



Your Sourcebook for
Ramah
Poland Journey



Course materials created and selected by Ramah staff and educators. © Ramah Israel.
Book design and production by Typiary.com (October, 2026).
For internal use only. Not for distribution.

Dear Haverim,

This sourcebook is not a comprehensive history of the Jews in Eastern Europe. Neither is it a travel guide. Rather, we have compiled texts connected with the sites that we will visit during our brief trip to Poland. The texts reflect, on the one hand, almost 1000 years of Jewish life in Eastern Europe, and on the other, the murder of individual men, women, and children. They also bear witness to the struggle to survive, the battle to remain human and the fight against the debasement of humanity and integrity.

Our journey to Poland is an introduction to the greatness of Jewish life and culture in Eastern Europe before World War II. We cannot feel what people felt in the places we will visit — nor should we be expected to. As we stand and learn in the sites where some of the greatest rabbinic and secular Jewish minds of the past learned and taught, we pay tribute to those who lived there and to those who died there. By being there, we prove that the Jewish people continue to endure with a creative spirit, a passion to learn, and a love of Judaism despite the tragedy that befell the Jews of Europe. Just as we learn and remember the past, we vow to create a Jewish future.

— *The Staff of the Ramah Poland Seminar*

The Traveler's Prayer

תפילת הדרך

יְהי רָצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתּוֹלִיכֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם וְתַצְעִידֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם. וְתַסְמְכֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם. וְתַדְרִיכֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם. וְתַגִּיעֵנוּ לְמַחֲזֵז חֲפָצֵנוּ לְחַיִּים וּלְשִׂמְחָה וּלְשָׁלוֹם (וְאִם דַּעְתּוֹ לַחֲזוֹר מִיַּד אוֹמֵר וְתַחֲזִירֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם) וְתַצִּילֵנוּ מִכָּל אוֹיֵב וְאוֹרֵב וְלִסְטִים וְחַיּוֹת רָעוֹת בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּמִכָּל מִיָּנִי פּוֹרְעָנִיּוֹת הַמְתַּרְגְּשׁוֹת לְבוֹא לְעוֹלָם וְתִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵינוּ, וְתַתְּנֵנוּ לֶחֶן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים בְּעֵינֶיךָ וּבְעֵינֵי כָל רוֹאֵינוּ וְתִשְׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵינוּ. כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה וְתַחֲנוּן אַתָּה: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה.

May it be Your will, Lord our God and God of our ancestors, to guide us in peace, to sustain us in peace, to lead us to our desired destination in health and joy and peace, and bring us home in peace. Save us from every enemy and disaster on the way, and from all calamities that threaten the world. Bless the work of our hands. May we find grace, love, and compassion in Your sight and in the sight of all who see us. Hear our supplication, for you listen to prayer and supplication. Praised are you, Lord who hears prayer.

And so it was that the exiled Jews had been greatly oppressed for a long time. And the Angels saw that there was no limit to their suffering and no end in sight to their misery. Fearful that the handful of Jews might, God forbid, completely disappear from the world, the Angels cried out to God, and they said to Him:

“How long is this going to last? When You instructed Noah to send the dove out from the ark at the time of the flood, You gave it an olive branch so that it might have a support for its feet on the water, to rest. And when the dove was unable to bear the waters of the flood You allowed it to return to the ark, to safety.

“Yet You sent the Children of Israel out of the raft that was Eretz Yisrael and into a flood of hostility and anti-Semitism. And You have provided them with nothing for their support; nowhere for them to rest their weary feet in their long exile.”

Thereupon God took out a piece of Eretz Yisrael, which He had hidden away in the heavens at the time when the Temple was destroyed. And He sent it down to the earth. And He said, “Be a resting place for My children in their exile — *Poh lin yeladai b’galutam.*”

And that is how this land came to be called Poland — from the Hebrew words POH LIN — which means: *here shalt thou lodge, or, this is where you will live while in exile.*

But for how long? How long will the exile last? And what will happen in the great future when the Messiah will come? What are we going to do with our homes and businesses, our synagogues and settlements, the schools and other fine institutions that we shall have to build up in Poland over the centuries?

How can you ask? In the great future when the Messiah will come, God will certainly transport Poland with all its settlements, synagogues and Yeshivot to Eretz Yisrael. How else could it be?

— adapted from Shalom Asch, *Kiddush Hashem*

תוכן עניינים • Table of Contents

Introduction to the Participant.....	2
The Traveler's Prayer	2
Poland and the Exile, by Shalom Asch	3

Orientation and Reference

A Thousand Years of Polish Jewish History	10
Chronology of the Holocaust.....	12
Estimated Number of Jews Killed in the Holocaust	13
Map: Poland's Largest Jewish Communities on the Eve of War	14
Map: Jews Marked Out for Death at the Wannsee Conference.....	15
Map: The Concentration Camps	16
Map: The Division of Poland, 1939	17

Warsaw

Albert Einstein's Speech at the Memorial Unveiling.....	19
Map of the Warsaw Ghetto Area	20
Warsaw.....	21
Map: The Warsaw Ghetto Deportations.....	25
Warsaw: Sites in the Ghetto	26
Warsaw: Jewish Sites	28
Where is the World's Conscience? by Shmuel Zygelboym.....	30
The Deportations of Janusz Korczak and his Children	31
The Warsaw Ghetto Diaries of Dr. Hillel Seidman	32
Korczak's Declaration of Children's Rights	36
Mordecai Anilewicz's Last Letter, April, 1943	38
Haim Kaplan: Excerpts from <i>The Scroll of Agony</i>	39
Rahel Auerbach: Yizkor, 1943	41
Map: The Warsaw Ghetto Revolt.....	42
The Jewish Population Disbelieves Reports of the Extermination	43
Yankel Wiernik: A Year in Treblinka Horror Camp	44
Treblinka.....	48
Map: Treblinka Extermination Camp.....	50
Treblinka: Survivors' Testimony	51
Song: The Little Station Treblinka	52
Helena Birnbaum: Go To Treblinka.....	53
The Extermination of the Tykocin Jews	54
Tykocin	57
A Page of Testimony: A Victim from Tykocin	58

Lublin Area

Poem: Written in Pencil in a Sealed Freight Car	59
Map of Jewish Lublin	60
Lublin	61
Rabbi Meir Shapira; Yeshivat Hochmei Lublin and the “Daf Yomi”	62
Two Students at Yeshivat Hochmei Lublin.....	64
Map of Majdanek.....	66
Majdanek.....	67
Alexander Donat: Testimony from Majdanek.....	70
Helena Birnbaum: She Waited for Me	73
Belzec	74
Zamosc.....	76
Krasnik.....	77
Kazimierz Dolny.....	77
Thomas Toivi Blatt: Handling the Raw Material	78

Galicia

Map of Galicia.....	81
Lancut	82
Tarnow	84
The Road to the Shtetl.....	86
Hassidic Masters: A World Beyond	88
Song: Oyfn Pripetshok.....	94
Lezajsk.....	96
Einsatzgruppen	98
One Day in Jozefow: Initiation to Mass Murder	100

Krakow Area

Map of Jewish Krakow	102
Krakow.....	103
Krakow: The Jewish Quarter.....	104
Krakow: The Ghetto Area.....	105
Krakow: Sites of General Interest.....	106
Map of Auschwitz.....	107
Map of Auschwitz II-Birkenau	108
Auschwitz: Testimony from a Survivor	109
Auschwitz: The Place.....	109
Map: A Historian’s View of Birkenau.....	112
Primo Levi: <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i> / “The Journey”	113
Elie Wiesel: <i>Night</i> / “Arrival at Birkenau”	115
Primo Levi: “Bread”	118
Viktor E. Frankl: <i>Man’s Search for Meaning</i>	119
Poem: Pigtail	120
Poem: If This is a Man	121

Remembrance

Reading Matzevot (Jewish Gravestones)	122
On Jewish Time: Computing the Hebrew Year	124
Poem: To Open Eyes	125
Poem: In Many Houses.....	125
A Jewish Cemetery in Germany	126
Yizkor	127
Campo Dei Fiori.....	128
Forget Not That Which Amalek Wrought Unto You.....	129
Each Man Has a Name.....	130
HaTikva: Israel's National Anthem	131
Prayer for Martyrs	132
Psalm 121 and Psalm 130	133
Let Us Say Kaddish, by Elie Wiesel	134
Mourner's Kaddish	134
Memorial Prayer for the Martyrs of the Holocaust	135
Song: Ash and Dust.....	136
Special Kaddish for Victims of the Holocaust	137
Poem: Elegy for the Little Jewish Towns	138
A New Song.....	139
Song: Donah.....	140
The Last Seder in the Warsaw Ghetto.....	140
Fire!	141
Resources.....	142
A New Yizkor for Righteous Gentiles.....	143
Aharon Appelfeld: Reminiscences	144
On God and Auschwitz, by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks	145
Poem: At My Bar Mitzvah – and His	150
Song: One Human Tissue.....	151
Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones: Ezekiel, Ch. 37	152
Prayer for the State of Israel and IDF Soldiers.....	156
Suggested Reading List	159

Text Study

Limmud	160
Rabbi Akivah.....	161
Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah Chapter 157.....	163
The Holocaust and Halakhah.....	164
Poem: The Garden.....	165
“Then They Came For Me And There Was No One Left”	165
Afterword: Roman Vishniac	166
 Ramah Programs in Israel.....	 167

Maps

<i>Map: Poland's Largest Jewish Communities on the Eve of War</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Map: Jews Marked Out for Death at the Wannsee Conference.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Map: The Concentration Camps</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Map: The Division of Poland, 1939.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Map of the Warsaw Ghetto Area</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Map of Warsaw Ghetto Deportations.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Map: The Warsaw Ghetto Revolt.....</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Map: Treblinka Extermination Camp.....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Map of Jewish Lublin.....</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Map of Majdanek</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>Map of Belzec Camp, Winter 1942.....</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Map of Galicia</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>Map of Jewish Krakow.....</i>	<i>102</i>
<i>Map of Auschwitz.....</i>	<i>107</i>
<i>Map of Auschwitz II-Birkenau.....</i>	<i>108</i>
<i>Map: A Historian's View of Birkenau.....</i>	<i>112</i>

Orientation and Reference



Painted by a child at Terezin

A Thousand Years of Polish Jewish History

13th/14th c. Polish rulers encourage Jewish immigration; many Jews fleeing persecution and economic hardship arrive.

1264 Prince Boleslaw the Pious of Kalisz grants the first deed of rights to Polish Jews which serves as a basis for their legal status until the end of the Kingdom.

1334 King Kasimir III ratifies the Statute of Kalisz.

15th/16th c. Growth of Jewish communities. Jewish refugees from Western Europe seek refuge here.

Jews take an active part in the founding of new towns in the frontier region, thus contributing to the development of an economy based on the export of grain to western Europe.

Jewish community is autonomous with respect to financial issues. The Council of Four Lands, which constitutes the supreme authority of Poland's Jews and represents their interests before the country's rulers, is established.

Polish Jews are concentrated in the center of Polish towns and villages. Yiddish is the spoken language and Hebrew is reserved for prayer. Communal life (education, religion, health services) is run by local community (ק"ק).

Poland becomes major center of Jewish learning. The Council directs each large town to support a communal yeshiva.

1570 Rabbi Moshe Isserles (The Rama) publishes the Mappa, a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch. The rapid spread of the Shulchan Aruch, its immediate adaptation to Ashkenazi custom, as well as the spread of Jewish mysticism emanating from the circle of Cabbalists in Safed, are all manifestations of the cultural revolution triggered by the invention of printing.

1631 Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller (Tosafot Yom Tov) becomes Chief Rabbi of Krakow.

1648 Chmielniki Revolt. Thousands of Jews are brutally slaughtered by the Cossacks.

1670-1672 The Council of the Four Lands excommunicates adherents of the false messiah Shabbetai Zvi. Decline of autonomous institutions.

1760 Death of the Ba'al Shem Tov.

1764 Polish authorities abolish the Council of Four Lands.

1780 Leaders of Vilna community excommunicate the Hassidim.

1781 Joseph II of Austria's Edict of Toleration. Start of emancipation in west.

1786 Death of Rabbi Elimelech of Lejansk.

- 1787** Homberg begins the Jewish State Schools in Galicia. The beginnings of the Haskala.
- 1795** Third and final partition of Kingdom. Polish Jews become citizens of Prussia, Russia and Austro-Hungarian Empire.
- 19th c.** 35% of what was once Poland is Jewish.
- Jews fight for their civil rights and the right to preserve their national identity. Various political movements are active: Agudat Israel, the general Zionists, Mizrachi, the Bund and others. Agudat Israel represents the highly orthodox and aims to strengthen religious life in Poland and reject reform and Zionism. The Bund fights for the rights of Jewish labourers and views Zionism as a reactionary utopian dream.
- On the one hand, Jews contribute significantly to the economy, working in trade, commerce and professions but on the other, they are the victims of new forms of antisemitism.
- 1843** Faced with the dangers of modernity, Hasidim and Mitnagdim forget their differences.
- 1862** Opening of Temple in Krakow.
- 1881** Appearance of Yiddish Weeklies.
- 1882** First Aliya and large-scale emigration west.
- 1915** I. L. Peretz dies in Warsaw.
- 1915** Mass deportation of Jews from eastern front during First World War.
- 1918** Birth of the Polish State.
- 1925** Yiddish theatre founded in Warsaw by Esther Kaminski.
- 1934** Poland signs non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany and renounces the Minorities Charter.
- 1939-45** Hitler invades Poland. Three million Polish Jews are killed in Holocaust.
- 1946** Pogrom in Kielce: 43 dead, 50 seriously injured. 100,000 Jews emigrate.
- 1949** Communist government abolishes Zionist organizations: 30,000 Jews emigrate.
- 1953** Israeli consul in Warsaw is recalled to Israel, ending of diplomatic ties with Israel. 70,000 Jews leave Poland.
- 1968** After Israel's Six-Day War and increasing Communist anti-Zionism, the remaining Jews in Poland emigrate.
- 1988** Carmelite Monastery at Auschwitz.
- 1990** Free presidential elections. Renewing of full diplomatic ties with Israel. Church of Poland issues declaration that antisemitism is a sin.
- 1991** President Walesa visits Israel. Inscriptions on monument in Birkenau removed so as not to offend Jews.

Chronology of the Holocaust

30 January 1933	Adolf Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany.
28 February 1933	Hitler declares state of emergency after Reichstag fire. He consolidates power and influences election outcome.
22 March 1933	First concentration camp opens in Dachau.
1 April 1933	Boycott of Jewish shops in Germany.
10 May 1933	Public burning of books by Jews.
14 July 1933	Nazi party established as only legal political party in Germany.
15 September 1933	Nuremberg Laws instituted in Germany.
7 March 1936	Germany enters Rhineland, flouting Treaty of Versailles.
13 March 1938	Germany annexes Austria: "Anschluss".
15 July 1938	Evian Conference fails to solve Jewish refugee problem.
17 August 1938	All Jews in Germany are forced to add a Jewish name.
6 October 1938	Germany annexes the Sudetenland without British or French opposition at Munich Conference.
28 October 1938	Polish-born Jews expelled from Germany to Poland.
9 November 1938	Kristallnacht in Germany and Austria.
23 August 1939	Soviet-German non-aggression pact signed.
1 September 1939	Germany invades Poland; WWII breaks out.
27 April 1940	Himmler orders creation of Auschwitz concentration camp.
16 October 1940	Order for creation of Warsaw ghetto.
22 June 1941	Operation Barbarossa: German invasion of Soviet Union and beginning of Einsatzgruppen actions.
10 July 1941	Murder of Jews of Jedwabne by Polish citizens.
31 July 1941	Reinhardt Heydrich appointed to implement "Final Solution".
25 August 1941	Beginning of extermination of Tykocin Jews.
3 September 1941	First experimental gassings of Soviet POWs at Auschwitz.
7 December 1941	Japan attacks Pearl Harbor.
20 January 1942	Wannsee Conference: coordination of the "Final Solution".
22 July 1942	First Aktion in Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka.
18 January 1943	Second Aktion in Warsaw meets acts of resistance.
19 November 1942	Battle of Stalingrad begins.
19 April 1943	Warsaw Ghetto uprising.
11 June 1943	Heinrich Himmler orders liquidation of all ghettos.
2 August 1943	Revolt of prisoners at Treblinka.
2 October 1943	Danes rescue more than 7,200 Jews.
14 October 1943	Revolt of prisoners at Sobibor.
19 October 1943	Operation Reinhardt declared complete: Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka are closed.

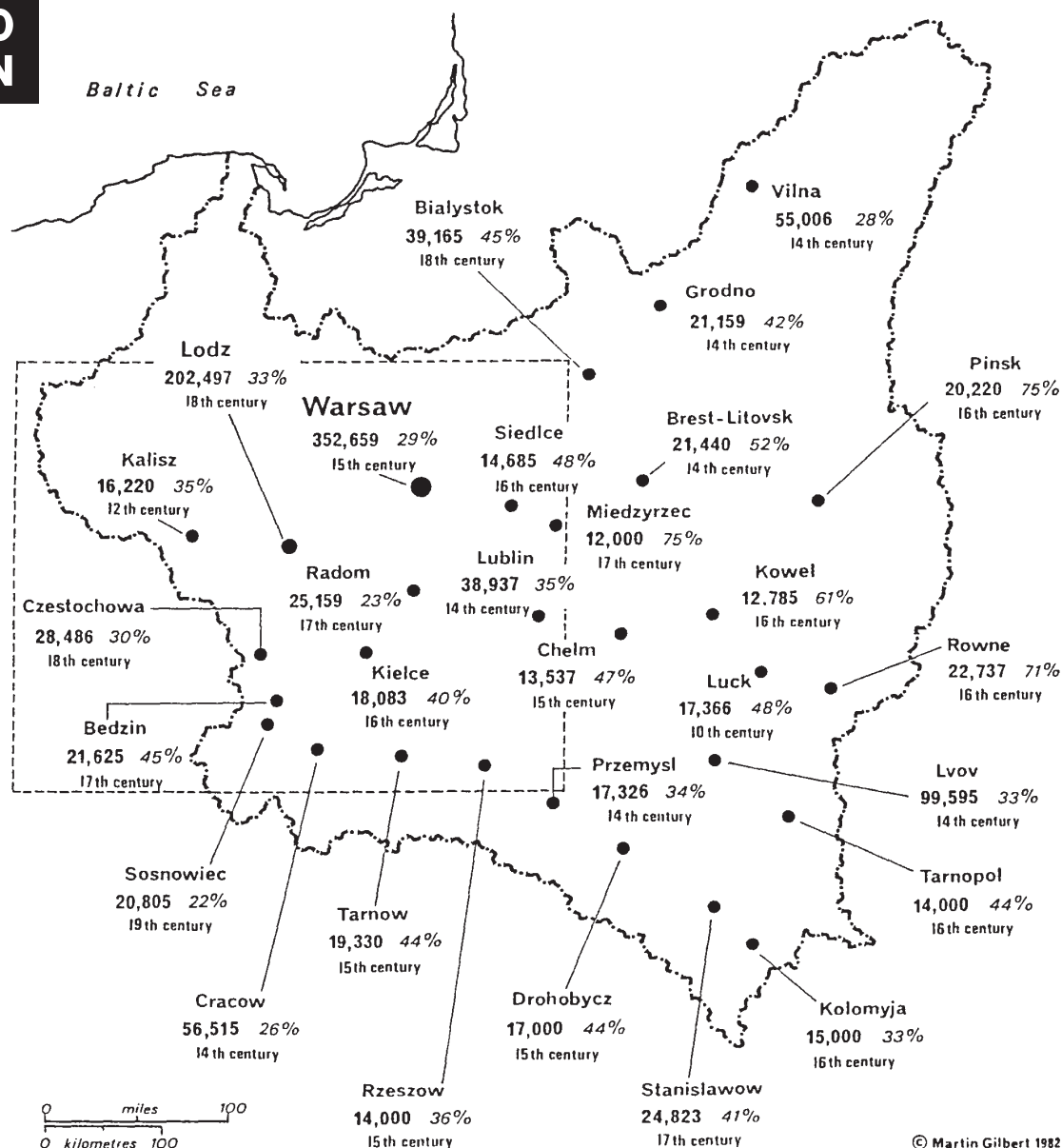
3 November 1943	“Harvest Festival”: 18,000 Jews murdered in one day at Majdanek.
18 March 1944	German invasion of Hungary.
17 May 1944	First deportation of Jews from Hungary to Auschwitz.
6 June 1944	D-Day: Allies land in Normandy.
24 July 1944	Soviets liberate Majdanek.
7 October 1944	Revolt of Sonderkommando at Auschwitz.
27 November 1944	Himmler orders end of gassing at Auschwitz.
18 January 1945	Nazis evacuate Jews from Auschwitz; Death March.
27 January 1945	Soviets liberate Auschwitz.
11 April 1945	American troops liberate Buchenwald.
30 April 1945	Hitler commits suicide.
7 May 1945	Germany surrenders unconditionally to Allies.

Estimated Number of Jews Killed in The Final Solution

Country	Estimated Pre-Final Solution Jewish Population	Estimated Jewish Pop. Annihilated	Percentage of Jewish Pop.
Poland	3,300,000	3,000,000	90
Baltic Countries	253,000	228,000	90
Germany/Austria	240,000	210,000	88
Protectorate	90,000	80,000	89
Slovakia	90,000	75,000	83
Greece	70,000	54,000	77
The Netherlands	140,000	105,000	75
Hungary	650,000	450,000	70
SSR White Russia	375,000	245,000	65
SSR Ukraine*	1,500,000	900,000	60
Belgium	65,000	40,000	60
Yugoslavia	43,000	26,000	60
Romania	600,000	300,000	50
Norway	1,800	900	50
France	350,000	90,000	26
Bulgaria	64,000	14,000	22
Italy	40,000	8,000	20
Luxembourg	5,000	1,000	20
Russia (RSFSR)*	975,000	107,000	11
Denmark	8,000	--	--
Finland	2,000	--	--
Total	8,861,800	5,933,900	67

* The Germans did not occupy all the territory of this republic.

