWV Charter introduced in House by Cong. Miller of Connecticut and in Senate by Sen. Hickenlooper of Iowa . . . HR 867 (Klein) amends GI bill to eliminate discrimination because of race or religion against vets by schools and colleges . . . HR 2910 (Stratton, Ill.) would authorize admission of 400,000 DPs into the U.S.A., preferring families of vets . . . JWV favors these bills, but "favor" is not enough. Everyone reading this column should write a personal letter to his Congressman and Senator *immediately* telling them how you feel about them, and ask HIM how HE is going to vote on them . . . NCRAC (of which JWV is a member) opposes Cong. Buckley (House) group libel bill in its present state, partly also because they think it bad to single out Jews as a group for special legislation . . . JWV favors appropriate similar bills in States and cities . . . Many posts lagging in support of FEPC bills in their respective states. Why? . . .

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EDITORIAL

A FLOWER for EACH GRAVE

The Civil War was over, but the news brought little joy to the sleepy town of Columbus, Mississippi. Of the hundreds of men who had marched away, only a few returned. But this was a time for work, not tears. Columbus had stood in the path of bloody campaigns, and the dead must be given a last resting place. Soon the cemetery held hundreds of Confederate soldiers and some 40 men who had worn the Blue.

One spring day in the late '60s, three young women of Columbus, their arms full of flowers, began to tend the graves of husbands and sweethearts. One day they invited the young widow of a Confederate soldier to join them.

As her three companions knelt to place their bouquets, the widow stood erect, gazing over the other bare and forlorn graves. What a pity that these should be forgotten!

"Why don't we break our bouquets and place a flower on each grave?" she suggested. The women hesitated—then quietly untangled the bouquets and placed a blossom on each mound.

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