

Warhaftig, Zorah

(b. 1906), Zionist leader who helped many Jewish refugees during World War II. Born in Western Belorussia, Warhaftig studied in Warsaw. He was very involved in Jewish public life there, and was an active member of the religious Zionist *Mizrachi* movement.

Because of his role in an anti-Nazi boycott committee, Warhaftig was forced to flee the advancing German troops when war broke out. He escaped to Lithuania and immediately began helping Jews there by taking charge of the Palestine Committee for Polish Refugees. In that capacity, he took care of other Polish refugees who had escaped to Lithuania, and made efforts to get them to Palestine. Most notably, Warhaftig helped many refugees reach the safe haven of East Asia by convincing the Soviet authorities to grant them transit visas through the Soviet Union (see also *Rescue of Polish Jews Via East Asia*). Warhaftig himself left for Japan soon thereafter, where he continued working on behalf of the refugees there, especially rabbis and *yeshiva* students. In 1942 he went to the United States, where he was elected to the executive board of the World Jewish Congress.

After the war, Warhaftig moved to Palestine, where he became a leading member of parliament and later, Minister of Religious Affairs. He published his memoirs, *Refugee and Survivor*, in 1988.