Poland's Largest Jewish Communities on the Eve of War



© Martin Gilbert 1982

Jews Marked Out for Death, 20 January 1942



By December, 1941 the German armies were masters of Europe, and on December 7, 1941 the Japanese entered the war against the United States and Britain.

At the Wannsee suburb of Berlin, German officials gathered on January 20, 1942 to discuss the final destruction of European Jewry. They also noted, as seen on the map above, what they believed to be the precise number of Jews still to be killed. The "low" figures for the Baltic States indicate their knowledge that so many thousands had been killed already. At the Wannsee Conference plans were made for what was called the "Final Solution", to be carried out by means of slave labor for all able-bodied Jews, the separation of men from women, and mass deportation.

The Wannsee Conference also specified the number of Jews in unconquered countries for eventual destruction, including 330,000 from Britain, 18,000 from Switzerland, 6,000 from Spain, and 4,000 from Ireland.

Between 1939 and 1945, six million unarmed and innocent Jewish civilians - men, women, children and babies - were murdered in Nazi-controlled Europe, as part of a deliberate policy to destroy all traces of Jewish life and culture. As many as two million of these were killed in their own towns and villages, some confined in ghettos where death by slow starvation was a deliberate Nazi policy, others taken to be shot at mass-murder sites near where they lived. The remaining four million Jews were forced from their homes and taken by train to distant concentration camps, where they were murdered by being worked to death, starved to death, beaten to death, shot, or gassed.

THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS



The Division of Poland, 1939



Warsaw

The speech below was read by Albert Einstein at the unveiling of the Rapaport Memorial for the Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto, dedicated in Warsaw, April 19, 1948.

The monument before which you have gathered today was built to stand as a concrete symbol of our grief over the inseparable loss our martyred nation has suffered. It shall also serve as a reminder for us we have survived to remain loyal to our people and to the moral principles cherished by our fathers. Only through such loyalty may we hope to survive this age of moral decay.

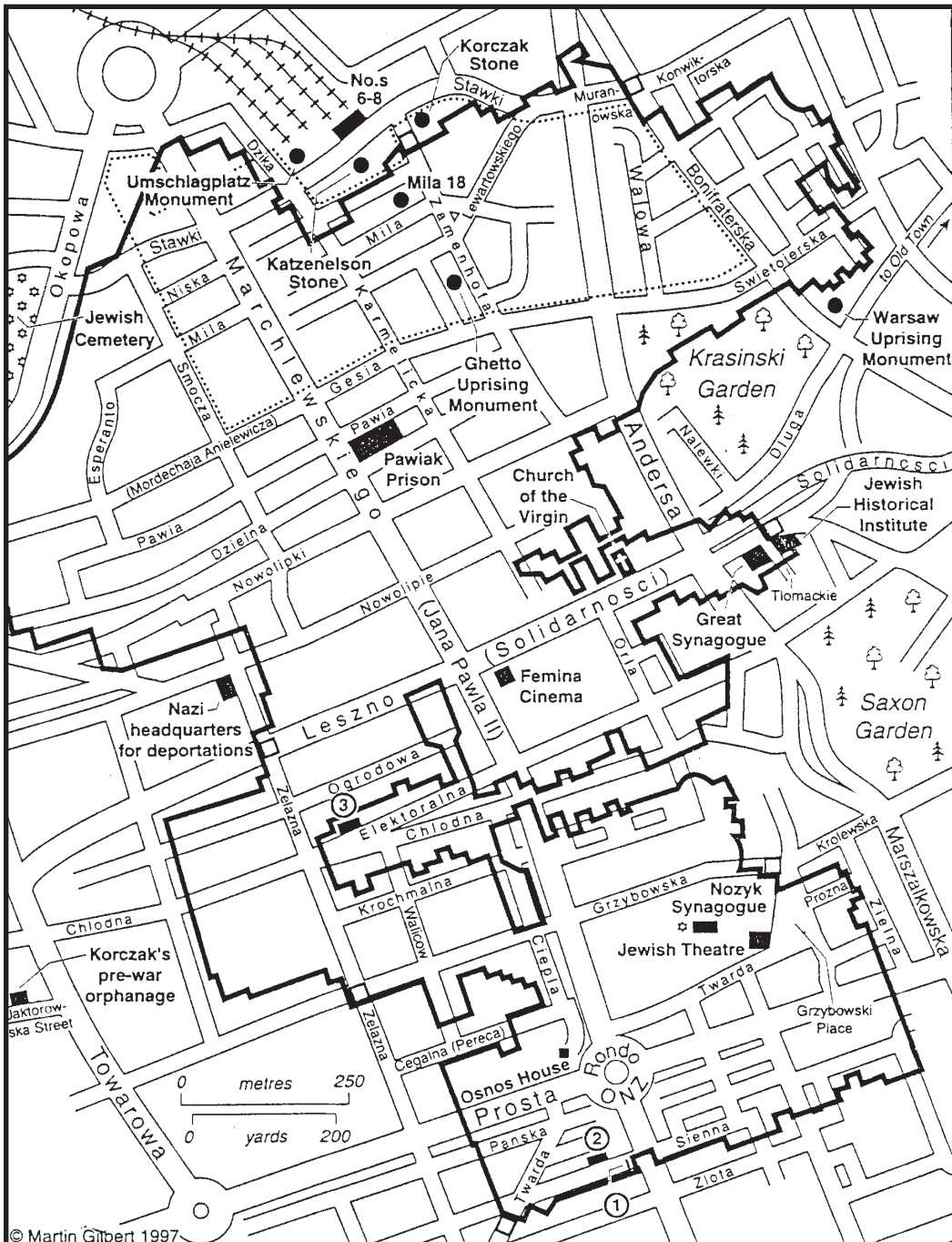
The more cruel the wrong that men commit against an individual or a people, the deeper their hatred and contempt for their victim. Conceit and false pride on the part of a nation prevent the rise of remorse for its crime. Those who have had no part in the crime, however, have no sympathy for the sufferings of the innocent victims of persecution and no awareness of human solidarity. That is why the remnants of European Jewry are languishing in concentration camps and sparsely populated lands of this earth close their gates against them. Even our right, so solemnly pledged, to a national homeland in Palestine, is being betrayed. In this era of moral degradation in which we live the voice of justice no longer has any power over men.



Let us clearly recognize and never forget this: That mutual cooperation and the furtherance of living ties between all the Jews of all lands is our sole physical and moral protection in the present situation. But for the future our hope lies in overcoming the general moral abasement which today menaces the very existence of mankind. Let us labor with all our powers, however, feeble to the end that mankind recover from its present moral degradation and again a new vitality and a new strength in its striving for right and justice as well as for a harmonious society.

Map of the Warsaw Ghetto Area

WARSAW



© Martin Gilbert 1997

- Ghetto wall established in November 1940
- Ghetto gates
- Boundary of the ghetto, September 1942 to April 1943
- Deportation railway siding (Umschlagplatz)

- ① Surviving ghetto wall
- ② Berson's and Bauman's hospital
- ③ The apartment building in which Czerniakow lived

Warsaw

Warsaw, the largest city in Poland, became the capital of Poland in 1596. There are records of Jewish residents in Warsaw from as early as the 15th century. According to a 1792 census, some 6,750 Jews lived in suburban Warsaw, comprising one-tenth of the city's residents. At this time, the Jews were actually barred from living in the heart of the city. In the 19th century, despite many restrictions imposed on the Jewish community, the Jewish population in Warsaw grew considerably. Warsaw's Jewish community became the largest Jewish community in Europe, and the second largest in the world, after New York. Before World War II some 378,000 Jews lived in Warsaw, comprising about 29% of the city's population. At this time, Jews lived in all parts of Warsaw, with many in predominantly Jewish neighborhoods.

After World War I the Jews of Warsaw suffered considerably from the policies of the Polish government. The worldwide economic crisis in 1929 also left its mark on the Jews of Poland, with approximately one-third living in poverty in the 1930s.

Despite these problems, Warsaw in the interwar period was considered the "capital" of Polish Jewry and one of the most important Jewish centers in the world. The city was home to a variety of Jewish political movements, welfare organizations, trade unions, and many cultural and religious institutions. Jewish newspapers and other publications in Polish, Yiddish and Hebrew were all printed in Warsaw. Warsaw was also home to various Jewish educational initiatives, sports organizations and youth movements as well as creativity on a wide scale vis-a-vis Jewish literature, theater and visual arts. On the eve of the Second World War, approximately 378,000 Jews lived in Warsaw, comprising about 29% of the city's population.

Jewish Life in Warsaw During the Holocaust

Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Within a few days the Polish government fled Warsaw, and on September 28, Warsaw came under Nazi rule. The military siege of Warsaw caused great suffering for all the inhabitants of the city. Within days the city became a mass of ruins and ashes. Thousands of Jews lost their lives in the German bombing raids and about a third of Jewish-owned buildings were demolished. Many thousands of Jews reacted by joining the vast stream of war refugees fleeing eastward. In late October, Warsaw became a district center of the new *Generalgouvernement* civil administration, with Ludwig Fischer serving as district governor. This new civil authority replaced the initial military regime that the German Army had established upon occupying Poland.

With the fall of Poland, the Jews of Warsaw became subjected to brutal attacks and forced labor. One of the first steps taken by the Nazis was to set up a *Judenrat* (Jewish Council) in Warsaw, under the chairmanship of Adam Czerniakow. The Nazis did not permit any Jewish institutions to function besides the *Judenrat* and welfare organizations. In November 1939 the *Generalgouvernement* issued the infamous regulations concerning the visual identification of the Jewish population, including the order for Jews to wear white armbands with a blue Star of David. Many Jews also lost any means of supporting themselves and their families as a result of tough economic regulations, such as severe restrictions on the movement of large sums of money and the freezing of bank accounts. The curfews limited the traveling of merchants and their business contacts outside the city. These and other restrictions made family life very difficult even before the ghetto was closed in November 1940. As a result, we begin to see the establishment of various public aid organizations that tried in different ways to alleviate the widespread suffering of the Jewish population. However, nothing could assuage the harsh psychological effects of public humiliations and harassments of Jews in the streets by German soldiers or the total dislocation of a family whose sole source of its meager rations was jeopardized because the breadwinner was taken off the city streets by the Germans to forced labor.

In October, 1940 the Nazis informed the Jews that a ghetto was to be established in Warsaw. The ghetto was sealed off on November 16; at its peak, it housed more than 450,000 Jews. Living conditions in the ghetto were insufferable. Six or seven people lived in one room, the food rations supplied by the Germans were vastly inadequate, and more than 80,000 people died of disease, cold and malnutrition. The German Transfer Office regulated all economic exchanges in the ghetto. In fact, only about 65,000 Jews worked during this period and even they couldn't support their families. However, most economic activity conducted by the Jews in the ghetto was illegal, including food smuggling. In order to survive, most Jews either subsisted on their savings or slowly sold all their property. Despite the grave difficulties, life for some inhabitants of the Warsaw Ghetto was rich with educational and cultural activities conducted by underground organizations. These organizations were offshoots of various Jewish political parties and youth movements that had existed before the Nazi occupation. In the Warsaw Ghetto there were secret libraries, children's classes and a symphony orchestra. In addition, prominent writers and poets continued to compose their artistic works. The Oneg Shabbat Archive was an underground enterprise led by the historian Emanuel Ringelblum. Between 1939 and 1944 Ringelblum and his team worked, inside and outside the ghetto, to document the history of the Warsaw Ghetto and other communities in Nazi-occupied Poland.

During the first half of 1942 rumors began to circulate about deportations from other ghettos, spreading panic among the ghetto inhabitants. In addition, the Germans began carrying out night raids in which Jews were plucked from their homes at random and murdered. In late July, 1942 the Germans launched a two-month-long wave of deportations from the Ghetto. Unwilling to follow Nazi orders and make the decision of whom to deport, *Judenrat* chairman Adam Czerniakow committed suicide. The fact that children had not been excluded from these orders was a breaking point for him that contributed to his decision to commit suicide. By September 12, 1942, approximately 300,000 Jews had been deported from Warsaw — 265,000 to the Treblinka extermination camp. Some 50,000 Jews remained in the Ghetto. In the following testimony, Holocaust survivor Adam Boren, born in Warsaw in 1925, describes the 1942 deportations:

“In 1942, the Germans announced that all Jews not working for German enterprises must, under penalty of death, register in the *Umschlagplatz*. They had to bring with them some clothing in one small bag and they would be given one bread for the journey to a labor camp. The German SS started rounding up people in the streets and herding them onto the *Umschlagplatz*. All of us thought that perhaps we would be better off away from the crowding and the starvation, so there was no resistance. Later, as thousands of people were taken away, families broke up and people began to hide. The Germans began surrounding whole city blocks and searching house by house. They started dragging Jews from cellars and attics and herding them to the trains. They were loaded into the cattle cars and shipped off to unknown destinations. Slowly information started filtering down about the annihilations in the murder camps. No one at the time could believe it. How could a nation that was so advanced technologically and culturally in Europe, the nation of Goethe and Heine and Beethoven murder people, women, children, old men outright?”

Source: Yad Vashem Archives 0.69/198

At the beginning of the deportations leading members of the youth movements active in the Warsaw Ghetto formed a self-defense group known as the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Zydowska Organizacja Bojowa, ZOB*). Another group formed was the Jewish Military Union (*Zydowski Zwiazek Wojskowy, ZZW*).

In January, 1943, the Nazis launched a second wave of deportations out of the Warsaw Ghetto. Believing this *aktion* to be the final liquidation of the ghetto, the Jewish ghetto fighters devised plans to resist the Germans. The deportations lasted just five days, during which some 6,000 Jews were deported and more

than 1,700 were killed inside the ghetto. Many of the Jews in the ghetto believed that they could survive by hiding until the end of the war, and in their eyes this was a form of resistance. In fact, the Germans had only planned to deport a few thousand Jews at that time. Some Jews in the ghetto became convinced that armed resistance could help them survive. The Jewish ghetto fighters, by contrast, believed that their goal was not survival, but rather resistance for the sake of resistance.

The final liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto began on April 19, 1943, on the eve of the Jewish Passover holiday. The ghetto fighters were ready in their positions. The majority of the remaining population was hiding in bunkers built over the previous months. The fighters launched the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising — the first uprising of an urban population in German-occupied Europe. After days of guerilla warfare, the Germans resorted to searching for Jews, bunker by bunker, and burning down the ghetto. The Jewish ghetto fighters fought heroically. By May 8, the Nazis discovered the leaders of the Uprising in the Milo 18 bunker.



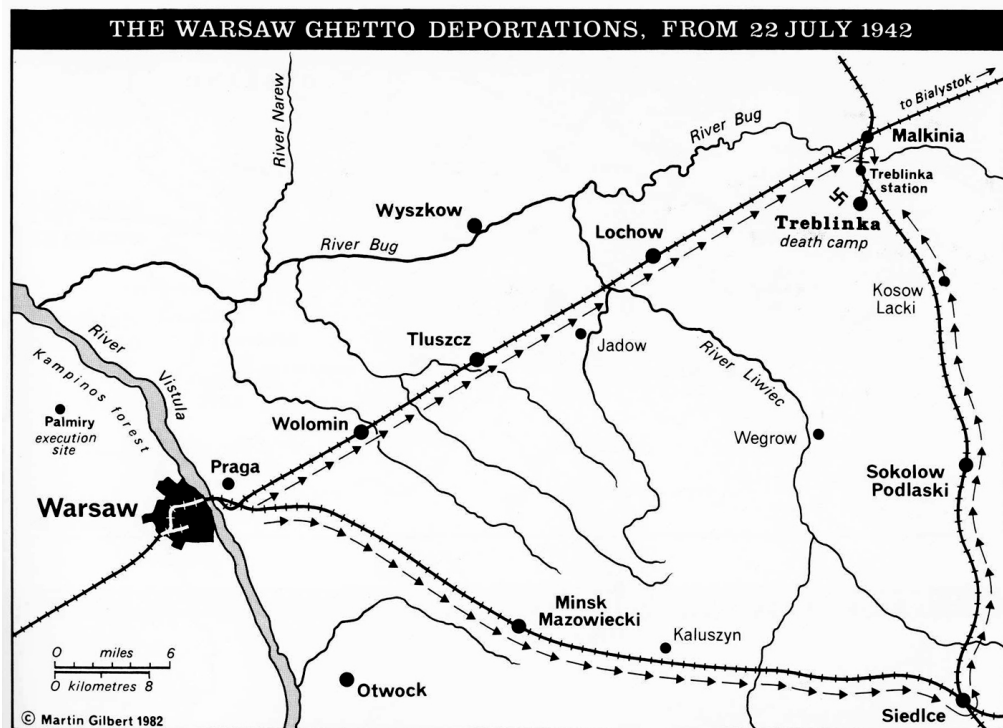
After the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, individual Jews hid in the ghetto for several months, and thousands crossed over to the Polish side of Warsaw in search of refuge. Moreover, many of these Jews were killed in the Warsaw Polish Uprising in August 1944. Warsaw was razed to the ground after the failed 1944 revolt. 150,000 Poles were killed and hundreds of thousands were sent to Nazi labor camps.

Warsaw was liberated by the Red Army on January 17, 1945.

Jewish Life in Warsaw after the Holocaust

At the end of the Second World War, about 2,000 Holocaust survivors congregated in Warsaw where they received some initial aid from the Jewish

Committee operating there. It was only with the reconstruction of Warsaw itself that Jewish institutions reopened in the city. The Institute of Jewish History resumed its activity, contributing greatly to the documentation of the destruction of European Jewry. The Central Jewish Committee also resumed activity, as did a number of Jewish social and cultural organizations. Over time, between 20,000 to 30,000 Jews, most of whom had not lived in Warsaw before the war, settled in the city. There were several waves of emigration in March, 1968 leaving behind a small Jewish community that is in the throes of revival and rejuvenation.



WARSAW

Warsaw: Sites in the Ghetto

The Uprising Statue

The Statue commemorates the Ghetto warriors. Erected in the center of the former Ghetto region, on Zamenhof Street. Built by Nathan Rapaport, the famous sculptor, who died in 1987 in New York. An exact copy has been placed on the grounds of the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem. A solemn state assembly takes place annually, near the statue, commemorating the date of the Ghetto Uprising. Near the formal memorial statue, erected in 1948, stands the original memorial statue, erected by the Ghetto warriors in 1946, marked with the Hebrew letter “ב”.

W
A
R
S
A
W



Umschlagplatz, 1945. Panoramic compilation photo.

The Umschlagplatz

A square near Zamenhof and Stavki streets, in the northern parts of the Warsaw Ghetto, near the freight train depot and the vocational school. After being gathered in the *Umschlagplatz* courtyard, most of the Warsaw Jews were sent to Treblinka, while a minority was sent to other camps. This station began to operate with the first “*aktions*” in the summer of 1942. Today the site is marked by a memorial wall inscribed in Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew, commemorating the spot. The Polish authorities erected a new memorial on the former site of the gas station.

Mila 18

The Z.O.B. (Jewish Fighting Organization) main Warsaw bunker during the April uprising. After the great Ghetto fires and losing its bases, this is where many troops assembled, with the organization’s headquarters. On May 8th the Germans surrounded the bunker. As they no longer had any hope of survival, many warriors committed suicide. Several of them were poisoned by the gas bombs hurled into their hideaway. More than one hundred warriors died here, including Mordechai Anilewicz, commander of the Uprising. The 8th of May marked a turning point in the Ghetto battles. Until that day there were few Z.O.B. victims. After conquering the bunker, S.S. General Stroop made a report

to his superiors. To this day, the warriors' bodies remain beneath the rubble. Nothing is left of the bunker. A hill of testimony was erected on the spot after the Ghetto was freed.

The Pawiak

The central jail for the Warsaw region, located inside the Ghetto. The building, which served as a Polish prison as early as the second half of the 19th century, is located at number 28 Dzhelna street. During WWII, hostages, smugglers, and suspects were brought to the Pawiak for interrogation. In its cellars the prisoners were sometimes tortured to death. The Pawiak was feared by all residents of the Ghetto. The building in question is not standing today. There is an exhibition about the Pawiak in the remaining torture chambers, and besides them, the only other element of the structure which still stands is part of the prison courtyard's entrance gate.

34 Dzhelna Street

The "Dror" center, where the youth group affiliated with the "Poalei Zion Z.S." party held its educational-conceptual activity. This youth group had a direct connection with the "Kibbutz Hameuhad" in Israel. The aid activities were focused in this base, and here the Z.O.B. (Jewish Fighting Organization) was founded on July 28th, 1942.

The Warsaw Akiva Hakhshara

On 10 Nalveki Street, in a three room apartment. Founded in 1940 by Gusta and Shimon Drenger, with thirty young participants from Krakow and Warsaw.

The "Shomer Hatzair" Center

On 23 Nalveki Street is the "Shomer Hatzair" center.

The "Gordonia" Center

When the Hakhshara groups were dispersed, the "Gordonia" pioneers gathered in an apartment at 23 Nalveki Street, which became an important center for the movement.

