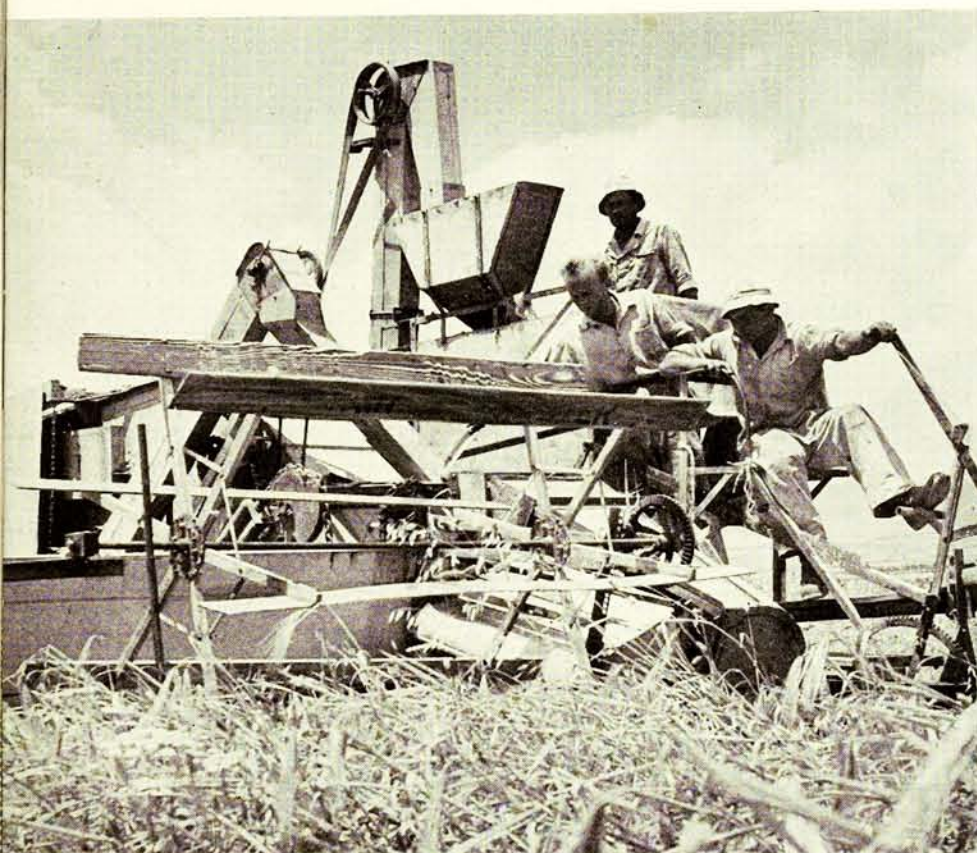




The women fight the battle of food production on the farms.



Modern machinery increases the yield. (Below) Fishing as a new calling.



1939-1943 FOUR

By JULIAN L. MELTZER

FOUR years ago, in the fateful autumn months of 1939 when the war clouds were piling ominously upon the horizon of Europe, less than half a million Jewish people in Eretz Israel were being tested in a crucible of physical onslaught and political conflict from which they emerged with their powers of endurance as firmly forged as tempered, unbending steel. For more than three years, the Yishuv had stood in the forefront of the impact of sinister forces. Scores and hundreds of its manhood and womanhood — the humble, anonymous pioneers — fell upon the highways and byways, in the fields and the woodlands, in city streets and upon hillside tracks, in covert ambush and open attack. Yet none faltered; none retreated. Something which transcended their personal reflexes to danger, call it the pride of nationalism if you will although that description hardly conveys the sublime spirit of it, kept them at the plough, the wheel, the lonely watch in the night, at the thousand and one routine tasks of normal life. Nor did they budge or offer to compromise when a higher danger than physical harm became paramount to the body corporate: far more potent a menace to their future collective existence than the threat to the individual. They knew full well the implications of political developments, the uncertainties in the evolution of higher policy, but pursued their jobs and went on planning and clung to their hopes and aspirations as staunchly and steadfastly as they kept their course.

