

Dvoretzki, Alter

(1906--1942), partisan commander in Belorussia. Born in the town of Diatlovo (Zhetl), Dvoretzki became a lawyer in Novogrudok. When the Germans occupied Diatlovo in June 1941, Dvoretzki returned to the town and was appointed chairman of its *Judenrat*. Unlike some other *Judenrat* chairmen, Dvoretzki quickly set up an underground partisan group in his ghetto. He came up with a plan to arm the young Jews of the surrounding towns and take them to the Lipiczany Forest to fight the Germans.

Dvoretzki managed to obtain weapons and smuggle them into the ghetto. He also gave weapons to a group of escaped Soviet prisoners of war P, and sent them to the forest. In addition, he helped young Jewish refugees with no family leave the ghetto to join the partisans in the forest.

Dvoretzki devised a detailed plan for armed resistance in case the Germans tried to liquidate the ghetto. However, someone betrayed Dvoretzki to the Nazis, and he was forced to flee to the forest, where he met escaped Soviet prisoners of war that had become partisans. These men, many who hated Jews, did not have enough weapons and were not really willing to fight the Germans. Nonetheless, Dvoretzki tried to convince their commanders to attack Diatlovo in order to free the young Jews trapped inside. On the night of April 29, 1942, the partisans went to the ghetto, only to learn that a large number of German troops had arrived to massacre the Jews of the ghetto the next day. The Soviet partisans were not willing to risk their lives by attacking, so they returned to their base in the forest. The partisan commanders were both afraid and jealous of Dvoretzki—so they set up an ambush and murdered him and one of his comrades.

In the end, despite his death, the plans Dvoretzki had laid helped more than 600 Jews escape from the Diatlovo Ghetto and flee to the forest during the ghetto's liquidation on August 6, 1942. Those Jews formed a fighting partisan unit, which eventually became the third Jewish company in the Soviet Orlianski-Borba battalion. (see also Resistance, Jewish)