Additional Sites

The "Judenrat" Building (on the corner of Zamenhof and Mordechai Anilewicz streets, then called Gensha); identifying entries and walls on Zlota Street; the Three Cross Square; the Gestapo Headquarters; the bridge (on the corner of Zhlezhna and Chlodna Streets); the Church across from 34 Dzhelna Street; the Z.O.B. exit via the sewage pipes (entrance in Franciskanska, exit in Prousta corner of what is now Nardovi Street); an additional exit on Ogrodova Street. The District Court on Lashno Street; the Hospital which served as the Korczak House, before Korczak was expelled.

Warsaw: Jewish Sites

The Nozyk Synagogue

Built in 1899. One of the five largest synagogues in 20th century Warsaw. It is located in one of the courtyards on Taverda Street. Named after Zalman Nozyk, who built the synagogue and presented it to the community, the Nozyk Synagogue is unique for having been a cornerstone of Jewish Religious music and Synagogue singing. Music-loving worshippers swarmed here from distant countries. The building was destroyed during the Holocaust, and was rebuilt with Jewish funds and assistance from the Polish Government. Re-opened in 1983, it serves as the central Synagogue and seats the Chief Rabbi of Poland.

Photo on right.

The Jewish Theater

A faint echo of the theaters that were active in Warsaw since the second half of the nineteenth century. In the 1880's it was Abraham Goldfaden who founded an active theater. In the early 1900's, it was Esther Rachel Kaminski and her daughter, Ida, who set the tone in Yaacov Gordon's Theater. One of the playwrights was I.L. Peretz, another was Shalom Aleichem. In the 1920's the Jewish Theater Culture thrived, and

Zigmund Turkov's name was heard by all. During the Ghetto period, the Jewish Theater employed a cast of 135 — two of whom survived. Nowadays the Jewish theater building stands near Taverda Street, and is booked in advance. The actors receive a salary from the Polish Government, although most of the actors are not Jewish, and only use Yiddish professionally. Plays, such as the "Dibbuk", are put on to show the Jewish-Polish culture. The audience is generally not Jewish, and uses earphones to hear the simultaneous translation.



The Gensha Cemetery

Included in the Ghetto territory, the cemetery can now be entered via Okopowa Street. It has been said that the Cemetery is “full of Jewish life”. This is one of the few Jewish sites which survived in post-Holocaust Warsaw. Many of Poland’s most important Jewish leaders are buried here. Among the best known are Dr. Zamenhof, creator of Esperanto; Meir Balaban, a renowned historian; I.L. Pertez and Anski — writers and playwrights; Kaminska — the actress; and many others. Memorial statues for Janusz Korczak and for the Fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising also stand here.

The Korczak House

The Jewish orphanage still stands, and still serves as a home for impoverished children. (The orphanage that stood inside the Ghetto did not survive). The house is situated on what was once 92 Krochmalna Street. In front of the house stands a statue of Korczak.

The Tlomatzka Street Synagogue

The Great Synagogue, which was also Warsaw’s representative Synagogue. This Synagogue was unique in that it was the only one facing the street, while all others were secreted in the courtyards. The Synagogue stood for 65 years (built in 1878) and was destroyed during the Holocaust. The ceremonial demolition of the Synagogue on May 16th, 1943 marked the end of the Warsaw Uprising. That was when the long-awaited telegram was sent to Berlin, stating that “the largest Jewish quarter in Eastern Europe” had been wiped out. A high-rise office building was built on the ruins of the Synagogue.

The Warsaw Jewish Institute

Stands on Talometzka Street. The historical and research institute was formally established in 1994, but it owes its name, history, and collections to the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute. The first to launch the gigantic work of preserving the memory of Polish Jews and gathering what was left of their heritage after the Holocaust, was the Central Jewish Historical Commission, set up in December of 1944. There are currently permanent and temporary exhibitions.

Where is the World's Conscience?

I take the liberty of addressing to you my last words and through you the Polish government and people of the Allied States and the conscience of the world.

From the latest information received from Poland, it is evident that without doubt the Germans with ruthless cruelty are now murdering the few remaining Jews in Poland.

Behind the walls of the ghettos the last act of a tragedy unprecedented in history is being performed.

The responsibility for the crime of murdering all the Jewish population in Poland falls in the first instance on the perpetrators, but indirectly it also weighs on the whole of humanity, the peoples and governments of the Allied States which so far have made no effort toward a concrete action for the purpose of curtailing the crime. By passive observation of this murder of defenseless millions and the maltreatment of children and women, the men of those countries have become accomplices of criminals.

I have also to state that although the Polish government (in exile) has in a high degree contributed to stirring the opinion of the world yet it did so insufficiently for it did nothing extraordinary enough to correspond to the magnitude of the drama now being enacted in Poland.

Out of nearly 3,500,000 Polish Jews and about 700,000 Jews deported to Poland from other countries, there still lived in April of this year, according to the official information of the head of the underground organization sent to the United States through a delegate of the government, about 300,000. And the murders are still going on incessantly.

I cannot be silent and I cannot live while the remnants of the Jewish people of Poland, of whom I am a representative, are perishing.

My comrades in the Warsaw Ghetto perished with weapons in their hands in their last heroic impulse.

It was not my destiny to perish as they did together with them but I belong to them and to the mass graves.

By my death I wish to express my strongest protest against the inactivity with which the world is looking on and permitting the extermination of the Jewish people. I know how little human life is worth, especially today. But as I was unable to do anything during my life, perhaps by my death I shall continue to contribute to destroying the indifference of those who are able and would act in order to save, maybe at the last moment, this handful of Polish Jews who are still alive from certain annihilation.

— *Shmuel Zygelboym*

The Deportations of Janusz Korczak and his Children

It was an unbearably hot day. I put the children from the home at the far end of the square, near the wall. I thought that I might manage to save them that way at least until the afternoon, and possibly until the next day. I suggested to Korczak that he come with me to the ghetto officials and ask them to intervene. He refused, because he didn't want to leave the children for even a minute. They began loading the train. I stood by the column of ghetto police who were putting people in the boxcars and watched with my heart in my mouth in the hope that my stratagem would succeed. But they kept packing them in and there was still room left. Urged on by whips, more and more people were jammed into cars. Suddenly, Schmerling, the sadistic ghetto police officer whom the Germans had put in charge of the Umschlagplatz, commanded that the children be brought to the cars. Korczak went at their head. I'll never forget the sight to the end of my life. It wasn't just entering a boxcar. It was a silent, but organized protest against the murderers, a march like which no human eye had ever seen before. The children went four-by-four. Korczak went first with his head held high, leading a child with each hand. The second group was led by Stefa Wilczynska. They went to their death with a look full of contempt for their assassins. When the ghetto policeman saw Korczak, they snapped to attention and saluted. "Who is that man?" asked the Germans. I couldn't control myself any longer, but I hid the flood of tears that ran down my cheeks with my hands. I sobbed and sobbed at our helplessness in the face of such a murder.

— Joseph Arnon
"The Passion of Janusz
Korczak," *Midstream*
(May, 1973).



The Warsaw Ghetto Diaries of Dr. Hillel Seidman

Dr. Hillel Seidman (1914-1995) was a researcher, author, and Chassidic Jew who kept a diary chronicling daily life in the Warsaw Ghetto. Written between July 1942 and January 1943, the diary, miraculously rescued from Nazi hands, records the Ghetto's last days. Dr. Seidman managed to escape the ghetto in January 1943, and ended up in Vittel, a prison camp in Vichy, France. He secured a false Paraguayan passport and survived the war, one of only twelve prisoners to survive Vittel. He died in 1995.

WARSAW

II

Wtorek 28 lipca 1942

Wid. Sklepy J. zn. „rodzicielskie” ^{zapa}
które sprzedawały chleb na karty żywnościowe - pracażnie, zawiązkę. Wasciele, albo
wysiedzeni, albo rąpci pracażni „rodzicielskie”,
gdzie mają uadzię, będą lepiej chronieni.
Mama dowodem chleba. Jedym. Ustaje ten
wszelki szm i giel, wszelkie nicelale
sprawdzenie chleba. ~~to~~ jedyn
rodz. shape, mat. „placówki”
pracy - robotników żydowskich, idę
wysiedziących codziennie do pracy
poza płotkiem i przynoszących
do po kuchenku 2 chleba.
Cena kg chleba dochodzi
do 100 złotych polskich (1000
franków francuskich). Ludzie
umierają w domach, na ulicach. Boją
się wychodzić do kuchni ludowych,
gdzie karzący 2 wch. solącamy

Today, they expelled the residents of the orphanages.

There had been no shortage of orphans in the ghetto.
Hunger, typhus, and German brutality had “supplied” them in abundance.

...the oldest, and largest, orphanage was on Krochmalna Street—
recently moved to Sienna Street.

It was directed by ***Dr. Janusz Korczak.***

His name was known across the country,
and far beyond the borders of Poland.
He was a distinguished author—
a source of pride for Polish literature—
who wrote many books about children, and for children.

He was a leading voice in the field of education,
a gifted lecturer, an extraordinary teacher,
and most of all—an exceptional human being.

Dr. Korczak was also a pediatrician with a thriving private practice.
But he left behind his wealthy patients.

He gave up his profession—
and devoted his life to the poorest of the poor—
to children with no parents.

To them, he was both father and mother.

He surrounded them with warmth, care, and love.
And the children could feel it—instinctively.
They knew a warm heart beat for them.
And their hearts overflowed with love for “the Doctor,” as they called him.

In this way, Korczak raised entire generations—
guiding them through life’s hardships with thought, advice, and help—
until they stood on their own.

From every corner of the world—
from America, from Eretz Yisrael,
from New Zealand, England, and Australia—
letters arrived at the orphanage from his former students.
Filled with warmth, gratitude, and sometimes, longing for their teacher.

And so too in the present.
Even in the darkest moments of occupation—
when hunger and despair ruled—

Korczak's thoughts were fixed on one thing:
how to find a slice of bread,
a spoonful of stew,
or a little milk—
to nourish "his" children.

He knocked on every door of power in the ghetto,
begging for food.

And when he succeeded—
his face would light up with joy.
That was his reward—
for sleepless nights and days full of worry.

But now...
Today...
The orphanage must be evacuated.

Korczak could stay behind—
he was a doctor.
The Jewish Council could still protect him.
He was safe.

But Korczak refused.

He would not abandon his orphans.

He went with them.

A crowd of children stood before the orphanage on Sienna Street.
Children, children, children...
Little ones, tiny ones, toddlers.
Some older.

All quiet.
All gaunt.
Some held small bundles.
Others, books or notebooks.
None of them cried.

Only here and there, a single tear rolled down a pale cheek.

They walked down the stairs slowly—
lined up in rows—
with amazing discipline.

All eyes turned to “the Doctor.”
He was with them.
So—what was there to fear?

They were not alone.

Korczak buttoned a child’s coat.
Straightened another’s cap.
Lifted a bundle.
Wiped away a tear.

Then the procession began.
The children marched out—
on their final journey.

And many understood...
They would not return.

These young Jewish lives, so full of potential—
of talent, of soul—
were walking quietly, with dignity, toward their end.

They were silent.
But their eyes revealed everything.

They marched in rows—
calmly, solemnly—
led by ***Janusz Korczak.***

The symbol of love,
of goodness,
defeated by the brutal enemy.

But in truth—

He was the victor.

For in him,
the spirit of the Jewish people—
its kindness,
its self-sacrifice—
lived on.

Even as the beast crushed the man—
humanity stood tall.

Korczak's Declaration of Children's Rights

As a children's advocate, Janusz Korczak spoke of the need for a Declaration of Children's Rights long before any such document was drawn up by the Geneva Convention (Korczak: 1924) or the United Nations General Assembly (Korczak: 1959). The Declaration he envisaged — not a plea for goodwill but a demand for action — was left uncompleted at the time of his death. Culling through *How to Love a Child*, *The Child's Right to Respect*, and other works, I have compiled the rights that Korczak considered most essential:

The child has the right to love.

(Korczak: "Love the child, not just your own.")

The child has the right to respect.

(Korczak: "Let us demand respect for shining eyes, smooth foreheads, youthful effort and confidence. Why should dulled eyes, a wrinkled brow, untidy gray hair, or tired resignation command greater respect?")

The child has the right to optimal conditions in which to grow and develop.

(Korczak: "We demand: do away with hunger, cold, dampness, stench, overcrowding, overpopulation.")

The child has the right to live in the present.

(Korczak: "Children are not people of tomorrow; they are people today.")

The child has the right to be himself or herself.

(Korczak: "A child is not a lottery ticket, marked to win the main prize.")

The child has the right to make mistakes.

(Korczak: "There are no more fools among children than among adults.")

The child has the right to fail.

(Korczak: "We renounce the deceptive longing for perfect children.")

The child has the right to be taken seriously.

(Korczak: "Who asks the child for his opinion and consent?")

The child has the right to be appreciated for what he is.

(Korczak: "The child, being small, has little market value.")

The child has the right to desire, to claim, to ask.

(Korczak: "As the years pass, the gap between adult demands and children's desires becomes progressively wider.")

The child has the right to have secrets.

(Korczak: "Respect their secrets.")

The child has the right to "a lie, a deception, a theft."

(Korczak: "He does not have the right to lie, deceive, steal.")

The child has the right to respect for his possessions and budget.

(Korczak: "Everyone has the right to his property, no matter how insignificant or valueless.")

The child has the right to education.**The child has the right to resist educational influence that conflicts with his or her own beliefs.**

(Korczak: "It is fortunate for mankind that we are unable to force children to yield to assaults upon their common sense and humanity.")

The child has the right to protest an injustice.

(Korczak: "We must end despotism.")

The child has the right to a Children's Court where he can judge and be judged by his peers.

(Korczak: "We are the sole judges of the child's actions, movements, thoughts, and plans... I know that a Children's Court is essential, that in fifty years there will not be a single school, not a single institution without one.")

The child has the right to be defended in the juvenile-justice court system.

(Korczak: "The delinquent child is still a child... Unfortunately, suffering bred of poverty spreads like lice: sadism, crime, uncouthness, and brutality are nurtured on it.")

The child has the right to respect for his grief.

(Korczak: "Even though it be for the loss of a pebble.")

The child has the right to commune with God.**The child has the right to die prematurely.**

(Korczak: "The mother's profound love for her child must give him the right to premature death, to ending his life cycle in only one or two springs... Not every bush grows into a tree.")

– from *The King of the Children: The Life And Death Of Janusz Korczak*, by Betty Jean Lifton (St. Martin's Griffin New York, ISBN: 0-312-15560-3). The complete text can be found on the Website: <http://www.korczak.com/Biography/kap-0.htm>

Mordecai Anilewicz's Last Letter (April 1943)

It is now clear to me that what took place exceeded all expectations. In our opposition to the Germans we did more than our strength allowed — but now our forces are waning. We are on the brink of extinction. We forced the Germans to retreat twice — but they returned stronger than before.

One of our groups held out for forty minutes; and another fought for about six hours. The mine which was laid in the area of the brush factory exploded as planned. Then we attacked the Germans and they suffered heavy casualties. Our losses were generally low. That is an accomplishment too. Z— fell, next to his machine gun.

I feel that great things are happening and that this action which we have dared to take is of enormous value.

We have no choice but to go over to partisan methods of fighting as of today. Tonight, six fighting groups are going out. They have two tasks — to reconnoiter the area and to capture weapons. Remember, “short-range weapons” are of no use to us. We employ them very rarely. We need many rifles, hand grenades, machine guns and explosives.

I cannot describe the conditions in which the Jews of the ghetto are now “living.” Only a few exceptional individuals will be able to survive such suffering. The others will sooner or later die. Their fate is certain, even though thousands are trying to hide in the cracks and rat holes. It is impossible to light a candle, for lack of air. Greetings to you who are outside. Perhaps a miracle will occur and we shall see each other again one of these days. It is extremely doubtful.

The last wish of my life has been fulfilled. Jewish self-defense has become a fact. Jewish resistance and revenge have become actualities. I am happy to have been one of the first Jewish fighters in the ghetto.

Where will rescue come from?

— Eds. Jacob Glatstein, Israel Knox, and Samuel Margoshes;
Anthology of Holocaust Literature, pp. 334-335.



Haim Kaplan: Excerpts from *The Scroll of Agony*

November 13, 1941

The journal is my life, my companion and my confidant. Without it I would be lost. In it I pour out all my heart's feelings, until I feel somewhat relieved. When I am angry and irritable and my blood boils; when I am full of reproach and bitterness because I have so little strength and capacity to fight the vicious waves that threaten to engulf me; when my hands tremble with inner feeling — I take refuge in the journal, and am immediately enwrapped in the inspiration of the Shekinah of creativity, though I doubt whether the task of documentation with which I am occupied is worthy of being called “creativity.” In the future let them evaluate it as they may: the main point is that I find repose for my soul in it, and that is enough for me...

April 18, 1942

The evening of the Holy Sabbath, 1 [month missing], 5702, was a night of horror and dread in the miserable ghetto. The Nazis committed a massacre against the Jews, and much innocent blood was shed. Darkness covered the murderer's abominations, and aside from officers of the Jewish police force, no one was present at the time of the murder, though the echo of the shooting reached the ears of all the inhabitants of the ghetto in the silence of the night. Most people didn't know why or wherefore there was shooting. Only with the light of morning when we found the victims at the gates of our houses, did we know that our calamity was as vast as the sea.

Just a day or two before the slaughter it was felt in the air of the ghetto that some catastrophe was in the offing. We sought confirmation in the events of Lublin. In what way is Warsaw favored over Lublin? The battle cry, “Destroy, murder, wipe out,” was the same everywhere. Little Lublin was destroyed in a few days. Warsaw was larger and would be destroyed in a few weeks. Greater confirmation was given by rumors that began to spread, saying that the same battalion that had acted in Lublin was coming to carry out a massacre in Warsaw too.

In addition to what has been said, at this time, on the border between the ghetto and the Aryan quarter, a Yonak (hoodlum) was killed, a type of ruffian and bully who supported himself with theft and strong-arm methods. Some of them are Ukrainians and some are Germans. This time a German Yonak was killed, put to death by a violent criminal like himself because of a smuggling dispute. His murderer was known to the authorities. But that didn't prevent them from concocting the false accusation that a Jewish hand was involved.

Therefore, our hearts prophesied some impending evil. A person's heart tells him, and that of a nation — even more so.

The night before the slaughter eighteen Jewish policemen who speak

German well were summoned to accompany the murderers on their way. A secret movement arose in the ghetto, and in a whisper various words were passed. The Jewish policemen calmed the angry crowd, saying that not a hair on their heads would be harmed!

The killing began at midnight. Small groups of four murderers with lists in their hands started going from door to door, arresting those “condemned”

“The whole nation is sinking in a sea of horror and cruelty... I do not know if anyone else is recording the daily events... Anyone who keeps such a record endangers his life, but this doesn’t alarm me. I sense within me the magnitude of this hour and my responsibility to it. I have an inner awareness that I am fulfilling a national obligation.”

**— Kaplan Diary,
January 1942**

to death, with a Jewish policeman showing them the way. They held pistols in their hands, and machine guns were strapped to their waists. They rang the bell at the gate. The porter would hurry to open the gate, and the murderers beat him shamefully, ‘til his soul nearly fled. And if, for any reason, the porter tarried a little and didn’t hurry to open the door in the wink of an eye, he was the first victim. In that fashion six porters fell on the night on the slaughter, though their names were not on the list

prepared on the day before. Here’s something amazing: unlike their usual ways, they behaved with the requisite courtesy this time, saying “good evening” on their arrival and politely inviting the condemned man to come with them. On their way out to the courtyard a powerful searchlight lit up the darkness. Without any unnecessary delay they stood the condemned man up against the wall and put an end to his life with two or three shots. They left the body in the gate and immediately departed, hurrying on to a new killing.

How many squads of murderers like that dispersed throughout the ghetto to shed innocent blood? It’s hard to say. But the total number of murders is known to us: fifty-two dead and twelve wounded! In the morning light their corpses were found splayed out in the doorways. There was no trial or judgment. Officially they were not accused of any crime or sin — in darkness the list was prepared, and in darkness the sentences were executed. Not a living Jewish soul knows why, for what reason they were killed...

— Haim Kaplan, *The Scroll of Agony*; Ed. David Roskies, *The Literature of Destruction*, pp. 435, 448-449.

Rahel Auerbach: Yizkor, 1943

I saw a flood once in the mountains. Wooden huts, torn from their foundations were carried along the raging waters. One could still see lighted lamps in them; and men, women, and children in their cradles were tied to the ceiling beams. Other huts were empty inside, but one could see a tangle of arms waving from the roof, like branches blowing in the wind waving desperately toward heaven, toward the river banks for help. At a distance, one could see mouths gaping, but one could not hear the cries because the roar of the waters drowned out everything.

And that's how the Jewish masses flowed to their destruction at the time of the deportations. Sinking as helplessly into the deluge of destruction...

Who can render the stages of the dying of a people? Only the shudder of pity for one's self and for others. And again illusion: waiting for the chance miracle. The insane smile of hope in the eyes of the incurable patient. Ghastly reflections of color on the yellowed face of one who is condemned to death...

Ah, the ways of Warsaw — the black soil of Jewish Warsaw. My heart weeps even for the pettiest thief on Krochmalna Street; even for the worst of the knife-wielders of narrow Mila, because even there they were killed for being Jewish. Anointed and purified in the brotherhood of death.

Ah, where are you, petty thieves of Warsaw? you illegal street vendors and sellers of rotten apples. And you, the more harmful folk — members of great gangs who held their own courts; who supported their own synagogues in the Days of Awe; who conducted festive funerals and who gave alms like the most prosperous burghers.

Ah, the mad folk of the Jewish street! Disordered sooth sayers in a time of war.