Three years ago, the Yishuv — which had emerged from one ordeal to enter another — confronted the equally fateful summer of 1940 when it seemed as though the common foe of the British Empire, which then stood alone, might overwhelm the bastion of the Middle East. That danger came closer, perhaps, in the summer months of last year when Rommel and his armies thundered up to the gates of Alexandria and lay there crouched and ready to spring, while the braggart voices of Berlin and Rome brayed out their loathsome menaces, promising the extinction of the vanguard of the Jewish race in the cradle of its birth and regeneration. It was again a period for the testing of the soul of the Yishuv, and there were remarkably few craven-hearts to flee from the ranks which grew closer as the danger drew nearer.

THE YISHUV UNAFRAID

WITHAL, the Yishuv laboured tremendously in the factories and the fields, maintaining a ceaseless flow of supplies to the great armies which were then beginning to be assembled and to the civilian markets. Production rose to unprecedented peaks. The infant Jewish industrial system of Palestine, with a tradition of barely two decades to sustain it, proved itself beyond all compare as worthy of the confidence and sanguine hopes so often voiced. Nor was that all. First thousands and

FATEFUL YEARS

New York Times Jerusalem Correspondent

then tens of thousands, and finally scores of thousands of young men and women—aye, and the older ones too—rallied to the Colours and to the home security services. From every walk in life, from the class-rooms and the university halls, from the shops and the offices, they came forward to play their part as the Yishuv's guardians and watchmen. They fell or were captured by the enemy in Libya, Greece, Crete, Ethiopia, and Syria: they went to France, with the first Palestinian Auxiliary Military Pioneers, and came back to the Middle East for service in its widely-flung sectors: they went through the three Libyan campaigns, and helped to free the oppressed Jewish communities of Tripolitania. As part of the Eighth Army they went forward into Tunisia.

Today there are fifty thousand of them in the British Army, the Navy, the Royal Air Force, the auxiliary and settlement police formations, all striving to the same end—the furtherance of the Jewish mission of national emancipation. It is a proud record if one remembers the inelastic man-power and woman-power of a Yishuv of half a million souls and the call of the home production front in agriculture and industry.

FORGING THE SPIRIT

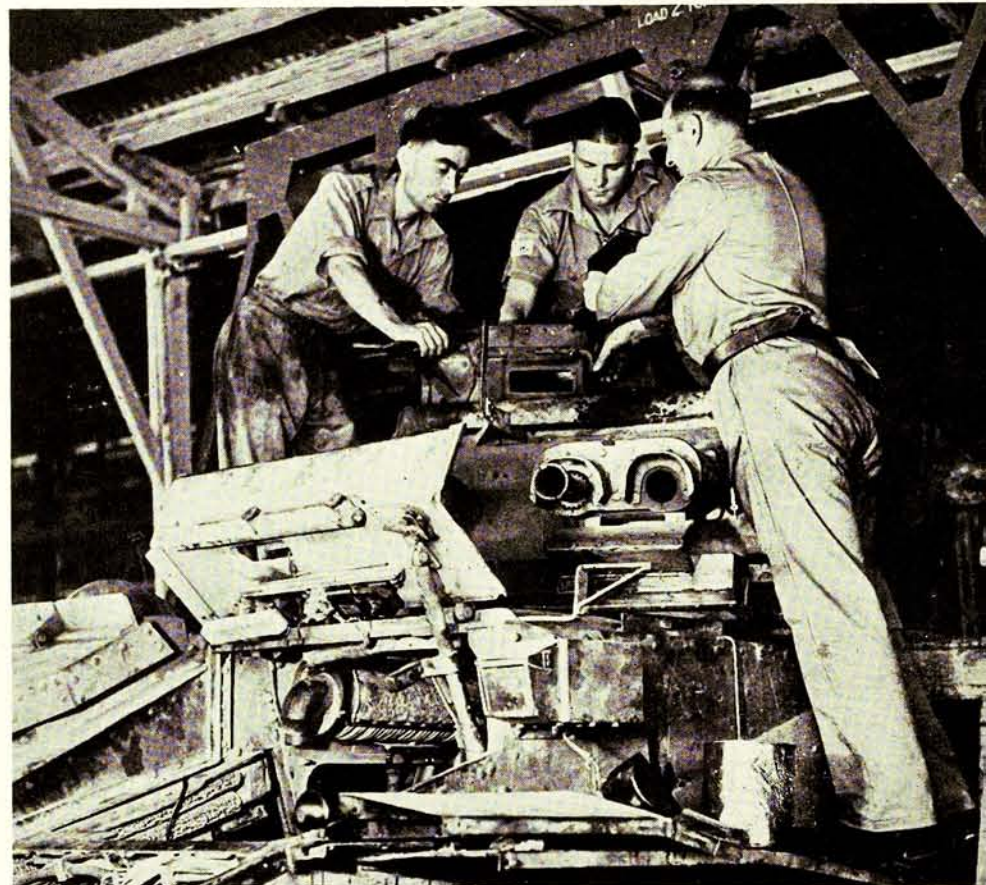
ONE must comprehend that background of the Jewish effort in Eretz Israel in the past few years in proceeding to any present-day analysis of the progress achieved in the past year. The spirit in the Yishuv today is no fortuitous growth nor the product of a single year in its current history. It is the forging and fashioning of many years, many impulses, many trends, many shocks and rebuffs, many triumphs and tribulations, many disappointments and only a few really happy moments. It has evolved, as the spirit of a nation gradually returning to its own soil must evolve, out of difficulty and despair no less than the ephemeral spasms of rejoicing and enthusiasm at some particular achievement. Blood and sweat, toil and tears, to quote the Prime Minister's unforgettable epigram, have been the burden of the Yishuv these many years: and it is in the enduring of them that the Yishuv has been able to reach its present stability of body and soul.

