

Beverly Hills, April 18, 1971.

28th Anniversary of Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen;

I consider it a great honor that on the 28th anniversary of the heroic Warsaw Ghetto Uprising I have been given the privilege to address this assembly.

It is to me a source of profound satisfaction^a that I can convey my remarks to a group of young people interested in Jewish⁶⁷ life and history

We the survivors^w of Hitler's holocaust are getting on in years and you, the young generation, the future Jewish community leaders in the United States, Israel or elsewhere in the world have to see to it that that never again ~~should~~^{shall} defenseless Jews be exterminated by other nations, like the six millions Jews in Europe.

One of your foremost tasks ~~will be~~^{is} to keep alive the facts of the holocaust. The world tends to conveniently forget and distort the truth about this great catastrophe which struck the Jewish nation.

One of the reasons why I am addressing you here is because of sad experience with the Hitler Youth which was organized and trained to be future leaders of Nazi Germany. Yesterday's Hitler Youth are today's Neo-Nazis. The Hitler Youth was in many respects more cruel and blood-thirsty than their elders.

You, the young Jewish generation, should be ready mentally and physically to defend yourself in case of need.

To give you an approximate idea of the happenings of that time, I will now try to describe some ~~of the~~^{of the} events which I witnessed myself.

All these events were of a similar pattern all over the Nazi occupied territories in Europe - a master plan was very much in evidence - as methods and timing were very much like.

In September 1939, Hitler's army invaded Poland.

When they entered my home town, Czestochowa, they started on the next day to ~~round up~~^{seize} the Jews in the streets and mass execute them in the public squares. The victims were forced to dig their own graves.

The Germans were ~~also~~ taking as hostages prominent Jewish community leaders and other well-to-do people to extract from them large sums of money and jewelry.

Jews young and old were being seized in the streets during day-time and nights from their homes and sent to camps of forced labor.

Jews were being gradually and systematically dispossessed of all their belongings: first the furniture was taken away from them, then merchandise confiscated, and then they themselves expelled. ^{eventually} ~~from their~~^{from their} ~~homes~~^{homes}.

into freight freight cars

2) The looted Jewish goods were loaded ~~in~~ ^{into freight freight cars} trains and sent to Germany.

1) ~~The~~ ^{the} ~~copy~~ ^{copy} of ~~it~~ ^{it} was that each apartment had to be left in perfect order and the keys delivered in person to the German authorities.

A few months later, ghetto ~~districts~~ ^{districts} were established where several families had to share one apartment. Resulting disease and malnutrition decimated the ghetto population.

Jews were not allowed to leave the ghetto without a pass under penalty of death. There was a sign just beyond the ghetto limits ~~announcing that "Jews and dogs are not allowed here"~~ ^{out of banners to}

Jews were being arrested everyday by the Gestapo in the streets and at home, very often not to be seen again.

Soon afterwards, certain parts of the ghetto were ~~condoned~~ ^{closed} off by the german gendarmerie, ~~Ukrainians,~~ ^{on} Polish and Jewish police, ~~and by~~

People were ~~told~~ ^{ordered} to leave their apartments with only small bundles of food and personal belongings and assemble in front of the buildings. There the selections took place - some ~~was~~ ^{some} were lucky enough to be temporarily left, others taken away to the railway station and in cattle wagons, deported to the gas chambers of Treblinka.

The average transport was 6 thousand ~~daily~~ ^{daily} - this was as much as the gas chambers and crematoriums could daily dispose of.

The cattle ~~wagons~~ ^{wagons} were so overcrowded that many people died ~~in them~~ before reaching the destination.

The Germans tried to ~~hide~~ ^{hide} from the Jews that they are going to die. They assured them that they are going to labor camps and in some case even that they are going to emigrate to "New Palestine".

The Germans used to say that the Jews enter the concentration camps by the gate but leave by the chimney.

As the large ghetto ~~population~~ ^{population} was dwindling, the Germans forced the remaining inhabitants into smaller ~~areas,~~ ^{areas} the so called "small ghettos" - consisting of the most dilapidated buildings.

This is when the ~~youth~~ ^{youth} started to organize under-ground movement to fight the Germans, after they found out that the people were being sent to death.

~~the~~ ^{members of} ~~the~~ ^{the} underground ~~people~~ ^{people} were digging tunnels, manufacturing grenades, and collecting money for weapons, amunition and German uniforms.

Movements of this kind were organized in ghettos throughout Poland, the largest of them being the Jewish Fighting Organization which led the heroic 6 weeks long fight againstt the German ~~during~~ ^{during} the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April 1943.

After such fights with the partisans the Germans always systematically dynamited the ghettos, killing ~~all~~ ^{most of} those who were unable to escape.

From the original 55 thousand Jews in Czestochowa only a few hundred survived.

I would like now to quote Simon Wiesenthal's final remarks from his book "The Murderers Among Us". Wiesenthal is best known for his tireless tracking of thousands of Nazi criminals and ~~among other~~ is best known for his discovery of Adolph Eichman's South American hideout.

Shortly before Wiesenthal's liberation his Rottenfuhrer Merz asked him what would he say, should he come to America. ~~xxxxx~~ Wiesenthal was ^{cautiously} silent.

Then Merz told him: "You would tell the truth to the people in America, wouldn't you?" ^{can}

"That's right", Wiesenthal answered.

~~Then~~ Merz replied: "You know what would happen, Wiesenthal? They would not believe you. They would say you were crazy. Might even put you in a madhouse. How can anyone believe this terrible business unless he has lived through it??"

I myself find sometimes hard to believe what I went through. I am closing these remarks with my own Yiskor.

Esther Przeworski Pratt