Ah, bagel sellers on winter evenings.

Ah, the poverty stricken children of the ghetto. Ghetto peddlers; ghetto smugglers supporting their families; loyal and courageous to the end. Ah, the poor barefoot boys moving through the autumn mire with their boxes of cigarettes. "Cigarettes! Cigarettes! Matches! Matches!" The voice of the tiny cigarette seller crying his wares on the corner of Leszno and Karmelicka Streets still rings in my ears...

Hitler finally achieved his greatest ambition of the war. And finally, his dreadful enemy was defeated and fell: the little boy on the corner of Leszno and Karmelicka Streets; of Smocza, and Nowolipie; of Dzika Street. The weapons of the women peddlers reached to every market square...

Not long ago, I saw a woman in the streetcar, her head thrown back, talking to herself. I thought that she was either drunk or out of her mind. It turned out that she was a mother who had just received the news that her son, who had been

rounded up in the street, had been shot.

“My child,” she stammered, paying no attention to the other people in the streetcar, “my son, my beautiful, beloved son.”

I too would like to talk to myself like one mad or drunk, the way that woman did in the Book of Judges who poured out her heart unto the Lord and whom Eli drove from the Temple [See 1 Samuel 1].

I may neither groan nor weep. I may not draw attention to myself in the street. And I need to groan; I need to weep. Not four times a year. I feel the need to say Yizkor four times a day...

At the end of the prayer in which everyone inserts the names of members of his family there is a passage recited for those who have no one to remember them and who, at various times, have died violent deaths because they were Jews. And it is people like those who are now in the majority.

— Ed. David Roskies, *The Literature of Destruction*, pp. 459-464



The Jewish Population Disbelieves Reports of the Extermination

From a report by Yitzhak Zuckerman in Warsaw in March 1944, and sent to London on May 24, 1944 through the Polish Underground.

The liquidation of the Jews of the Government-General began at Passover, 1942. The first victims were the Jews of the city of Lublin, and shortly after that the Jews of the whole district of Lublin. They were evacuated to Belzec, and there they were killed in new gas chambers that had been built specially for this purpose. The Jewish Underground newspapers gave detailed descriptions of this mass slaughter. But [the Jews] of Warsaw did not believe it! Common human sense could not understand that it was possible to exterminate tens and hundreds of thousands of Jews. They decided that the Jews were being transported for agricultural work in the parts of Russia occupied by the Germans. Theories were heard that the Germans had begun on the productivization of the Jewish lower-level bourgeoisie! The Jewish press was denounced and charged with causing panic, although the descriptions of the “rooting out” of the population corresponded accurately to the reality. Not only abroad were the crimes of the Germans received with disbelief, but even here, close by Ponary, Chelmno, Belzec and Treblinka, did this information get no hearing! This unjustified optimism developed together with the lack of information, which was the result of the total isolation from the outside world and the experience of the past. Had not the Germans for two-and-a-half years carried out many deportations of Jews — from Krakow, from Lublin, from the Warsaw district and from the “Reich?” Certainly there had been not a few victims and blood had been shed during these deportations, but total extermination?

There were some people who believed it, however. The events at Ponary and Chelmno were a fact, but — it was said — “that was just a capricious act of the local authorities.” For, after all, the German authorities in the Government-General did not have the same attitude to the ghettos in the cities and the small towns, not until death brought an equal fate to all. More than once, in various places, the reaction to the information we had about the liquidation of the Jews was: “that cannot happen to us here.”

It was of course the Germans themselves who created these optimistic attitudes. Through two-and-a-half years they prepared the work of exterminating the three-and-a-half million Jews of Poland with German thoroughness. They rendered the Jewish masses helpless with the aid of individual killings, oppression, and starvation, with the aid of the ghettos and deportations. In years of unceasing experiments, the Germans perfected their extermination methods. In Vilna, they had needed several days to murder a thousand Jews. In Chelmno half an hour was enough to kill a hundred, and at Treblinka ten thousand were murdered every day!...

— Eds. Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, and Abraham Margoliot;
Documents On the Holocaust, pp. 277-278.

Yankel Wiernik:

A Year in Treblinka Horror Camp

Translated from the Yiddish by Moshe Spiegel

The Treblinka camp was divided into two sections. In Camp One there was a railroad spur and a debarkation platform for unloading human cargo. Next was a large area where the belongings of the newcomers would be laid out. The foreign Jews brought the most luggage. Nearby was an infirmary (measuring 30 x 1 x 2 meters). Two men worked there, wearing white smocks and Red-Cross armbands, and passing as physicians. From the arrivals they chose the aged and ill, and seated them on a long bench facing a trench. Behind them stood Germans and Ukrainians. They killed the victims by shooting them in the back, so the bodies fell at once into the mass grave. When they had assembled a large number of corpses, they gathered them together and set them on fire. They were consumed by the bright flames.

Nearby stood barracks occupied by Germans and Ukrainians. There was an office building, barracks for Jewish workers, workshops, stables, pigsties, food depots and ammunition magazines. Trucks were parked in the courtyard. To the unsuspecting observer the place looked like a genuine labor camp.

Camp Two was altogether different. The workers' barracks was 30 x 10 meters. Here was a laundry, a small laboratory, a special domicile for seventeen women, a sentry house and a well. There were also thirteen chambers in which the victims were asphyxiated by gas. The buildings were surrounded by barbed wire. Both wire barricades were three meters high. Between the fences there were tangles of steel wire. Ukrainian sentries stood all around. The entire camp was fenced with barbed wire four meters high. The fence was adorned with small shrubs. There were four observation towers, each four stories high, and six one-story towers, fifty meters high. Beyond the last barrier anti-tank guns were stationed.

When I arrived at the camp, three gas chambers were functioning. The remaining ten were added during my stay. Each chamber measured about twenty-five square meters and was two meters high. The roof opening was hermetically sealed, and the terra-cotta floor sloped toward the debarkation platform.

The brick building was separated from Camp One by a wooden wall. Both walls, of wood and of masonry, formed a corridor rising eighty centimeters above the roof. The gas chambers were connected with the corridor. Hermetically closed steel doors provided entry into each chamber. A platform, raised above the ground, connected the three chambers. The doors of every room on the side of Camp Two opened only from the outside, swinging upward and out with the help of iron supports, and were shut by bolts fixed in wooden frames. The victims were ushered through the doors from the corridor, and their bodies were

dragged through the doors facing Camp Two. Along the gas chambers stood an electric station, about as large as the chambers but somewhat higher. This station provided light for both camps. A motor from a Soviet tank pumped in the gas, which reached the chambers through influx valves. The speediness of the execution depended upon the quantity of the gas intake.

Two Ukrainians operated the death machines. One was called Ivan, a tall man with pleasant eyes, nevertheless a sadist. He found much enjoyment in the tortures and agonies of the victims. More than once he ran to us and nailed our ears to the walls, or ordered us to lie down and beat us savagely. In his sadistic frenzy he joked and laughed uproariously. He murdered his victims in various ways, according to his whims. The other, Nicholai, was shorter, pale and looked as if spiritually possessed.

The day I first saw men, women and children being led to their doom I nearly went mad. I tore my hair and wept unrestrainedly. I suffered most when I looked at the little ones walking beside their mothers, or at the others walking alone, who had no thought of the quick and cruel death impending. Their eyes were wide with fear and wonder. "What is all this? What is it for?" seemed to be congealed on their lips. When they saw the stony faces of their parents, however, they kept silent and prepared for whatever might come. They remained still or nestled against one another or cuddled up to their parents, awaiting the ghastly end. Suddenly the entrance doors would swing open. Ivan would appear with a thick gas pipe, a meter long. Nicholai was with him, swinging a sword. At a signal the victims would be driven in, clubbed and lashed without mercy. To this day the fearful screams of the women and the crying of the children ring in my ears. There was despair and agony in the screams, a plea for mercy, a cry to God for vengeance. I shall never forget the horrible sights there.

Into the chamber of twenty-five square meters 450 to 500 people were jammed. The congestion was unbelievable. The victims carried in the children, somehow hoping thus to save them from death. On their way to die they were beaten and driven by truncheons and gas pipes. Dogs were set upon them; barking, they threw themselves upon the victims. Everyone, eager to escape the blows and the dogs, rushed screaming into the lethal chamber. The stronger pushed the weaker. But the tumult did not long endure. The doors closed with a clang on the packed chamber. The motor was connected with the inflow apparatus and switched on. In twenty-five minutes, at the most, all lay dead. But they did not really lie, for they had no room to fall. They died standing, their legs and arms entangled. There were no more screams. Mothers and children were clasped in death's embrace. There was no friend or foe, no envy. No one was more beautiful or ugly — all were suffocated, yellowed by gas. No rich, no poor — all were alike before the Lord.

Why all this? I found it most difficult to stay alive, but I had to live, to give the world the story of this depravity, this bestial depravity.

Their fiendish operation over, Ivan and Nicholai looked around to see that all was in order. They went around to the other side, where the doors faced the loading station. They opened the doors and tossed out the bodies. The task of carrying the corpses to the mass grave devolved on us, though we were very weary after a day's labor at building. But protest would merely bring us beatings, and the same death, or an even more terrible one. So we did as we were told. A *Hauptmann*, of medium stature and with pince-nez, whose name I did not know, stood over us. All he did was yell and beat us. I fumed a pleading glance toward him; he halted for a moment. "If you weren't a carpenter you'd be killed!" he said. I looked about me. The other laborers were getting the same treatment. A whole pack of dogs was attacking us, helping the Germans and Ukrainians who were lashing us. One quarter of the workers were felled. We hurled the newly dead into the mass grave indiscriminately. Our numbers had been reduced when we returned. Luck was with me, for after the *Hauptmann* had gone the *Unterscharführer* had let me off further work.

While working in Camp One I saw our brethren being conducted into gas chambers, and the fearful agonies they were forced to suffer. New trainloads arrived. As soon as the train departed, the women and children were driven into the barracks. The men were left in the court. Then the women and children were ordered to disrobe. The more naive women took out towels and soap, thinking they were about to bathe. The murderers came to demand order and quiet. They began their beatings and tortures. The children cried. Grown-ups sobbed and shrieked. But nothing availed. The lashing became more powerful. It weakened many, gave strength to others. Then the girls and women entered the barber's room for haircutting. Now they felt sure they were going to the baths. Through the other exit they were conducted to Camp Two, where they stood naked, awaiting their turn, in the bitterest frost. Tiny tots stood barefoot and naked in the open. For a long period they awaited their turn in the gas chambers. The children's feet froze to the earth. They wept and shuddered. The Germans and Ukrainians paced up and down the ranks beating them. Ivan's favorite victims were the little ones. When he assailed women who begged him to desist because they held children in their arms, he would tear the child from the woman's grasp, tear it in two, or, holding it by feet or hand, smash its head against a wall. These were not rare instances — they were repeated at every few steps.

The men suffered a hundredfold more terribly. They undressed in the court, and were compelled to carry their clothes and place them in an orderly fashion among other heaps of garments; then they were sent into the women's barracks and bidden to carry the clothes from there to the same piles. When they again resumed their places in the rows, the guard picked out the strong, healthy and well-built men and started torturing them. They were beaten into a bloody pulp, in the most savage ways. Then, massed together, women and men, old people and children, they started off at a signal. They were to go from Camp One to Camp

Two, to the gas chambers. When they came to a certain small building, an official seated therein ordered them to surrender all articles of value. Some, still under the illusion that they would be permitted to live, took the trouble to conceal everything possible. But the hangmen found everything — if not before death, then after. Everyone passing through this building had to raise his or her hands. Thus, with arms up-raised, the entire sorry procession went to the chambers of death. There a Jew, chosen by the Germans, was stationed as a so-called “bath master.” He ordered everyone to enter the room at once, since the water was becoming cold; and thus they were forced in, amid shrieks and blows. As already related, the space was very narrow. Men suffocated in the close quarters. Since the motor for the new chambers was functioning poorly, the unfortunates there, unable to move, suffered interminably. Not even Satan could have thought of more fearful torment. When the chambers were reopened, some few might be found half alive, and they were dispatched by rifle butt, a bullet, or vigorous kick. Sometimes the victims were left in the chambers all night, without using the motor. The close confinement and pressure were able to kill most of them, but many remained alive, particularly the children, who had greater endurance and were removed still breathing. A German revolver, however, soon remedied this. Perhaps the worst part was the standing stark naked in the frost, awaiting the horrible death. But the chambers themselves were no less horrible.

The hangmen greeted each new contingent with wild joy. To allay suspicion of their ultimate disposition, the deportees had been sent in passenger coaches and permitted to take along everything they considered needful. They arrived well clad, bearing much food and clothing. Some had large amounts of fats, coffee, tea and various foods in their luggage. But upon arrival they were dragged from the cars and realized the horrible truth quickly enough. On the second day, after laborious hours of burying them, there was not a sign left of them save their clothes and food.

The number of trainloads grew from day to day — now there were thirteen gas chambers operating. There were days when 20,000 were asphyxiated. The screams and sobs and groans never left our ears. The corpse-removal crew, still kept alive, fasted and wept on the days when the trains came in. The more weak and emotional ones broke down and committed suicide. These were generally the more intelligent. When they returned to the barracks after their ghastly work, still hearing the screams of the doomed, they would hang themselves during the night. Fifteen or twenty each night. They could not longer endure the torture of the German officers, or the suffering of the doomed.

Treblinka

The construction of the Treblinka B camp began in March 1942. The Polish inmates of the nearby Treblinka A leveled the ground, together with Jews caught for this purpose in nearby towns. Late in April the central structure of the camp, Death House One, was ready.

The size of the entire camp was 5000 hectares. It was surrounded by a hedge which was heavily interwoven with barbed wire. One part of the fence ran through a young forest in the north. Observation towers equipped with powerful floodlights were situated on the four corners, and on some low hills at its center. The guard, the *Lagerschutz*, was composed of Ukrainians for the most part. The western borderline was laid out on a railroad track with a siding. A ramp ran along this siding; from the ramp, a wide gate led to an open space that could hold two to three thousand people. The lot was separately fenced with barbed wire. In the northern part of the plot there was a large wooden shack. Beyond the southern fence was a sorting-place for clothes, called *Lampensortierungsplatz* (sorting lot for rags). Farther to the south was an execution lot, for the chief commander of the camp, and a grave-lot, for his victims. The fenced-in arrival square was connected with the general area of the camp by a gate in the northeastern corner of the fence. A road led from that gate eastward, for some 200 meters, and then turned south at a right angle parallel to a thin wood, and finally reached an unfinished building. The building had a peculiar appearance. It looked like an unfinished shell of a brick building 40 meters long and 15 wide; by the middle of September, when information on Treblinka arrived, this building was nearly completed. Its construction probably began during the action, perhaps in mid-August, by Jewish artisans selected from those brought for extermination.

Typically, the necessary bricks were hauled from Warsaw in freightcars attached to the rear of each transport-train. The bricks were loaded at the Warsaw *Umschlagplatz* by Jews. An eyewitness described the building's interior as follows: one corridor 3 meters wide ran through the center, with five rooms or chambers on each side. The height of the chambers was 2 meters, and the area 35 square meters.

There were no windows in the execution-chambers, but there were doors to the central corridor, and a kind of trapdoor leading to the outside. Ramps adjoining the trapdoors from the outside had a surface which was slightly concave so that they resembled huge basins. Workers were assigned to assemble pipes for steam. This building became Death House Number Two.

A forest track bypassed this building, and ran through the wood along the west wall, terminating at Death House Number One after several turns. Death House Number One was positioned at a right angle to Number Two.

Relatively speaking, the easiest work in the death camp was the sorting of clothes of the murdered; at this job one could also eat one's fill, since the

“resettled” Jews had been told to bring provisions— bread, jam, shortening, fat and sugar. But the chief would not let them stay at this job for long. After a few days he would order them to be transferred to grave-work.

Openings in the Jewish auxiliary services would be filled from incoming transports. Normally, two transports arrived daily, in the morning and evening. At more intensive times, there were several a day. Of the scores of boxcars in a transport, a few would come to a halt at the camp, while others would be towed away to the side, to wait until the detached cars were processed and unloaded. The emptying of the cars was done swiftly, and the auxiliary service received the newcomers on the arrival lot. Orders in Yiddish directed women and children to the shack, while men remained in the open. They would see a poster with a giant inscription “*Achtung, Warschaner!*” (although masses of arrivals came from other places) under which was written “Do not worry about your future... all of you are headed for the east, to work; while you work, your wives shall take care of your houses. But first you must bathe and your clothes must be cleaned of lice. Deposit your valuables at the local safe deposit box, for which you will receive a proper receipt. You shall get everything back after bathing and delousing.”

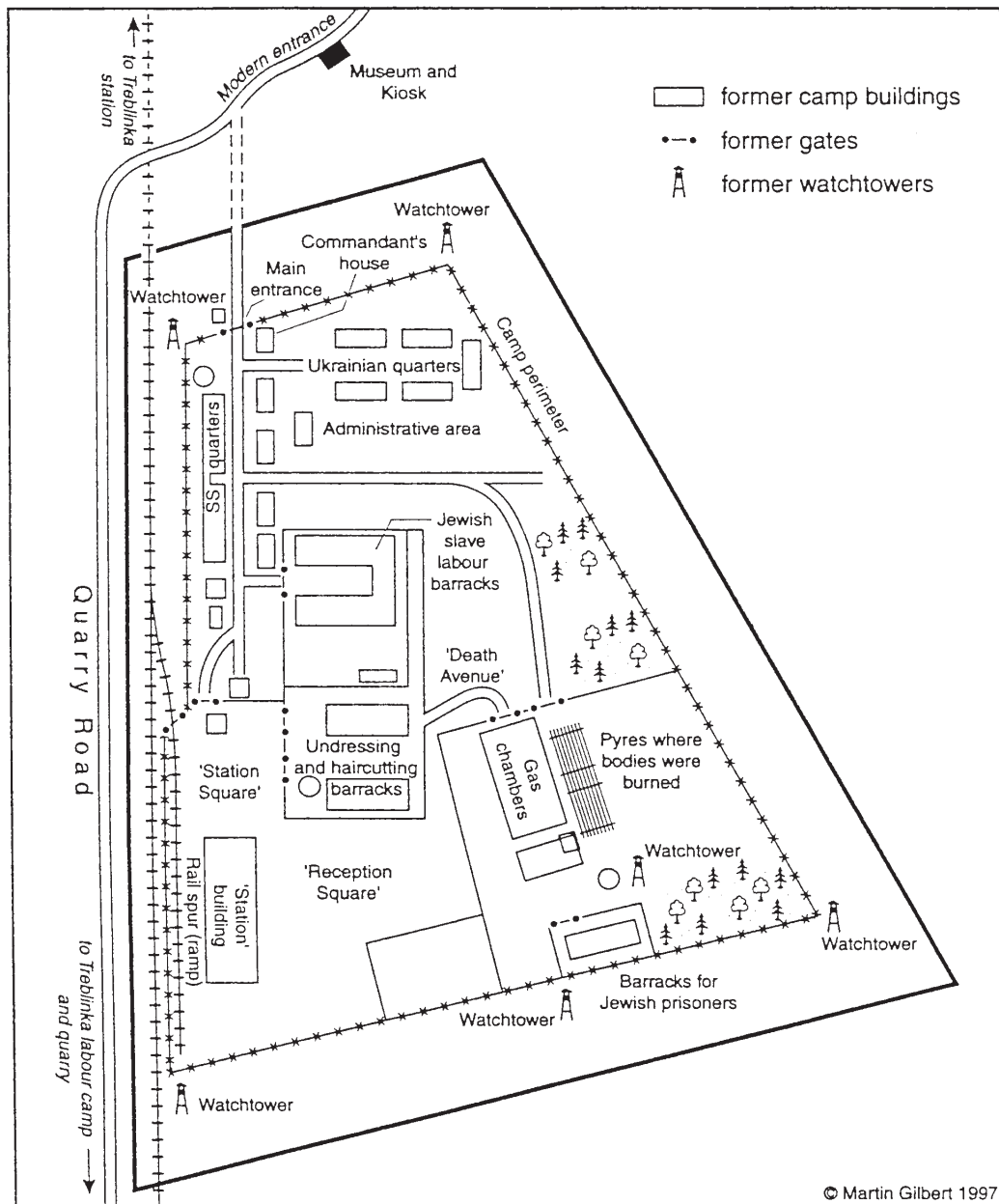
At first an officer with an angelic face would come and deliver a speech to the above effect. When the frequency of transports and their size grew, the Germans dispensed with this.

Signs with occupational categories were displayed on the surrounding fence: “tailors”, “shoemakers”, “cabinet makers”, etc., in order to strengthen the confidence of the arrivals. Of course, not a single selection of this kind was ever made. Instead, the *Kapo* swiftly placed the men in ranks ten deep, ordered the removal of shoes, and to strip bare. At this point the last act of the Treblinka tragedy opened: the terrorized mass of men, women and children started on their way.

The group of women and children ran first, driven by ceaseless whipping and prodding with clubs; in the hands of Germans were long cattle whips. Sped faster and faster, whipped more and more, harder and harder, women and children became frantic, crazed by pain and fear. Screams and lamentations, mixed with curses and abuse from the Germans disturbed the silence of the woods. At that point all were aware that they were headed for death. At the entrance to Death House Number One stood the chief, in person, with a cattle whip. In cold blood he would urge the women to enter, using his whip profusely. The floor was made slippery, thus people slipped and did not manage to get up under the avalanche of others falling on them when driven in by force. The chief threw small children in, over the top of the mass of bodies. When the chamber was filled to the brim, the doors would be hermetically locked and the slow suffocating of live people began, with overheated steam entering through the orifices in the pipes. At first smothered cries would be heard, then they would become muted, and fifteen minutes later the execution would be complete.