If I were asked to sum up in a sentence the ruling sentiment in the Yishuv during the past year, it would be—The indomitable "Little Man" and "Little Woman" in Palestine went about their ordinary work and tackled their routine cares with the same unobtrusive yet dogged force which has come to be associated with the pioneering task which the Yishuv is discharging.

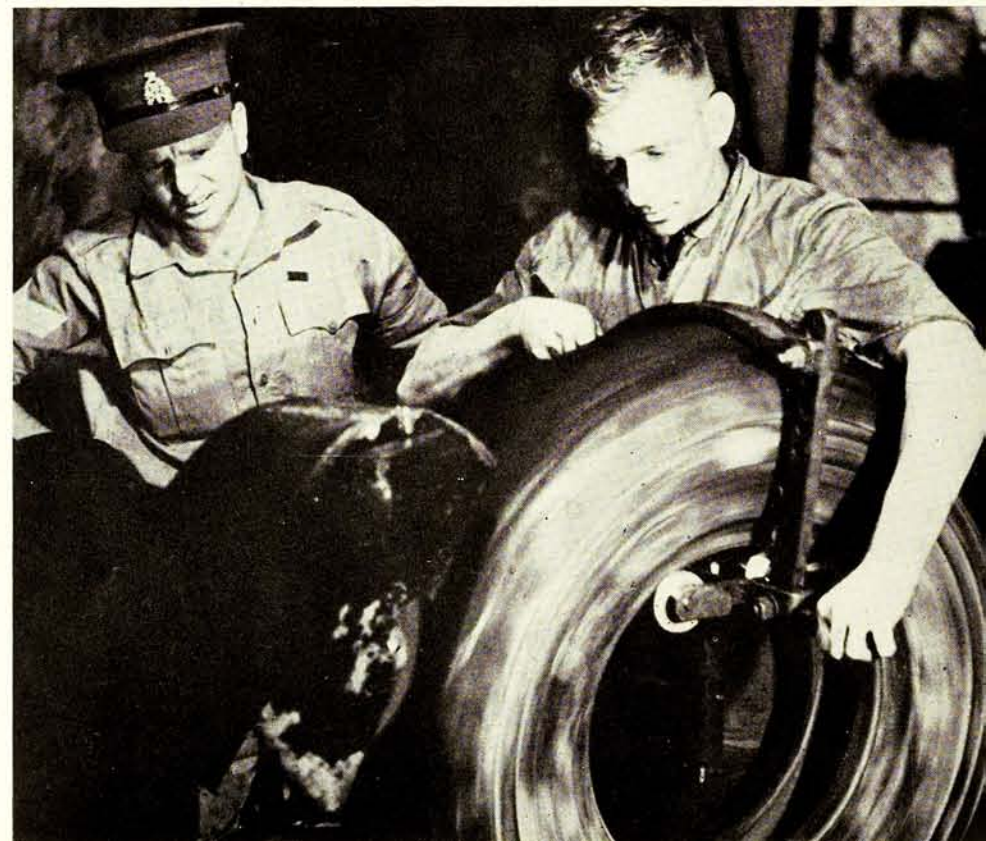
It is facile to quote figures and provide factual evidence to show progress. But it is not always so facile to describe the multitudinous intangible elements leading to that progress: the perpetual striving, the numerous hardships, the continual effort (*Continued on page 52*)



The Jewish Settlement Police look like Anzacs as they mount guard.



