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**Where Does the War End and the Holocaust Begin? Bergelson on World War II and the Holocaust**

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**Abstract**

In the Soviet Union, the story of the Nazi war against the Jews was subsumed into the total war between the Soviet Union and the fascist enemy, a war that took between 20 and 30 million Soviet lives, 2 million of them Jews. We forget that many of those who told the Soviet story of war were themselves Jewish. With Ilya Ehrenburg (1891-1967) and Vasily Grossman (1905-1964) writing for the important military newspaper Red Star, Jewish photojournalists visually recording the war, and the many Jews as members of the editorial staff of most major Soviet newspapers, Soviet Jews were the ones charged with telling the war to the entire Soviet audience. And at the same time, this was a Soviet war told in all of the languages of the Soviet Union — in Ukrainian, Georgian, Uzbek, and even in Yiddish, the official language that marked Soviet Jews as a nationality. Ehrenburg and Grossman had been relatively well-known Russian-language journalists before the outbreak of war. Who would be called on to tell the story of the war in Yiddish? That task fell to many important twentieth-century Yiddish writers, among them David Bergelson.