Map of Treblinka Extermination Camp

WARSAW



Treblinka: Survivors' Testimony

Richard Glazer (Switzerland), survivor

"It was at the end of November 1942. They chased us away from our work and back to our barracks. Suddenly, from the part of the camp called the death camp, flames shot up. Very high. In a flash, the whole countryside, the whole camp, seemed ablaze. It was already dark. We went into our barracks and ate. And from the window, we kept on watching the fantastic backdrop of flames of every imaginable color: red, yellow, green, purple. And suddenly, one of us stood up. We knew... he'd been an opera singer in Warsaw. His name was Salve, and facing that curtain of fire, he began chanting a song I didn't know:

'My God, my God
why bast Thou forsaken us?

'We have been thrust into the fire before
but we have never denied Thy Holy Law'

"He sang in Yiddish, while behind him blazed the pyres in which they had begun then, in November 1942, to burn the bodies in Treblinka. That was the first time it happened. We knew that night that the dead would no longer be buried, they'd be burned."

– Claude Lanzman, *Shoah*, p. 14

Avraham Bomba, (Tel Aviv), survivor

"There was a sign, a small sign, on the station at Treblinka. I don't know if we were at the station or if we didn't go up to the station. On the line over there where we stayed there was a sign, a very small sign, which said 'Treblinka.' The first time in my life I heard the name 'Treblinka.' Nobody knew. It was not a place. There was not a city. There is not even a small village. Jewish people always dreamed, and that was part of their life, part of their messianic hope, that someday they're going to be free. That dream was mostly true in the ghetto. Every day, every single night, I dreamed about that. I think that going to be good. Not only the dream but the hope conserved in a dream.

"The first transport from Czestochowa was sent away on the day after Yom Kippur. The day before Sukkot, there was a second transport... I was together with them. I know in my heart that something is not good, because if they take children, if they take old people, they send them away, that means it is not good. What they said is they take them away to a place where they will be working. But on the other hand, an old woman or a child of four weeks or five years, what is work? It was a foolish thing, but still, we had no choice— we believed in them."

W
A
R
S
A
W

התחנה הקטנה טרבלינקה

מילים : ולדיסלב שלנגל
לחן : יהודה פוליקר

The Little Station Treblinka

Words by Vladislav Slengel
Music by Yehuda Poliker & Yaakov Gilad

W
A
R
S
A
W

כאן התחנה טרבלינקה...
כאן התחנה טרבלינקה...
בקו שבין טלושץ' לוורשה
מתחנת הרכבת וורשאה-האוסט
יוצאים ברכבת ונוסעים ישר
הנסיעה נמשכת לפעמים
חמש שעות ועוד 45 דקות
ולפעמים נמשכת אותה נסיעה
חיים שלמים עד מותך
והתחנה היא קטנטונת
שלוש אשוחים גדלים בה
וכתובת רגילה אומרת:
כאן התחנה טרבלינקה
כאן התחנה טרבלינקה

ואין אפילו קופה
גם איש המטענים איננו
ובעבור מליון
לא תקבל כרטיס חזור
ואיש לא מחכה בתחנה
ואף אחד לא מנפנף שם במטפחת
רק באויר תלויה דממה
לקדם פניך בשממה אטומה
ושותק עמוד התחנה
ושותקים שלושה האשוחים
שותקת הכתובת השחורה
כי כאן התחנה טרבלינקה
כאן התחנה טרבלינקה
ורק שלט פרסומת
תלוי עוד מאז
סיסמה ישנה ובלויה האומרת:
"בשלו רק בגאז"
כאן התחנה טרבלינקה
כאן התחנה טרבלינקה

*Here is Treblinka Station...
Here is Treblinka Station...
On the line between Plotz and Warsaw
From the train station Warsaw-Ost
Leaving by train and travelling direct
The journey sometimes takes
5 hours and 45 minutes and sometimes
takes an entire lifetime until
your death
And the station is tiny
Three pines grow there
And a plain sign says—
Here is Treblinka Station
Here is Treblinka Station*

*And there isn't even a ticket booth
Or a porter
And not even for a million
Can you get a return ticket
No one waits at the station
No one waves a handkerchief
Only a tear hangs in the air
To greet you in sealed desolation
And the station pole is silent
And the pines are silent
And the black sign is silent
Because here is Treblinka Station
Here is Treblinka Station
Only an advertisement still
hanging there from then
An old, worn slogan says—
"Cook only with gas."
Here is Treblinka Station
Here is Treblinka Station*

הלינה בירנבאום: סעו לטרבלינקא

Helena Birnbaum: Go To Treblinka 19.9.1986 עם שובי מפולין

Go to Treblinka!
Open your eyes wide,
Attune your ears,
And listen to the sounds crying out there
From every grain of earth.

סעו לטרבלינקא
פקחו את עיניכם לרוחה
חדדו את השמיעה
עצרו את הנשימה
והקשיבו לקולות הבוקעים שם
מכל גרגר אדמה —

Go to Treblinka!
They are waiting for you there,
Thirsting for the sound of your life—
For the sign of your existence—
For the steps of your feet—
For a human look which understands and
remembers—
For a loving caress of their ashes.
Go to Treblinka!

סעו לטרבלינקא
הם מחכים לכם שם
צמאים לקול חייכם
לאות לקיומכם,
לצעד רגליכם
למבט אנושי מבין וזוכר
ללטוף של אהבה על אפרם —
סעו לטרבלינקא

Go of your own free will.
Go from the powerful pain over the horrors which
took place.
Go from the depth of understanding and a hurting
heart which will not be still.
Listen to them there with all your senses!

סעו מרצונכם אתם, החופשי
סעו מכוח הכאב על האימה שהתרחשה
מעמק ההבנה והלב כואב ולא משלים —
הקשיבו להם שם בכל החושים!

Go to Treblinka!
There the silence— which is green— or yellow or
white—
Which enfolds them in every season of the year—
Will tell you stories upon stories
Of the life which became prohibitive and impossible.

סעו לטרבלינקא
שם הדממה הירוקה, הזהובה או הלבנה
העוטפת אותם בכל אחת מעונות השנה
תספר לכם סיפורי סיפורים
לל החיים שהפכו אסורים ובלתי אפשריים —

Go to Treblinka!
See how time has stopped there.
Listen to time which has stood still,
To the rumbling stillness of the dead,
And to the humanoid stones which cry there in silence.
Go to Treblinka to sense all this for a second.

סעו לטרבלינקא
ראו איך הזמן שם עצר
הקשיבו לזמן העומד, לשתיקת המתים
הרועמת
ולאבנים בדמות אנוש הבוכות שם
בדממה
סעו לטרבלינקא לחוש זאת לשנייה —

Go to Treblinka!
Make a flower grow from a warm tear— in a human
breath—
In front of one of the stones memorializing a whole
community,
Upon ground which is their body and ash.
They are waiting there in Treblinka for you to come
and listen to their stories which cry out in the
silence.
And in complete, speechless solidarity,
Bring to them— each time—
The continuing story of life,
Of reviving love.

סעו לטרבלינקא
הצמיחו פרח בדמעה חמה, בנשימה
אנושית
מול אחת האבנים - זכר לקהילה שלמה
על אדמה שהיא גופם ואפרם.
הם מחכים שם בטרבלינקא שתבואו
ותקשיבו לספורים
הזועקים בתוך הדממה
ובהזדהות מחלטת אילמת, מאחדת
תביאו להם בכל פעם
את ספור החיים הנמשכים
האהבה המחיה.

Go to Treblinka— for generations—
Don't leave them alone!

סעו לטרבלינקא לדורי דורות
אל תעזבו אותם לבדם.

W
A
R
S
A
W

The Extermination of the Tykocin Jews

from a booklet marking the 55th anniversary of the extermination

The Jewish *kahal* in Tykocin was established in 1522 and in the 17th and 18th centuries it was undoubtedly the most important agglomeration of the Jews in the Podlasie Region. In the mid-17th century it came into prominence among the *kahals* of Lithuania and Korona as a district *kahal*. Apart from the material wealth, the Jews of Tykocin over the ages worked out a vast spiritual heritage of the orthodoxal community which yielded the renowned family of rabbis named Tiktin, Tiktiner. Rabbis and talmudists of Tykocin were the authors of a lot of religious and philosophical dissertations which were later kept in the Renaissance Great Synagogue.

Before the Second World War the Jewish community in Tykocin amounted to over 2000, which constituted about half of the population of the town.

At the beginning of the Second World War, in September of 1939, Tykocin was beyond the limits of the direct military operations. In the early part of September the German troops invaded the town and before long all men, both Poles and Jews, were ordered to gather in a Catholic church. They were locked there and kept imprisoned for three days. Leaving Tykocin the German soldiers plundered homesteads of the Jews who on that day, Yom Kippur, were praying in the synagogue.

After the Germans had left the town it was occupied until June of 1941 by the Red Army.

After the outbreak of the Soviet-German War in the later part of June a German detachment arrived in Tykocin. Its task was to appoint the Civil Service in the town. Jews were ordered to wear on their left arms a white armband with the star of Zion and to perform clean-up services in the town.

On the 16th of August, 1941, a Gestapo official arrived in Tykocin. He inspected the Jewish homesteads and carried on some conversations, although his action did not arouse any suspicions. On the 17th of August five Gestapo soldiers arrived in Tykocin. They went to the nearby village of Łopuchowo. They ordered the local country people to dig two ditches, 12 meters long and 5 meters deep, in the surrounding forest.

Several days later the news on the ditches leaked out to the Jews. They called a meeting to discuss this problem with Rabbi Awa Ówiatycki, greatly respected among the Jews. The rabbi ascertained that the ditches were of strategic importance and they would be used for military purposes.

Several days later, on Sunday, the 24th of August, at six o'clock in the afternoon, while all the inhabitants of the town were taking a rest or walking, a public announcement was made that the next day, i.e. on Monday, the 25th of August, all the Jews of Tykocin— men, women and children were to appear in the market square.

On the 25th of August, 1941, at six o'clock in the morning, the Jews of Tykocin, obeying the order, appeared in the market square, then called the Jewish Market Square (today the Old Market Square). A German soldier dressed in Gestapo uniform was checking the list of names; the market square was surrounded. The Jews were then divided into several groups: workers, young people and older men. At seven o'clock in the morning seven lorries arrived in the market square. Heavily-armed German soldiers dressed in Gestapo uniforms got off the lorries. They cordoned off the square. They were brutal. Women and children were loaded onto the lorries. The lorries set off heading for Jeżewo. A procession was formed of the men. The Jews were lined up in fours. The tallest of them were ordered to take the front positions. In the first row Chackiel di Chojcher, Jakub Choroszuca— a merchant in timber, and his father-in-law Mosze Gar were marching. In the second row musicians were marching— Daniel Dojcz (a trumpeter), Szmul Sokolowicz (a drummer) and Eli Kawka (a violinist). They were forced to play the anthem HaTikva and other Jewish songs. The procession made its way towards Jeżewo and after several hours reached the elementary school in Zawady. During the march an old man Szmuel Babecki was shot dead for walking out of the route column. Having reached the elementary school in Zawady the Jews were locked in there. They were informed by the Germans that they would be transferred to the ghetto in Czerwony Bór. Shortly afterwards lorries drove up and every ten minutes successive loads of Jews were taken out to the forest near the village of Łopuchowo.

Over the previously dug out ditches a horrifying mass execution took place. It was performed by the German soldiers recruited from the police battalions Numbers 309 and 316 under the command of Wolfgang Birkner delegated from the Gestapo in Warsaw. After the volleys from the machine guns had been discharged the bodies fell into the ditches. About 1400 people were murdered on that day. At night the Germans forced the local country people to fill up the ditches while having them informed that those were the victims killed at war.

The next day, on the 26th of August, 1941, early in the morning, they begun searching the houses of the Tykocin Jews. Once again the Jews were ordered to line up in the market square. Like on the day before the lorries drove up and the Jews were taken to the elementary school in Zawady and from there to the forest near the village of Łopuchowo. The nightmarish scenario of the previous day recurred. On that day the Germans murdered about 700 people, putting them into the second ditch which was then also filled up.

About 150 Tykocin Jews managed to escape. Some of them were hiding for some time in the neighboring forests and bunkers. Many of them worked their way to other little towns and to Białystok where they landed in ghettos. A lot of them were captured and murdered by the Nazis. The murdered Jews were buried in the third little ditch in the forest near Łopuchowo where some Poles killed by the Germans were also buried. Among the few Jews who survived the mass extermination was Abram Kapica, then a boy of thirteen, who at first survived in

Knyszyn and Jasionówka and later landed in the ghetto in Białystok. After the war he settled in Israel. He described his terrible experiences in the book entitled *A Young Boy Conquers Death*, published in Tel Aviv in 1994.

On the 25th of August, 1944, after the Germans had left Tykocin, 16 Jews who escaped death in the mass extermination arrived in the forest near the village of Łopuchowo. Most of them later left Poland, heading for Israel and other countries where they published books dedicated to the history and memory of their forefathers. In 1949 a book entitled *Pincus Tiktin: Tiktiner Historical Book* was published in New York. In 1959, in Tel Aviv, a book entitled *Sefer Tiktin* was published. Apart from describing the history of the *kahal* and memories of individual persons, the authors performed a very laborious task. They re-created the list of the families of the Tykocin Jews who died during the Second World War.

Tykocin

XV It's All Over

from Yitzhak Katznelson, "The Song of the Murdered Jewish People"

7

*Rising over Lithuanian or Polish towns, the sun will never find
A radiant old Jew at the window reciting Psalms,
or going to the synagogue.
On every road peasants will welcome the sun in wagons,
going to market.
So many gentiles— more than ever, yet the market is dead.
It is crowded— yet seems empty.*

8

*Never will a Jew grace the markets, and give them life.
Never will a Jewish kapota flutter in markets on sacks of potatoes, flour, porridge.
Never will a Jewish hand lift a hen, pet a calf. The drunken peasant will whip his horse
sadly, return with his full wagon to the village.
There are no more Jews in the land.*

9

*And Jewish children will never wake in the morning from bright dreams,
Never go to heder, never watch birds, never tease, never play in the sand.
O' little Jewish boys! O' bright Jewish eyes! Little angels! From where?
From here, yet not from here.
O' beautiful little girls. O' you bright pure faces, smudged and disheveled.*

10

*They are no more! Don't ask overseas about Kasrilevke, Yehupetz.
Don't.
Don't look for Menahem Mendels, Tevye the dairymen, Nogids, Motke thieves. Don't look—
They will, like the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and Amos from the Bible,
Cry to you from Bialik, speak to you from Shalom Aleichem and Sholem Asch's books.*

15

*Woe is unto me, nobody is left... There was a people and it is no more. There was a people
and it is... Gone...*

– The Literature of Destruction, Ed. David Roskies

58

Lublin Area

Majdanek • Krasnik

Kazimierz Dolny

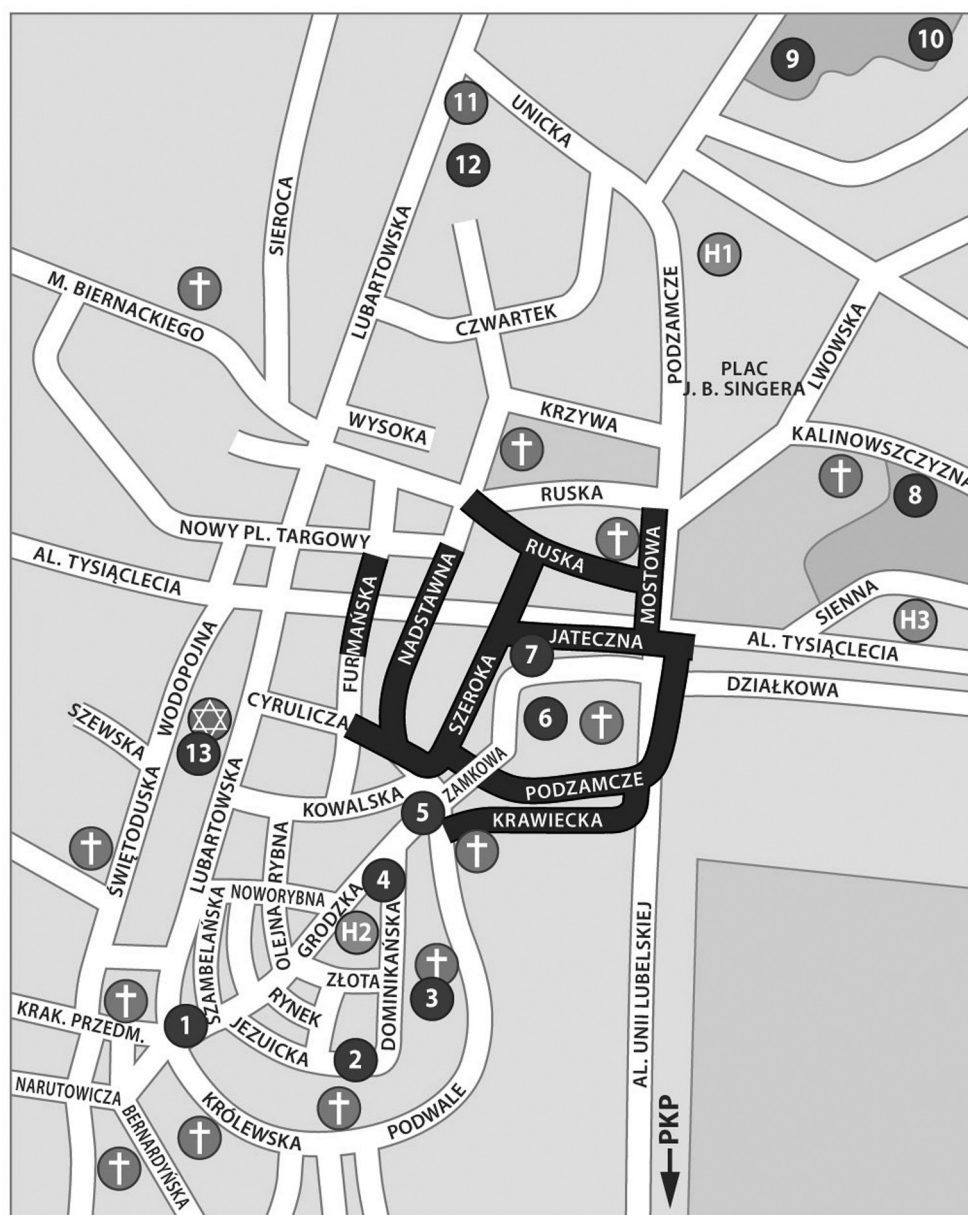
כתובה בעפרון בקרון החתום
דן פגיס

כאן במשטוח הזה
אני חווה
עם הבעל בני
אם תראו את בני הצעיר
קין בן אדם
תצידו לו שאני

Written in Pencil in
a Sealed Freight Car
-Dan Pagis, survivor

here in this carload
I am eve
with my son abel
if you see my elder son
cain son of man
tell him that I

Map of Jewish Lublin



Lublin main sights:

1. The Krakow Gate
2. The Old Theatre
3. The Dominican Church
4. The Jewish Orphanage
5. The Grodzka Gate
6. The Former Royal Castle
7. The Plaque Commemorating Synagogues

8. The Old Jewish Cemetery
9. The New Jewish Cemetery
10. The tombstone of Meir Szapiro
11. The Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin (The Yeshiva)
12. The Former Jewish Hospital
13. The Jewish Prayer House

The streets of the former Jewish quarter are highlighted black.

Lublin

Lublin is the largest city in Eastern Poland, located in the Lublin district on the Bystrzyca River. Jews have comprised a sizeable part of the city's population since the early 15th century. In an 1806 census, 72% of Lublin's residents were Jews, whereas at the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Jews comprised just over a third (35.1%) of the population in Lublin.

Historically, Lublin was an important center for Jewish religious activity. The Maharshal synagogue, Lublin's oldest and most illustrious, was built in 1566. In the 16th century the "Council of Four Lands," the central institution of Jewish autonomy in Poland, began operating in the city, continuing until 1680. This "governing body" greatly enhanced Lublin's prestige in the eyes of Polish and European Jewry, making it one of the major Jewish centers in Eastern Europe. Hassidic Judaism began to take hold in Lublin in the second half of the 18th century, particularly after Yaacov Yitzhak Horwitz (The "Seer of Lublin," 1745-1815) settled there.

Lublin was also a center of commerce for Jews, despite numerous restrictions, heavy taxation and occasional violence against Jews.

Zionist activity intensified in Lublin after World War I. For example, *Hashomer Hatzair* was the most prominent of several Zionist youth groups; the *Tarbut* Hebrew schools held a central position in education, along with the religious-Zionist *Yavneh* school and the ultra-Orthodox *Beit Yaakov* school for girls. The most famous yeshiva was *Hakhmei Lublin*, founded by Rabbi Meir Shapira, recruiting some of the most important Jewish thinkers of the time while offering social sciences and sciences equal to those of the best schools in the country. Rabbi Shapira instituted the *Daf Yomi* (daily page) program — a system still popular today, allotting a pre-assigned page of Talmud for study each day.

During the Holocaust

The Germans entered Lublin on September 18, 1939, and immediately began persecuting the city's Jews: many were sent away for forced labor, physical attacks were commonplace, and Jewish property was confiscated. In November, 1939 Jews were forced to wear a yellow Jewish badge, later changed to a white armband with a Star of David. Their movement was restricted, and those living on the city's main street were evicted from their homes. On March 31, 1941 a ghetto was established with a population of about 34,000.