Repairing a light tank. (Below) Retreading tires for British Army trucks.





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1939-1943: Four Fateful Years

(Continued from page 27)

to overcome each successive obstacle, the persistent urge to get on to the next job, the human heartbreak, the sense of frustration at deliberate or unintentional wastage. Unlike the fixed-year plans of the totalitarian states, the Jewish effort in Eretz Israel has never had any time-limit.

What are isolated incidents or facts, after all, without a deep knowledge of what has gone into their making? One may cite the fact that six new Keren Hayesod villages have been established and have the sceptics murmur, "No more?" One may note that the frontiers of Jewish settlement have been extended southward into new areas, and here the critics sneer, "Only now?" Yet there might be no scepticism or criticism if one were able to convey the tremendous subjective impulses which lay, hidden and unseen yet with dynamic motive power, in the creation of those facts.

Nine hundred Jewish refugee children came early this year to Palestine from Poland and Russia via Teheran—but what can describe the almost incredible exposure of their long travel across great continents and over the seas, the ecstatic welcome which they were given, the preparations made to absorb them into the new life—and the myriad threads which, before and after the event, bound them into the warp and woof of the fabric of Eretz Israel?

THAT is why a profound appreciation of the background of Jewish life and endeavour must precede any review of this year, as past years, in Eretz Israel. For one paramount truism must be kept continually

in mind—if the Yishuv has endured and survived the buffets and blows of "outrageous fortune," it has been with one aim: the regeneration not only of those privileged to be in Palestine but also of the legions yet unredeemed from exile. It has been part of their mission to further national emancipation: and the inspiration and high spiritual purpose of that mission has bound the Yishuv inseparably to the historic task of shaping the national destiny of the whole people.

Throughout these years the Jewry of Eretz Israel has been advancing step by step towards the time when it can throw wide its arms and truly say, Come all ye who would be comforted and rebuilt in Zion! There is a supreme personal element in all of this movement of national redemption, for the hundreds of thousands of pioneers who came here in the past twenty years, left their families and kinsfolk back in tortured Europe and the strength of filial and blood ties is as tensile as the strength of national feeling. Palestine Jewry would sacrifice far more than it has done to rescue European Jewry—what a tragic and dramatic turning of the tables since the last war!—and the profoundly moving experience of the past year has shown without a scintilla of doubt the extent to which this could be offered and the nationalist humanitarian mission discharged if the opportunity were given. Dr. Weizmann some time ago called Palestine Jewry the voice of the national conscience: but, the repository of the national spirit no less, it is the dynamo of the total redemption of Israel. (Continued on page 58)



A hot cup of coffee in the early morning cheers up United Nations soldiers as they pass through a Jewish settlement.

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Alec Templeton: Eminent concert pianist, graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in London, has toured both Europe and America extensively as a concert artist. He has appeared with all the major Symphony orchestras in England and America, and is in great demand by colleges and universities because of his inimitable gift as an entertainer. He has composed a large number of works for solo piano, as well as Symphony orchestras, including Rhapsody Harmonic, Concertina Lyric, Insect Suite, Idyll and Sonatine Ballads.