The deportation of Lublin's Jews to the Belzec extermination camp began on March 17, 1942. Up to 1,400 Jews were deported daily. This ongoing deportation

ended on April 20 after some 30,000 Jews had been deported to their deaths. The 4,000 remaining Jews were moved to a Lublin suburb. Over the next few months, they were subjected to periodic *selektionen*, and by October, 3,800 Jews had been deported to the nearby concentration camp and extermination center at Majdanek. In July 1944 all but a very few of the remaining Jews in Lublin were murdered by the Germans. The city was liberated by the Soviet Red Army that same month.

Many Jews, most of whom survived the Holocaust in the U.S.S.R., settled in Lublin, but the vast majority of them left during the years 1946-1950 leaving only a tiny community.



A German guard outside the yeshiva during the occupation of Poland.

Rabbi Meir Shapira Yeshivat Hochmei Lublin and the "Daf Yomi"

Shapira, Meir (1887-1934)

Polish rabbi, *rosh yeshivah*, educationalist, and communal leader. Shapira received ordination when only 15 years old from Rabbis Isaac Shmelkes, Meir Arikh, and his teacher, his maternal grandfather, Samuel Isaac Schor. Shapira manifested his future interest in Jewish education as early as 1910, when in his first position as communal rabbi of Gliniany, he founded his first yeshivah in his own home, later transferring it to his next post in Sanok. He rapidly gained a reputation among Polish Jewry, and was elected to the chair of the education committee of Polish Agudat Israel in 1919, and to the leadership of the whole organization in 1922. Shapira also became a Jewish spokesman in Polish government circles in 1923. He was elected to the Polish Sejm, where he was noted for his forceful speeches and outspoken criticism of anti-Semitism. Within two years, however, Shapira decided to devote the whole of his life and energy to Jewish education. He thereupon resigned from the Sejm in 1924, accepted the post of rabbi in Piotrkow, and worked for the development of the two enterprises which remain his greatest contribution to Jewish education.

The first enterprise was a program of studies (still in existence) which has passed into Jewish nomenclature as the *daf yomi* ("daily page"). At the 1923 congress of the Agudat Israel, Shapira proposed that every Jew undertake to study each day one identical page of the Talmud. The plan envisaged a communal completion of the study of the Talmud every seven years. Shapira himself participated in the completion of the first cycle in 1931.

Shapira's second achievement was the establishment of *Yeshivat Hakhmei Lublin*. He first conceived of the idea of this yeshivah in 1922, and two years later; after a highly strenuous fund-raising tour of Europe and North America, laid the foundation stone in the presence of leading Jewish rabbis and dignitaries. This institution was unique in conception, character, and even architecture. Shapira was vigorously opposed to the poor amenities, unattractive surroundings, and penurious atmosphere characteristic of the traditional yeshivot. He set a precedent, now universally followed, by equipping his establishment at Lublin with an excellent library (much of it his own), with spacious living and dining quarters, and with appropriate lecture halls. The academic standards themselves were maintained by a rigorous selection of applicants, including a growing number of Hassidic youth. Shapira frequently lectured to the students and participated in their daily studies, activities, and even meals.



L
U
B
L
I
N

In 1933 Shapira accepted an invitation to become rabbi of Lodz, on condition that the community honor the yeshivah's debts. The condition was accepted, but Shapira died before assuming the post. Shapira was an enigmatic and colorful personality, in whom a deep understanding of rabbinic lore was combined with a nimble wit and love of life. The former is indicated in his responsa *Or ha-Me'ir* (1926), and in various collections of essays published by his pupils. The latter was revealed in the songs and melodies he composed while dancing with his students. Many of his witty aphorisms are still quoted. The manner of his death was characteristic of his life. Realizing that his end was near, he requested his students to dance in song around his bed; while they were so engaged, he breathed his last breath.

Two Students at Yeshivat Hochmei Lublin

When I was 16 years old, Rabbi Meir Shapira opened his famous Yeshiva Chochmei Lublin. Rabbi Shapira sent delegates to seven different towns throughout Poland to give entrance tests to students who would be interested in coming to the yeshiva. He knew that there were many talented students who didn't have the money to travel to Lublin, or who might be too shy to come, so he sent out two *rabbonim* to each of these places. Rabbi Shapira built a beautiful new building in Lublin... it was a palace... the most beautiful yeshiva structure in Eastern Europe. There were over 100,000 Jews at the dedication of the building, the *chanukas habayis*, including the sainted Tchortkover Rebbe and the Gerrert Rebbe, the *Imrei Emess*, so called after the title of his writings (lit. "Words of truth").

We had to know 200 "*blatt*" (folios) of Talmud to pass the entrance exam. The representatives of the Lublin Yeshiva were in each place for two days. Advertisements were placed in the Orthodox Jewish newspapers informing the public where and when the interviews would be taking place. There were five *talmidim* accepted from where I took the exam, and I was one of them. I went to Chochmei Lublin a year later, after I received my entrance card confirming I had been accepted as a *talmid*... I was there for the *chanukas habayis*... it seemed like all the *gedolim* from Eastern Europe were there... it was like *Matan Torah*, that's the effect it had on everyone. I learned in the Chochmei Lublin for three and a half years until the Lubliner Rov died at 46 years of age, on the seventh of Cheshvan in 1933.

— Mechuel Tenebaum, "The World That Was: Poland", Living Memorial, Cleveland; 1997.



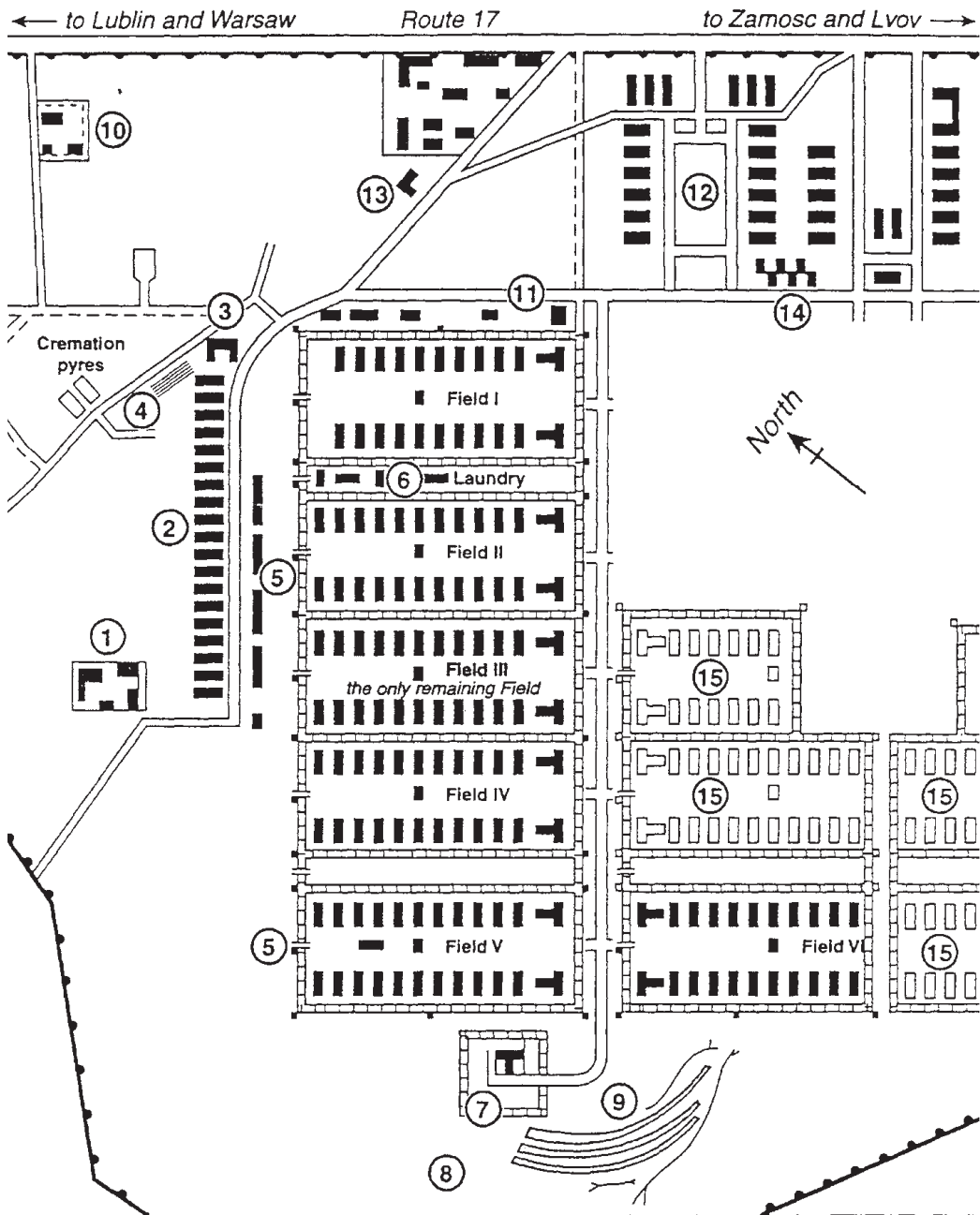
"אליהו" רב ודיאכריס ווארשע על רבינו ופעילי ש"י י"ג עיי' מקורבני רבי

My transition from a boisterous boy to a serious scholar was short, almost abrupt — an act of will. What made it possible was the supportive atmosphere of the yeshiva, where I was with others who were going through a similar experience. From early childhood we were raised with the belief, which we recited in our daily prayers, that the Torah was a divine gift of love and that studying it was the greatest *mitzvah*. Once we decided autonomously to act on our beliefs, and that was the case with the vast majority of us, the result was a life dedicated to the service of God in prayer and study with a fervor only people of that age are capable of. We spent all our waking hours studying and praying, careful lest we waste a precious moment of time idling. That is where I first encountered the concept of “*bitul zman*” (nullification of time), but in the yeshiva, time not used in either study or prayer, with the exception of tending to basic needs, was wasted, nullified. For us, time was Torah.

— Ben Zion Gold, in Gutman, Y.; Mendelssolm, E.; Reinhartz, J. & Shmeruk, C., *The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars*, Brandeis New England; 1989.

שכב	ישבת חכמי לובלין — הישיבה ומיסדה
ב"ה	
שעה	סדר היום לתלמידי ית"ל
6	קימה
7.30	תפלה בציבור
8.45	שיעור רי"ף בסדרן
9.15	ארוחת שחרית והפסקה
10	שינון התלמידים בהשעורים
11'45	שעור מקאוות ביום א' ב' ג', זבחים גמ' ותוס' ד' וה'
1.30	ארוחת הצרים, ובב' וה' לימוד שערי תשובה לר"י
2.45	הפסקה
3	שינון בלימודים שלמדו בשנים שעברו
4	תפלת מנחה ותהלים
4.30	שעור דף-יומי
5.30	תפלת ערבית
6	לימוד הש"ס לפי החלוקה וחזרת השיעורים
9	ארוחת ערב
9.30	חזרת רי"ף בסדרן
10	כתיבת ח"ת מה ששמע מהר"ם שליט"א או מה שחננו ה' לחרש בעצמו.
	
	סדר הלימוד בישיבה

Map of Majdanek



- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Dogs' house | 7. New crematorium | 13. S.S. doctor's house |
| 2. Stores | 8. Areas of mass executions | 14. Present administration building |
| 3. Baths and gas chambers | 9. Mass execution pits | 15. Planned extension, early to mid 1944 |
| 4. Selection yard | 10. Commandant's house | I - VI Barracks (Fields) |
| 5. Guardhouse | 11. S.S. Womens' quarters | ▪ Watchtowers |
| 6. Old crematorium | 12. S.S. quarters and commandant's offices | ▬ Camp perimeter |

© Martin Gilbert 1997

Majdanek

History of the Camp

The German concentration camp in Lublin, popularly called Majdanek, was initiated by Heinrich Himmler's decision. Visiting Lublin in July 1941, Himmler entrusted Lublin district SS and police commander, Odilo Globocnik, with building a camp "for 25-50,000 inmates who would be used to work in SS and police workshops and at construction sites."

The camp was going to be the source of a free workforce for the realization of the plans to build a German empire in the east.

Initial plans concerning the size of the camp were modified a couple of times, with the area of the camp and the planned number of prisoners being enlarged each time. The so-called "general plan" to build Majdanek was authorized on 23rd March 1942 and was intended to establish a camp to hold 250,000 inmates and prisoners of war. Thereby Majdanek was to have become the largest camp in occupied Europe. However, economic difficulties and failures on the eastern front prevented full realization of these plans.

The camp at Majdanek was subordinate to the Concentration Camps Inspectorate (*Inspektion der Konzentrationslager*), and from March 1942 to the Economics and Administrative Department of the SS (*SS-Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt*). The camp was administered by a commandant supported by a garrison of up to 1,200 people. The function of the commandant was performed respectively by: Karl Koch, Max Koegel, Hermann Florstedt, Martin Weiß, and Arthur Liebehenschel.

The camp, built from autumn 1941, was initially called *Kriegsgefangenenlager der Waffen SS Lublin* – a camp for prisoners of war, and in February 1943 was renamed *Konzentrationslager Lublin* – a concentration camp. The official functions of a POW camp and concentration camp did not exhaust the tasks allocated to Majdanek by the German authorities. *Konzentrationslager Lublin* was also a link in the realization of the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question". In addition it was used as a penal and transit camp for the Polish rural population.

The camp, situated in the south east suburbs of Lublin on the road to Zamosc and Lwów, occupied an area of 270 hectares. It consisted of three sectors: the SS segment, the administration section and the prisoner area (*Schutzhaftlager*), which was made up of five so-called "fields" with wooden barracks as the accommodation for inmates. Due to their primitive, careless construction, lack of basic sanitation and the fact that they were overcrowded, the barracks had

a negative effect on the conditions of the prisoners' existence and caused the growth of the death rate in the camp. The situation was even made worse by the shortage of water, food, clothes and medicines. A distinct improvement in the living conditions took place only at the end of the existence of *Konzentrationslager Lublin*. From October 1942 a camp for women was established in one of the fields. Although the plan to create a camp for children at Majdanek was never realized, Jewish, Belarusian and Polish children from Zamojszczyzna were prisoners of the camp. On the grounds of *Konzentrationslager Lublin* there was also a field hospital for Soviet disabled soldiers. Majdanek additionally had a few sub-camps (in Lublin on the grounds of the former Plage-Laskiewicz airport and in Lipowa Street, plus the labor camps in Budzyn, Radom, Blizyn and Warsaw).

Prisoners came from nearly 30 countries. Polish citizens dominated (mainly Poles and Jews) but there were also prisoners from the Soviet Union and the Czech Republic (Jews). Apart from Poles and Jews, the Russians, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians constituted the largest groups of inmates. Representatives of other nationalities made up a small percentage of the general number of inmates (French and Germans among others).

From the very beginning of their stay at the camp, the prisoners were inevitably accompanied by hunger, fear, backbreaking work and diseases. For all real and imagined offences prisoners were severely punished and persecuted. Prisoners' lives were constantly threatened. They died in the aftermath of wretched living conditions, they were executed and murdered in gas chambers. Among an estimated 150,000 prisoners who entered Majdanek, 80,000 people, including 60,000 Jews, were killed according to the most recent research.

In order to remove the traces of the crimes, the corpses of those who died and the murdered were burnt on pyres or in the crematorium.

The tragic history of the Lublin concentration camp came to an end on 23rd July 1944 after the Red Army entered the city.

Soon, a Soviet NKWD camp was organized for members of the Polish Secret State on the grounds of Majdanek. German soldiers were also imprisoned for some time in the barracks of the former camp.

© 2006 The State Museum at Majdanek. All rights reserved
State Museum at Majdanek Website
<http://www.majdanek.pl/articles.php?acid=45&mref=1>

“Harvest Festival”

Made nervous by armed Jewish resistance during the Bialystok and Vilnius (Vilne, Wilno) ghetto deportations, respectively in August and September 1943, and by the uprisings in the Treblinka and Sobibor killing centers, respectively in August and October 1943, the SS leadership in Berlin decided to kill the remaining Jews in District Lublin, including those incarcerated at Majdanek.

On November 3, 1943, in Operation “Erntefest” (Harvest Festival), special SS and police units dispatched to Lublin specifically for that purpose shot 18,000 Jews just outside the camp. At least 8,000 of the victims were Majdanek prisoners; the remaining 11,000 were forced laborers from other camps or prisons in Lublin city. During the operation, music was played throughout the camp over loudspeakers to drown out the sounds of mass murder. This massacre at Majdanek on November 3, 1943, was, in the number of victims, the largest single-day, single-location killing during the Holocaust.

USHMM Website

Holocaust Encyclopedia (on-line entry)

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005190>

Alexander Donat: Testimony from Majdanek

My first reaction to Majdanek was relief: we were at the very pit of wretchedness and nothing worse could happen. All our desperate struggles against our fate, our attempts to escape, to run, to hide, were behind us. The burden of responsibility for those I loved had willy-nilly been taken from my shoulders; I had done what I could, but their fate no longer depended on my efforts. My situation had been drastically simplified; all I now had to worry about was my own survival.

I still felt some of the exaltation of the last days of the Warsaw Ghetto. That desperate fight still cast its retrospective glow. I felt I was witness to disaster and charged with the sacred mission of carrying the Ghetto's history through the flames and barbed wire until such time I could hurl it into the face of the world. It seemed to me that this sense of mission would give me the strength to endure everything.

But I was underestimating Majdanek. Hell has no bottom. In the center of our field where we were imprisoned, near the fountain, the *Lageralteste* would amuse himself with his daily victim. He wore a green triangle, indicating that he was a common criminal, but this did not prevent him from repeating proudly, "*Ich bin ein Germaner*", or from being friendly with the SS men. Often, at random, he would grab someone and throw him into the pool, and whenever the man's head would come up for air, he would club it or kick it back under the surface. The convulsive floundering of the drowning man filled him with ineffable joy and he invited SS men or even other inmates who happened by to share in his delight. The fun often ended tragically: the victim either died on the spot, or emerged so weakened from the ordeal that he contracted pneumonia and died in a few days anyway.

Always near the *Lageralteste* was a fourteen year old Jewish boy called Bubbi. In velvet shorts and military boots he wandered around Field Three with his little riding crop and even Jakob, the most hardened Barrack Elder and the terror of Majdanek, looked at Bubbi with horror. In a moment of confidence our own Barrack Elder, Szydlower, told me the boy's story. Bubbi had been sent to Majdanek from Lublin with his parents in the Resettlement of autumn 1942. The *Lageralteste* had liked his childish face and chose him as a minion. Among the German inmates who were the Majdanek elite — some of them had been in camps since 1933 — homosexuality was widespread and they often picked boys from among the deportees. After Bubbi had been so selected by the *Lageralteste*, the boy had been 'knighted' and raised to the rank of a Kapo. For the ceremony the boy's mother was brought from Field Five, his father from adjoining barracks, and in the presence of SS authorities and the camp elite the boy hanged his parents with his own hands. The *Lageralteste* was very proud of his minion's exploits and pronounced him a *psychischer Germaner* in spite of his Jewish origin.

Bubbi used to loll around the Field nibbling on cherries or slowly eating a ham sandwich in front of the starving prisoners. Thousands of hungry eyes followed him, though reason dictated that one ought not to look in his direction at all for fear of catching the little monster's attention. But Bubbi found his own victims. His greatest pleasure was to select an especially tall inmate, order him to

squat down until his face was level with Bubbi's own, and then Bubbi would spit cherry stones in the prisoner's face, aiming at his eyes. The prisoner was expected to smile broadly to show he was entering into the spirit of the little game. Bubbi would giggle and laugh happily, smacking the prisoner across the face with his riding crop, and when he lost his balance and fell over, Bubbi would be beside himself with joy and would occasionally give his victim a cherry, first putting it into his own mouth and then spitting it into the prisoner's. When Bubbi ran out of cherries, he filled his mouth with water and spat it over his victim's face. This might go on for hours until the victim fell exhausted.

The SS had other distractions too. At any moment the gate might open and a motorcycle driven by an SS man in a white sweater would roar in at top speed. This was *Obersturmführer* Anton Thumann, commandant of Field Three; driving his motorcycle full speed into a group of marching prisoners was his favorite diversion. When ranks of prisoners scattered at the sight of the death-dealing vehicle, Thumann would single out a couple of them for punishment, rope their hands to the motorcycle and drag them after him, gradually speeding up until they were no more than torn flesh and crumpled bones and the baroque's square was crisscrossed with blood.

One day some of us were watching one of these exploits when three SS men came up. Our Kapo suddenly ordered us into formation near one of the barracks. The first rank of five was ordered to spread out, leaving an interval of about ten steps between them, and to march to the center of the square. There the Kapo ordered them to run toward the kitchen. Clumsily, in their wooden shoes, the five men began to run, supposing it to be a race to amuse the SS men. Then a shot rang out from the tower at the other end of the field, followed by a second and a third. The five men dropped flat on the ground, but the Kapo ran at them waving his blackjack and four of them leaped to their feet at once while the fifth man lay there groaning. He was yanked to one side and the Kapo ordered another file of five to run. Four men dropped at the shots and the fifth ran on like one possessed. Then the four got up; none had been wounded.

I was in the sixth row. The practice in firing at moving targets kept up and our turn was next. I was covered with cold sweat. There were more and more victims and when my turn came a veil seemed to fall over my eyes. Mechanically I marched to the center of the field and turned to the right. 'Run!' the order was barked. I felt I was choking. My mind was a blank, my reactions purely physical. I was hunchbacked with fear; there was an unbearable itch between my shoulder blades. Suddenly I felt a horrible pain and a stiff neck. 'Bang!' All my muscles abruptly relaxed and I dropped on my face. I opened my eyes. I was not hit. The Kapo was running toward us, his blackjack swinging. I jumped up and raced to one side where the earlier survivors stood. Next to me a tall man said in an undertone to the man next to him, 'Chaim, does blood stink?' Chaim didn't answer only shook his head. 'In that case,' the first man replied, 'I've shat. Thank God.' The others glared angrily at him because they didn't like his using such a stupid old joke at that time — and because he was not the only one in that condition.

Target practice continued for another half an hour, with variations. The guards on the tower now fired at the man who ran fastest, then at the one who was last, now at the one in the center of the group, and then at those on the sides. Sometimes no shots were fired when men began to run, but when the last five started there was a burst of submachine-gun fire and all five men fell to the ground.

But the fun would not have been complete and the Germans would not have been Germans if no 'moral' was drawn from the activity. The inmate who had not dropped to the ground at all was given a double soup ration and from among the 'Jewish cowards' who dropped unwounded, an SS man picked one to be punished. '*Komm her Dreckjude, wirst umgelegt*'. (Come here you shitty Jew, I'm going to lay you out!). The victim knelt, face to the wall, his eyes closed and the SS man held a pistol to his temple. A shot sounded and simultaneously another SS man smashed the kneeling man on the head with a two-by-four and knocked him unconscious. A few moments later when the victim opened his eyes and looked around him bewildered, the SS man said, choking with suppressed laughter, 'You see, you're in the next world now, and we're the bosses here, too. And you're still the *Dreckjude* you've always been.'

That afternoon I had to help unload trucks and carry new stools into the barracks. About forty of them were brought in and placed in the center aisle, one next to every other bunk. During roll call our Barrack Elder Szydlower made a brief speech: 'Listen, you sons-of-bitches, today new stools were put in the barracks. I am warning you, may God have pity on any one of you who tries to sit on a stool, lean against it, or eat on it. The stools are there for decoration, not for your comfort, and I don't want to have to answer for every spot on them and I don't want the orderlies to have to clean up your shit. If I catch anyone sitting on a stool I'll unscrew his legs and he'll get such a shellacking that he won't sit down for the rest of his life.'

After supper, Szydlower sent for me to tell me that my middle-tier bunk was now assigned to some 'big-shot', and I'd have to take one of the top-bunks a few rows back. At first I didn't care, but around midnight I was awakened by something wet on my face. The barracks were full of snores and the latrine stench. Outside it was raining heavily and there was a hole in the roof right over my bunk. I moved to the edge of the bunk, but soon it was completely drenched. I got no sleep and finally the gong ended my torment.

— Alexander Donat, *The Holocaust Kingdom*

Helena Birnbaum: She Waited for Me

*She waited for me there, near the pathway.
She did know one day I would come
And would perceive her with all my senses —
My mother, beautiful and young*

*She waited for me there, near the pathway
in Majdanek
Across from the “disinfection” barrack —
the crematorium’s ovens.*

*After forty years I have come here from afar
And see her standing like Then — despite Death
Like on that night we were separated forever:*

*Dark-haired; not too tall
A long curl swaying over her forehead
And hair braided around her head
Red cheeks, large eyes still enlarged
by the lack of sleep
White teeth like pearls unveiling a smile —
The most wonderful smile on Earth
— a mother’s —
That attempts to comfort her child
In front of the gate to gas chamber and ovens...*

*A large shepherd’s plaid coat covers her body
And she clasps me into it, in order to
Embed in me the strength of human warmth
In this one but last moment
A ray of consolation
In this inferno
The place one could exit only
Through a chimney as a smoke.*

*I have come here again
From another country,
A grownup woman
Yet the same girl I was Then
Whom she did love so much
And over whose fate she agonized.*

*Entering this gravel road I felt her presence
I ran to her with all my breath
And like Then, I suddenly stooped.
Anguished in pain and helplessness I realized:
They had wrested her away from me
I shall never have her again!*

*Majdanek — today a sleepy kingdom of death
We were brought here together
Now I am standing here alone.*

*I try to embrace her silhouette, touch it
While drowned in horrible pain.
Small and helpless I stand here again
In front of the gas chamber and the crematorium
That was extinguished too late.
Powerless like Then though now free...*

*I sit on the ground near the pathway,
Put my head in my hands
Cry aloud almost to unconsciousness
With no self control, no embarrassment.
I cling to the shadow of my Mother killed here
Hold to it with all my strength
Decide to take it home with me overseas
Even though I would prefer to remain here
Along with my tears that permeate the ground.*

*I will never know how I went back
While she remained there in that deadly silence
I grew all numb
My body was shaking with spasms.*

*A stranger, a Polish museum worker, passed by
From a nearby hill he shouted to me:
“Whom of yours had they killed here
so that you’re in such a despair?”
Getting no reply — he left.
He addressed me in the language
of the living people
While I was with my vision of my dead Mother
With her shadow in the emptiness
With her death at Majdanek —
and perhaps with mine own too.*

— August 30, 1986

Belzec

The small town of Belzec was located in southeastern Poland between the cities of Zamosc and Lvov. During the German occupation of Poland in World War II, this area was located in the Lublin District of the Generalgouvernement (that part of German-occupied Poland not directly annexed to Germany, attached to German East Prussia or incorporated into the German-occupied Soviet Union).

In November 1941, SS and police authorities in Lublin District began construction of a killing center on the site of a former labor camp. The location was chosen because of the good rail connections and proximity to significant Jewish populations in the Lvov, Krakow, and Lublin districts of the Generalgouvernement.

The facility was finished in the late winter of 1942 as part of what later would be called Operation Reinhard - the plan implemented by the SS to murder the Jews of the Generalgouvernement. Belzec began operations on March 17, 1942; the first Jewish communities deported to Belzec were those of Lublin and Lvov. Belzec was the second German killing center, and the first of the Operation Reinhard killing centers, to begin operation.

The authorities at Belzec killing center consisted of a small staff of German SS and police officials (between 20 and 30) and a police auxiliary guard unit of between 90 and 120 men, all of whom were either former Soviet prisoners of war of various nationalities or Ukrainian and Polish civilians selected or recruited for this purpose. All members of the guard unit were trained at a special facility of the SS and Police Leader in Lublin - the Trawniki training camp. Commandants of the Belzec camp were SS Major Christian Wirth until June 1942 and then SS First Lieutenant Gottlieb Hering from June 1942 until June 1943.

The Germans divided Belzec into a combined administration-reception area and a separate area, in which the SS and police could carry out the mass murder hidden from view of victims waiting in the reception area. A narrow enclosed path called the "tube" connected the two sections of the killing center. The reception area held the railway siding and a ramp. The area where the mass murder took place included the gas chambers and mass graves. Rail tracks ran from the gas chambers to the burial pits. Each side of the camp measured 886 feet. Fine boughs woven into the barbed-wire fence and trees planted around the perimeter served as camouflage to prevent curious outsiders from seeing operations inside the camp.

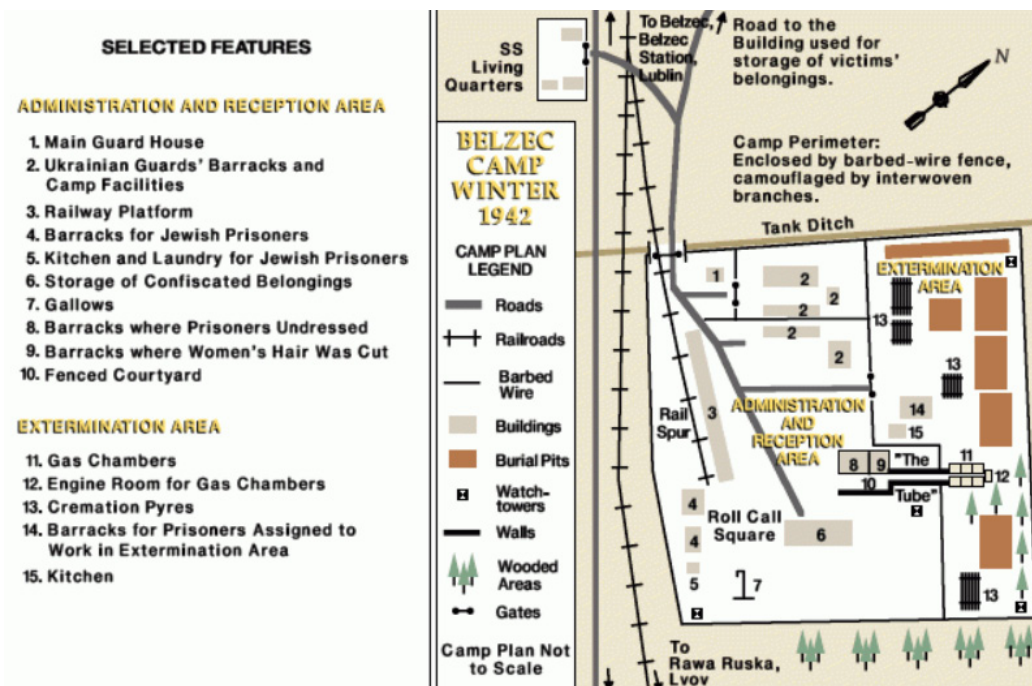
Trains of 40 to 60 freight cars, with 80 to 100 people crowded into each car, arrived at the Belzec railway station. Twenty freight cars at a time were detached and brought from the station into the camp. The arriving Jews were then ordered to disembark at the platform of the reception area. German SS and police personnel announced that the Jewish deportees had arrived at a transit camp and were to hand over all valuables in their possession. Initially, men were separated from women and children, though in later months, as transport arrivals became more chaotic due to increased awareness of the victims of what would happen, the Germans and the Trawniki-trained auxiliaries could not always implement this segregation. The Jews were forced to undress and run through the "tube," which led directly into gas chambers deceptively labeled as showers. Once the chamber doors were sealed, auxiliary police guards started an engine located outside the building housing the gas chambers. Carbon monoxide was funneled into the gas chambers, killing all those inside. The process was then repeated with deportees in the next 20 freight cars.

Members of the Sonderkommandos (special detachments) -- groups of prisoners selected to remain alive as forced laborers -- worked in the killing area. They removed bodies from the gas chambers and buried the victims in mass graves. Other prisoners selected for temporary survival worked in the administration-reception area, facilitating detaining, disrobing, relinquishment of valuables, and movement into the “tube” of new arrivals. They also sorted the possessions of the murdered victims in preparation for transport to Germany, and were responsible for cleaning out freight cars for the next deportation. German SS and police personnel and the Trawniki-trained guards periodically murdered the members of these detachments of Jewish laborers, and replaced them with persons selected from newly arriving transports

In October 1942, on orders from Lublin, German SS and police personnel, using groups of Jewish forced laborers rounded up from various locations in Lublin District, began to exhume the mass graves at Belzec and burn the bodies on open-air “ovens” made from rail track. The Germans also utilized a machine to crush bone fragments into powder.

Between March and December 1942, the Germans deported approximately 434,500 Jews and an undetermined number of Poles and Roma (Gypsies) to Belzec, where they were killed. Most of the victims were Jews from the ghettos of southern and southeastern Poland. The Germans also deported German, Austrian, and Czech Jews previously sent to transit camp-ghettos in Izbica, Piaski, and elsewhere to Belzec.

By late spring 1943, Jewish forced laborers, guarded by the SS had completed the task of exhuming the bodies and burning them and had dismantled the camp. During June 1943, the job was completed and the Jewish forced laborers were either shot in Belzec or deported to the Sobibor to be gassed. After, the Belzec camp was dismantled, the Germans ploughed over the site, built a manor house and planted trees and crops to disguise the area as a farm. Soviet forces overran the region in July 1944.



Zamosc

The town of Zamosc located in the Lublin province of eastern Poland, was established at the end of the 16th century by Jan Zamoyski (1542-1605), a Polish statesman, general, and grand crown chancellor of Poland during the reign of Stephen Bathory (1576-1587). Jan Zamoyski, who was educated in Italy, was instrumental in introducing into Poland humanist ideas reflected in his policies at both the national and the local level. Zamosc, sometimes labeled “Padua of the East”, was designed by the Italian architect Bernardo Morando (1540-1600), a native of Padua, according to the principles of “Citta ideale” (“Ideal city”) and it represents the only complete Renaissance urban complex in Poland. In accordance with his enlightened policies and his tolerant attitude, Jan Zamoyski invited new settlers to his town that included in addition to Poles, people from other nationalities and non-Catholic denominations: Armenians, Greeks, Italians, Hungarians, Scots, and Jews. This policy helped in strengthening the economic and cultural life of Zamosc and creating an island of tolerance at an epoch when other Catholic countries in Europe persecuted the Jews and the Protestants.

The first Jews settled in Zamosc in 1588, eight years after the founding of the town. They were Sephardim (Spanish Jews) coming from the Ottoman Empire and Venice and, consequently established the northernmost Sephardi community in Eastern Europe. Having been attracted by the commercial importance of the town, Ashkenazi Jews also began settling in Zamosc at the beginning of the 17th century. The influx of Ashkenazi Jews increased in the 1640's, especially by refugees fleeing the anti-Jewish massacres perpetrated by the troops of B. Chmelniecki during the Ukrainian revolt against Polish rule.

The first wooden synagogue in Zamosc was built at the end of the 16th century when also a Jewish cemetery was opened. The impressive Renaissance style synagogue was built in the 1610's. Many prominent rabbis lived in the town but as the nineteenth century progressed, the Haskala had a large influence on the community with the establishment of a Jewish high school alongside the traditional chedarim. Zamosc Jews became very involved in Bundist, Zionist and Polish Nationalist Activity. Some of the most famous Zamoscians include Y. L. Peretz and Rosa Luxemburg.

Since the end of 1918, Zamosc has been part of the Polish Republic. In the period between the two World Wars, and even with a continuing emigration, there was a significant increase of the Jewish population from 9,383 in 1921 to about 12,000 at the beginning of WW2, which represented about 45% of the total population.

The German army occupied Zamosc on September 14th, 1939. The mass deportations from Zamosc began on the eve of Passover, April 11, 1942. The entire Jewish population was gathered in the market place and gun fired with 89 killed on the spot and another 150 shot dead by the Germans on the way to the train station. By March 1943, all the Jews had been taken to Belzec and murdered.

After Zamosc was liberated by the Soviet army, the first 12 Jewish survivors returned to the town. They were joined by about 300 persons who returned from the Soviet Union. The local Polish population met them with hostility and even violence that brought about the death in 1945 of two Jews at the hands of local anti-Semites. Most Jews departed from Zamosc after a short period and in 1947 there were only five Jews left in the town. All have since died.

Krasnik

A town situated in the Lublin province. Jews are first mentioned in 1531 as merchants. The ruler of the town granted them the right of residence in 1587. This led to a steady increase in the Jewish population, causing the lord of the manor to decree in 1654 that Jews were to reside only in the street where the synagogue was being built. The community numbered 1,353 persons in 1765 (921 in the town itself). The Krasnik community numbered 1,778 (55% of the total population) in 1857, 3,261 (49%) in 1897, and 4,200 (51%) in 1921.

Before the outbreak of World War II, over 5,000 Jews lived in the town. The German army entered the town in September, 1939. On April 12, 1942 the first deportation to Belzec extermination camp took place. The next deportations to Belzec took place in October and November 1942, and the majority of the town's Jews met their death there. A few hundred fled into the forests, but Germans shot most of them. In the vicinity of Krasnik, a few Jewish guerrilla units were organized, including the unit under the command of Abraham Braun ("Adolf") and the unit called "Berek Joselewicz" under the command of Eduard Forst.

Kazimierz Dolny

The townlet of Kazimierz is situated in a picturesque spot not far from the city of Lublin. In the 14th century King Kazimir the Great purchased the village and turned it into a town. His Summer Palace encouraged the town to develop into a major commercial passageway which attracted many Jewish merchants. During his reign (1333-1370), King Kazimir extended many rights to the Jews, who in return respected him, and told many romantic stories about him and his Jewish love — Esterka.

The Jews of Kazimierz were known to be rich and very involved in all aspects of life, up to the 17th century. Unfortunately, the town's wealth attracted the Cossak gangs of Chiemelniestski and they engaged in pogroms against the Jews.

Between the 19th and 20th centuries the Jews of Kazimierz witnessed Chassidism, Enlightenment, Zionism, Youth Movements — typical to all other Jewish townlets at that time and in that region.

On September 8, 1939, the first German bombs fell on the town. On September 19, the *Wermacht* armored cars entered. In the spring of 1940, all Jews were ordered to leave towns and settle in the mountains, but within a short time they were forced to return, this time to a ghetto which was built for them.

On March 25, 1942 all the Jews of the town were ordered to report to the marketplace, where they heard that their hometown must be "*Judenrein*" (clean of Jews) within three days. This was how the town of Kazimierz lost all its Jewish inhabitants. None are left today.

Handling the Raw Material

In the middle of the night I was awakened by a sharp whistle. My bunk neighbor explained that a transport had arrived, a Dutch one. This train usually came in around 3:00 A.M.

While the transports of Jews from Eastern Europe usually arrived at Sobibor in overfilled cargo wagons or trucks, the Dutch transports came in standard passenger trains. The Jewish administration in Westerbork, Holland, their departure point, provided them with doctors and nurses for the sick, maids for the handicapped and babies. Food and medicine were in plentiful supply in attached freight wagons.

Kapo foreman Bunio tore into our barrack, and turning on the light, he shouted, "Porters and barbers... get ready!"

Groups of prisoners jumped from their bunks, dressed quickly, and went out to the square. Evidently a large transport was expected. Another Kapo dragged additional men from the bunks, myself included. A few of us were designated "porters" and a few others were called "friseurs," barbers.

The camp was well lit. Being led to the workplace, I could see some movement far off on the station platform. New arrivals were getting off the train. A narrow-gauge dumpcart passed by. Into it would be thrown, I was told, in addition to the large pieces of baggage, the sick, the old, the crippled, and all those unable to walk on their own. The rest would follow the SS men to a long barrack.

The eight-member group I was with was led to this barrack and told to wait for the arriving Jews. It was a large windowless barrack; its entrance and exit gates were wide open. Two prisoners were placed by the entrance gate, four in the center, and two by the exit. We were to tell the Jews passing through the barrack to leave their purses and small hand baggage there.

The first group of condemned Jews drew near. First were the women. They were nicely dressed. I stood for a moment, dumbfounded. It was early in the morning, and many small children slept in their arms. They had no idea they were going to their deaths.

The sudden crack of the whip reminded me not to be a passive observer. The veteran prisoners repeated a sentence in Dutch over and over again, informing the passing people that they were to leave their belongings here; I mimicked them. At the exit gate stood an SS man, and woe to us if someone passed by still holding something after crossing the length of the barrack.

Once in a while I would see bewilderment and suspicion on their faces. They had left their heavy baggage on the platform without worry, because all of the luggage had tags, but here they were told to throw their very personal belongings into a huge heap. When someone refused to leave a purse or a handbag, the SS man would whip the victim until he or she complied.

The column of about five hundred people passed through. We could hear more wagons arriving on the camp's side track. Now this place had to be emptied.

The barrack had several doors that led to attached smaller barracks. Several prisoners entered through these doors, and together we quickly loaded the heaps of hand luggage into blankets and carried them to adjoining rooms. Inside were tables where women stood sorting the booty. We threw down load after load. Soon the barrack was empty and the sand floor had been raked down.

Then the SS men led us to the gate of an enclosed courtyard and ordered us to wait. From inside the yard came a single German voice. I thought I heard the end of a speech. After a while the gate opened and we entered. The yard was now empty and quiet. Only heaps of neatly piled dresses, suits, and underwear remained.

We loaded the clothes onto blankets and carried them back through the gate. I understood that they were left by Jews who had just been ordered to undress. Moving along with others, I found myself in a large warehouse. We threw the clothes onto large, short tables.

Now, with the next group approaching from the train platform, we were ordered back to the first barrack, where the purses or small packages were to be left. Again the same procedure. Later we walked to the undressing and waited for the gate to open.

This time we were earlier, and again we heard from the other side a voice in German, "The 'Preacher' is talking," whispered Szmul. I paid heed. It was a speech conducted in a surprisingly relaxed and polite manner, so unlike the Nazis' normal behavior. The speaker apologized to the listeners for the inconvenience. For sanitary reasons they must undress, put their clothing neatly away, and take a shower before relaxing in the comfortable living quarters that were awaiting them. He recommended that they take the prepared postcards and write a few words to their loved ones in Holland to assure them of their safe arrival in Poland and good health.

The soothing speech of the well-mannered SS man was effective. There was applause. I heard a commotion as the people rushed towards the free postcards, having no idea that those very postcards were a lure meant to reinforce the facade of "resettlement" for the next transport. If only the fence dividing us had been transparent, they would have seen the still-warm mountains of clothing from their predecessors waiting to be sorted and packed.

Suddenly I heard the sound of internal combustion engines. Immediately afterward, I heard a terribly high-pitched, yet smothered, collective cry— at first strong, surpassing the roar of the motors, then, after a few minutes, gradually weakening. My blood froze. I'm sure that the people in the undressing yard heard the scream, but they could not have known what it meant. The noise, muffled by the sound of the engines and the thick walls of the gas chambers, could be taken for a distant thunder, and approaching storm.

An SS man with a machine gun and a whip was watching over us, and we stood waiting as if frozen in time. Now the “Preacher” finished his speech, and applause could once again be heard.

The people, like their predecessors, entered what the Germans sadistically called the Himmelstrasse (Road to Heaven). This was the path, flanked by a barbed-wire fence, that led to the hair-cutting barrack and finally to the gas chambers.