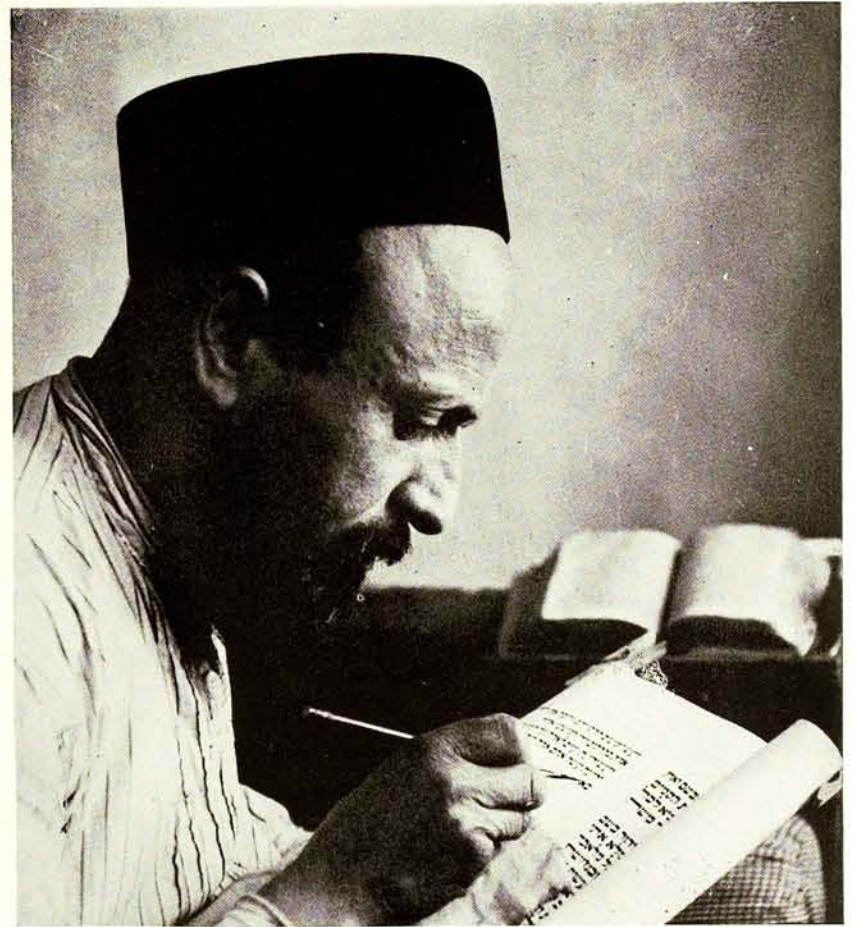
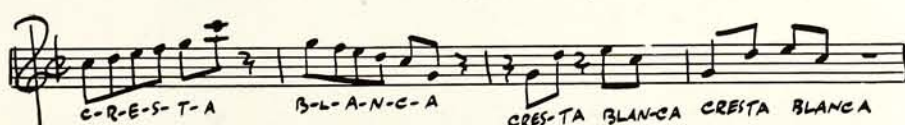
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A Scribe at work on the Holy Scrolls.

(Continued from page 52)

DR. WEIZMANN was right in regarding Palestine Jewry as the centrifugal force in world Jewish affairs today. It was a wise man who said that the Yishuv always regards its purpose as a jump ahead of the effort: it never catches up with even the fringe of the magnitude of its task. The Yishuv today is an eager, ardent, proud and warmly-living community of people. It is a microcosm of World Jewry, drawn from each nook and cranny of a complex and peculiar *Diaspora*. A year is insufficient to strike the balance, the assets and the liabilities, of what has happened in and until that period.

INTENSE DRIVING POWER

This is in no sense a survey of what has been accomplished since the New Year of 5703: rather should it be taken as a glimpse of what has gone into the Yishuv's soul to make the accomplishments credible. The acquisition and settlement of so many more tens of thousands of dunams of land by the Jewish National Fund, the construction of so many more new villages by the Palestine Foundation Fund, are the tangibles; but what is much more significant and epoch-making is the intangible driving power which made them possible.

There are so many tiny incidents in the ceaseless beat of human life

in Eretz Israel that no one can hope to be an omniscient recorder. Yet, of all the countless little episodes, the one I like best as the most typical of today's Yishuv is of the little boy aged nine years who tried to enlist in Tel Aviv by pretending that he was of eligible age. He had come with a forged note allegedly from his parents to say that they had no objection to his enrollment in a Jewish unit of the British Army. He burst into bitter tears when the "application" was turned down. So grieved was he, indeed, that the kindly British recruiting officer told him to come back from time to time to show how he was getting bigger for the great day when he could join up. The lad is a regular visitor at the recruiting office to show that he is "growing quickly" and will soon be old enough to serve his people and his homeland as a soldier.

That boy's gesture, symptomatic of the Yishuv's spirit of willing sacrifice, is an example of the unchanging faith and deep inner conviction which no external factors can shake that imbue the people in Eretz Israel at this time. The epitome of the Jewish effort today is Service above Self. And it is here, in Eretz Israel, and not in Germany or elsewhere, that the Jewish destiny is being created and here, too, not around council tables, that the Jewish tomorrow is being remoulded.