Our job in this section done, SS Oberscharführer Karl Frenzel randomly chose four prisoners, myself included, and led us to the hair-cutting barrack, less than twenty feet from the gas chambers. Inside were simple wooden chairs. Josef Wolf, a short, dark, middle-aged SS man, stood in the center of the room. I was given large shears and told to wait. The women began to come. I didn’t know what to do.

“Just snip quickly in bunches,” a comrade told me. “It doesn’t need to be close to the head.”

I was terribly shy. I had never seen a nude woman before. Like all fifteen-year-olds I wanted to, but I felt embarrassed for the naked and humiliated women. I tried not to look directly at them, and they looked down and tried to cover themselves.

Not all the women reacted the same way. One woman resisted, refusing to move. When the Nazi hit her with the whip, she attacked him with her fists and nails, but the German bullet was faster and killed her instantly. Now most were resigned and passive. A teenager wept at the loss of her lovely locks, asking not to have it cut too short.

They were going to die in only a few minutes, and there was nothing we could do. After the women left, we packed the hair into potato sacks, which were then brought to a nearby storeroom.

After about three hours’ work and over two thousand deaths, the SS men ordered us back to the barracks. We were being counted. Everything was tallied – both the number of the murdered and those still living. As we moved on, the searchlights enveloping us were shut off one by one. It was a beautiful starry night.

Nearing our barracks in Lager I, we heard the rhythmic thuds coming from the direction of the gas chambers, like stones being thrown into a metal box. Later I learned what it was. Prisoners in the crematoria section were throwing the bodies into the narrow-gauge dumpcarts that carried the corpses to the cremation site.

When we arrived at our compound, we were counted again before being allowed to go back to our barracks and to sleep. In the morning, another group would finish the job of sorting and packing the booty for shipment.

— Thomas Toivi Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor*

Galicia

Lancut

Tarnow • Lezajsk



Lancut

When the Polish king Kazimierz the Great occupied Galician and Vladimiran Rus', he also initiated the settlement of those areas. It was he who granted the town a charter. Lancut became the property of the Potocki family, whose management, along with the development of the railroad, contributed to the town's growth in the nineteenth century. A distillery was founded there that became famous for its liqueurs, vodkas and colognes, as well as a sugar factory. The last lord of Ła cut left his residence with the arrival of the Soviet army. His property was taken over by the state and divided up.

Jews first arrived in Lancut in approximately the fourteenth century and quickly became an important part of the town's life, aided by the favor shown them by the lords of the Lancut holdings. The original ban on trade (1613) was abolished, and Jews also worked as glaziers and wood-carvers. In the nineteenth century, it was the Hassidim who set the tone of Jewish life in Ła cut; in the interwar period, this would become the Zionist groups. The prospering town became an attractive place for Jews to settle. In 1939, they comprised approximately 40% of Lancut's population. There were three Jewish schools there: a Zionist one, a Hebrew one (*Tarbut*) and a conservative school for girls called *Beys Yakov*. During the Second World War, the German occupying authorities organized a POW camp in Lancut for Polish soldiers who had been taken prisoner.

On September 9, 1939, the Germans took over the city and instituted forced labor. The local synagogue was set on fire and the Lancut's Jews were expelled on September 22, 1939. At the end of 1939, some Jews returned and other Jewish refugees joined them. By the end of 1940, with the arrival of refugees from Krakow, there were 1,300 Jews in Lancut. A ghetto was created in January, 1942. In August, 1942 and May, 1943, people were sent from there to the camp in Pełkinie, and from there to the death camp in Belzec. The sick, elderly, and young were shot in the camp or in the nearby Nechzioli forest.

Traces of the former Jewish presence remain, such as the synagogue on ul. Sobieskiego. It survived thanks to Alfred Potocki, the owner of the castle, who urged the Germans not to destroy it. Though the Germans had already set it on fire, they then extinguished it.

The first Lancut synagogue existed as early as the seventeenth century. The one that still stands today was built in the second half of the eighteenth century with the permission of S. Lubomirski. It was reconstructed in the nineteenth century, when a distinctive exterior stairwell was added. The building has a rectangular floor plan, and on its eastern side has a square room of full height

with a floor below street level. It has cross and arched vaults. On its western side are a vestibule and a small room known as the “Lublin room”, and on the first floor the women’s gallery, which has a stairwell leading to it from the outside. The synagogue does not stand out particularly from the rest of the town’s buildings – this is because Lubomirski ordered it to be no bigger than the church or town hall, nor taller than the rest of the town’s buildings. The wonderfully furnished interiors are striking, however, and including regency-rococo polychrome stuccoed decorations from the second half of the eighteenth century, and colored wall paintings from the nineteenth century, with numerous inscriptions in the arcades of Bible texts and prayers. The wall paintings and arcades with prayer texts are noteworthy, as are the decorations, which were



thoroughly restored during the years 1983-1990. The latter provide a good opportunity to take a closer look at Jewish ornamentation. The main room has a centrally placed bimah, above which are Bible scenes: the temptation of Adam, the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, Noah’s ark and the sacrifice of Abraham. The ceiling of the small copula above the bimah is decorated with a snake swallowing his tail – the symbol of eternity. Atop the aron ha-kodesh on the eastern wall is colorfully painted stucco work in the shape of hands in a gesture of blessing – the symbol of priesthood. The rococo stucco work decorated with the symbols of the zodiac encircle the prayer space, above which are paintings depicting Jewish holidays. Many liturgical objects have survived, which may be viewed inside the synagogue.

Tarnow

Before World War II, about 25,000 Jews lived in Tarnow, a city in southern Poland, 45 miles east of Krakow (Krakow). Jews — whose recorded presence in the town went back to the mid-fifteenth century — comprised about half of the town's total population. A large portion of Jewish business in Tarnow was devoted to garment and hat manufacturing. The Jewish community was ideologically diverse and included both religious Hasidim and secular Zionists.

Immediately following the German occupation of the city on September 8, 1939, the harassment of the Jews began. German units burned down most of the city's synagogues on September 9 and drafted Jews for forced-labor projects. Tarnow was incorporated into the *Generalgouvernement* (the territory in the interior of occupied Poland). Many Tarnow Jews fled to the east, while a large influx of refugees from elsewhere in Poland continued to increase the town's Jewish population. In early November, the Germans ordered the establishment of a Jewish council (*Judenrat*) to transmit orders and regulations to the Jewish community. Among the duties of the Jewish council were enforcement of special taxation on the community and providing workers for forced labor.

During 1941, life for the Jews of Tarnow became increasingly precarious. The Germans imposed a large collective fine on the community. Jews were required to hand in their valuables. Roundups for labor became more frequent and killings became more commonplace and arbitrary. Deportations from Tarnow began in June, 1942, when about 13,500 Jews were sent to the Belzec extermination camp. During the deportation operations, German SS and police forces massacred hundreds of Jews in the streets, in the marketplace, in the Jewish cemetery, and in the woods outside the town.

After the June deportations, the Germans ordered the surviving Jews in Tarnow, along with thousands of Jews from neighboring towns, into a ghetto. The ghetto was surrounded by a high wooden fence. Living conditions in the ghetto were poor, marked by severe food shortages, a lack of sanitary facilities, and a forced-labor regimen in factories and workshops producing goods for the German war industry.

In September, 1942, the Germans ordered all ghetto residents to report at Targowica Square, where they were subjected to a "*Selektion*" (selection) in which those deemed "unessential" were selected out for deportation to Belzec. About 8,000 people were deported. Thereafter, deportations from Tarnow to extermination camps continued sporadically; the Germans deported a group of 2,500 in November, 1942.

In the midst of the 1942 deportations, some Jews in Tarnow organized a resistance movement. Many of the resistance leaders were young Zionists involved in the *Ha-Shomer Ha-Tsa'ir* youth movement. Many of those who left the ghetto to join the partisans fighting in the forests later fell in battle with SS units. Other resisters sought to establish escape routes to Hungary, but with limited success.

The Germans decided to destroy the Tarnow ghetto in September, 1943. The surviving 10,000 Jews were deported, 7,000 of them to Auschwitz and 3,000 to the Plaszow concentration camp in Krakow. In late 1943, Tarnow was declared “free of Jews” (*Judenrein*). By the end of the war, the overwhelming majority of Tarnow Jews had been murdered by the Germans. Although some 700 Jews returned to the city after liberation, virtually all of them soon left to escape local antisemitism.

— From the website of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005461>



Jewish cemetery in Tarnow.

The Road to the Shtetl

The small-town Jewish community of Eastern Europe — the *shtetl* — traces its line of march directly back to Creation. The Exodus from Egypt, the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, are seen as steps along the way, historical events no less real than the Spanish Inquisition or the Russian Revolution.

For the world at large, the record is more obscure. In the oldest inscriptions of the Egyptian and Babylonian kings, no mention is made of the Hebrews who, among other Semitic and non-Semitic tribes, guided their flocks from oasis to oasis in the area between Mesopotamia and the Jordan. No scribe registered their entrance into Egypt under the scourge of famine, and none recorded their dramatic departure under the leadership of Moses. Among the bloody battles between the Egyptian armies and the invaders of Syria and Asia Minor, the conquests of Joshua passed unheeded.

Even the unification of the clans under the warrior-king David failed to impress the ancient chroniclers. The name of Solomon, great builder of the Temple, is known only through the records of his own people. The history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, until their destruction in the eighth and sixth centuries B.C.E., had meaning chiefly for the scribes of the Bible.

This small and insignificant people has been, for most of its long history, a people without dominion. The road from Mount Sinai to the shtetl was over three thousand years long and during only a few centuries of that time was Israel an independent nation. Its actual independence ended when the Babylonian invaders destroyed the Temple of Solomon and exiled the population of Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C.E.

When they went into exile, they left behind few tangible traces of their culture — far too few shards and structures to satisfy archeologists of a later day. They took with them the key expressions of their existence as a sovereign people — the Presence of their God, the Law He had handed down to them upon Mount Sinai, and their faith in His Covenant. According to the shtetl, the Children of Israel have survived solely because of the Covenant made with God in accepting His Law.

It is the Covenant with God, says the shtetl, that has enabled a weak and homeless people to survive the great empires of Egypt and Babylon, Greece and Rome, Byzantium and Islam, and has caused their sacred books to enter into the Holy Writ of half the world.

It has become also a symbol of continuity maintained in spite of — perhaps because of — modification. The basis of the Yiddish language was a medieval German dialect with which Hebrew elements were combined. During the centuries it developed its own structure and style. In each new setting elements from local vernaculars have been absorbed, modified to suit the Yiddish idiom. Whoever knows Yiddish can understand the Yiddish of anyone else, even though some of the words may be incomprehensible. Yet each region has its own accent and idioms, which can be recognized and identified.

Western Europe never fully replaced Spain as the outstanding center of Jewish culture. The unrelenting succession of restrictions, expulsions and massacres left no opportunity for that. The history of the Ashkenazi communities is one of intermittent flight and destruction. When governments frowned and violence grew frequent, there would be a new exodus to a new country, where a new rabbinical academy would be established and would flourish, until the next wave of destruction.

When the Crusaders began to exterminate local “infidels” on their way to the Holy Land, the Jews of Western Europe began to look to the East for haven. An old legend tells how, in the days of the Black Death, a group of exhausted refugees came to an unknown country east of Germany. As they beheld it, a voice from Heaven announced in Hebrew, “*Polin!*” — here thou shalt rest! The name of the country was Poland.

Here they stayed, and more of the Ashkenazim came to join them, spreading through Eastern Europe. In Poland and beyond, in Russia, they found old Jewish communities dating back to the times of Greek colonization, or founded by refugees from the Byzantine Empire. Two streams of the Diaspora became united in Eastern Europe. One descended from refugees who had entered directly from Near Eastern Asia through the Black Sea. The later stream flowed in from Western Europe, in flight from France, Germany or Bohemia.

The Polish rulers, eager to develop their backward provinces, welcomed the immigrants from the West, experienced in commerce and industry. They granted them privileges and liberties, religious freedom and communal autonomy. Here the Ashkenazim found a haven where they could continue their way of life. And here evolved the most populous, the most cohesive and culturally the most homogeneous Jewish communities in Europe. For centuries to come, Eastern Europe would be the Jewish culture center.

The themes which had characterized the Ashkenazi community of Western Europe continued to develop: isolation from the non-Jewish world and complete penetration of religious precept and practice into every detail of daily life. By the time restrictions and pogroms caught up with them, as they did very shortly, the patterns laid down in Babylon and modified in Western Europe had further strengthened and crystallized.

The small town, the shtetl, was the stronghold of this culture. Whether among Poles or Russians, Lithuanians or Hungarians, the Jews retained their ways and their language — responding to the environment, assimilating much of it, integrating it into their way of life, yet keeping the core of their own tradition intact. They spoke Yiddish, wrote and read Hebrew, bargained in broken Polish or Ukrainian. In large cities, as time went on, more and more of them rebelled against the sole authority of the Torah. The shtetl, also touched by waves from without, felt the impact less violently and resisted more sturdily. Only the wars and revolutions of the twentieth century, with the final destruction of six million lives, put an end to its role as the current home of the tradition.

How and why it survived so long is a question that has been much debated and will not be simply answered. A large part of whatever answer there is lies in the shtetl itself, its way of life and most of all its way of thought.

A World Beyond: Excerpts based on *Hassidic Masters*, by R. Aryeh Kaplan, and other sources

People are beginning to discover the world of Hassidic thought. Now, just as when it came into existence some two centuries ago, the Hassidic spirit seems to have the power to draw the Jewish soul, uplifting it and awaking the bond between God and man.

The Hassidic movement was founded in the mid-eighteenth century by Rabbi Israel, known as the Baal Shem Tov. His teachings transformed Judaism into a continuous adventure, giving every Jew a ladder with which to rise above himself and his wretched condition. A large number of disciples followed Rabbi Israel during his lifetime, and after his death, his influence captured virtually all of Eastern Europe. Within a generation, the insights that he had taught had captivated a great many exceptional individuals, who in turn inspired the Jewish community as a whole with new spiritual ideas and values.

In order to understand Hasidism, we must first look at the situation that existed when it first came into being. The entire thrust of Jewish thought had turned away from the spiritual, and was engaged in the legal, sociological and historical aspects of Judaism. If there was any mention of the spiritual, it was about the fires of Ghenna [Hell] which awaited those who did not follow the exactitudes of the law. Much of the enthusiasm and the ardor that had existed in earlier generations seemed to have been snuffed out.

All this, of course, was not without reason. The most important single influence upon the Jewish community of that period had been the rise of Shabbetai Tzvi (1626-1676), the false Messiah of the mid-seventeenth century. Arming himself with the entire arsenal of Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah, Shabbetai Tzvi had conquered the hearts of a large portion of world Jewry. When the Turkish Sultan offered him the choice between conversion and death, his conversion to Islam resulted in a disillusionment that had threatened to crumble the very bedrock of Jewish belief.

The reaction to this was swift and decisive. If Kabbalah and mysticism could result in such calamity, then its study would be proscribed and its dissemination forbidden. If Shabbetai Tzvi could find justification for the abrogation of the law, then its hold would be tightened and made all the more strict. If joy and ecstasy could be perverted, they would be banned altogether.

For the most part this was the reaction of the Eastern European Jewish community. There were others who took a different approach. To them, mysticism and Kabbalah were little more than superstition, and the successes of the false messiah only demonstrated all the more clearly that these elements should be excised from the body of Judaism through a new surge of rationalism. If the bond of the law had been loosened by Shabbetai Tzvi, all the better, since it was this fetter that seemed to be preventing Judaism from coming into full

intellectual bloom. This was the reaction of many western European intellectuals, who became the forebearers of the “Enlightenment”.

These two camps may have had many disputes, but in one area there was almost total agreement. The mystical and ecstatic elements of Judaism were detrimental and dangerous, and should be eliminated in favor of a purely intellectual approach. If a pretender to the messianic throne arises, let him convince us with either Talmudic logic or philosophical reasoning!

In the shuffle of counterreformation following the Sabbetai heresy, God was almost completely lost. For how can we speak about God? The two most common approaches involved either the language of the mystic or that of the philosopher. The path of the mystic had already been blocked by the reaction against Sabbetaism. In religious circles, the highway of the philosopher had also begun to look dangerous, due to the excesses of the early enlightenment.

For the average individual, who was neither Rabbi nor scholar, this was a time of great spiritual poverty. He was told that the only way in which he could approach God was through the strictest adherence to the law, but the subject of God Himself was virtually taboo. The feelings of the common man were neglected almost to the point of starvation, and all that he was offered was a dry, formal ritual, without any warmth or inspiration. Only the learned could play a meaningful role in Jewish life, and leaders grew steadily apart from their flocks. For many, Judaism had become a burden rather than a path to God.

The secularized enlighteners were the first to point out these shortcomings, but they had little more to offer. They lived in a world of sophistry that treated traditional Jewish values as little more than a joke, and their hollow rationalism threatened to uproot what had taken centuries to build and plant. But for the average man, they too had little to offer. There was no groundswell of popular emotion, no one to clothe the spiritual nakedness of the masses.

These sentiments sound very familiar, and could just as well be spoken about contemporary Jewish life. For a long time, scientific rationality gave any mention of the spiritual the stigma of superstition. Since the existence of God could not be demonstrated through scientific proof, the less mention made of it the better. If one is to speak of Judaism at all, let him do so in historical, sociological, or nationalistic terms.

A large segment of today's Jewish population has little idea of how to approach the spiritual elements of Judaism. How do the historical and sociological elements of Judaism interact with the spiritual, the metaphysical, and the mystical? For many, this is a source of embarrassment, best not to be discussed at all. But this is not enough for those who are starved spiritually, no more now than two hundred years ago.

Besides this, more and more facts are emerging that cannot be resolved with strict scientific logic alone. Some of the best scientific minds today are beginning to recognize a reality beyond the physical, and for the first time, unprejudiced

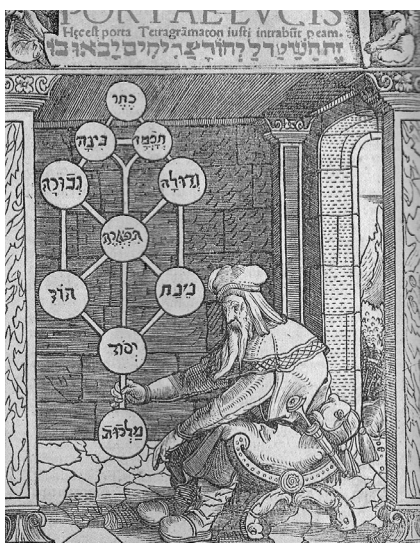
attempts are being made to explore it. It is in this context that a sudden upsurge of interest in Hasidism has developed.

In the teachings of Hassidic masters, one comes across a new way of approaching God and the spiritual. Neither Kabbalah nor philosophy, but experience is the proper way to approach God. "Serve God with gladness!" "Taste and see that God is good." "For me the closeness of God is best!" The words of the psalmist became the watchwords of the Hassidic movement. If there are contradictions and paradoxes, so be it — all of life is filled with conflict. But when I love someone very deeply, the mere fact that I find contradictions and paradoxes in his behavior does not diminish my love.

The Hassidic masters used the language of Kabbalah, and to a lesser extent that of Jewish philosophy, to teach the average individual how he too could experience God. Clinging to the traditions of the past, Hasidism breathed a new life into an old world. It was not theory, but practice, where the most

ordinary individual could become a denizen of the supernal universes. The highest ideals could be aspired to by every man, not only by destroying the body, but by letting the ego dissolve into nothingness, totally nullified in the presence of the Infinite.

Since the Hassidic masters used both the language and terminology of the Kabbalah, many see Hassidism as little more than an extension of earlier Kabbalistic thought. But even though the terminology is the same, the basic thrust is very different. While the earlier Kabbalah tried to bring man into heaven, the main idea of Hasidism was to bring heaven into man. While most of its basic concepts may have been found in



earlier works, the emphasis was novel, and it was formulated in such a way as to give hope and inspiration to even the lowliest.

Hasidism uplifted the masses, but it would be wrong to suppose that its teachings were designated solely as a kind of spiritual medicine, necessary when one is ill, but of no value for the healthy. An important teaching of Hassidism is that its insights are important to the spiritual well-being of every Jew. Although its masters aimed much of their energies at helping poor, illiterate Jews, it would be incorrect to say that this was the main characteristic of Hassidism, since the movement also brought new vision and depth to the entire body of Jewish thought.

In the earlier Kabbalah, there is a constant tension between two contradictory teachings. On one hand, there is teaching that "No thought can grasp God at all." God is so far above any human experience that it is impossible

to even think of approaching Him. On the other hand, there is also a basic teaching that “no place is empty of Him”. Wherever one looks, he can see God, and one can experience Him in any place as long as one truly seeks. God is therefore at the same time both imminent and transcendental — or in Kabbalistic terms, he both fills and surrounds all worlds. But there remains a question as to where the emphasis should be placed.

Even though it recognized the transcendental nature of God, Hassidism committed itself to His imminence. Foremost among Hassidic teachings is the idea that God fills all creation and is accessible to any person. A soul is the spark of the divine, and if one merely removes the barriers, the soul will find its own way to the suprarational worlds, and ultimately to the Infinite Being Himself.

Hassidism also stressed the fact that God created the world as an act of altruism and benevolence, and that pleasure, rather than punishment, is the goal of man. God Himself is the source of all pleasure, and the greatest delight is therefore attachment (*devekut*) to God. Why should one sin if it will diminish this pleasure, and why mention Ghenna [Hell] when the loss of God’s closeness in itself a much greater punishment? And if God wants to give us good, then is there any excuse to ever give up hope?

The Hassidic masters pointed out that if God exists, then He is everything, and man needs no other goal in life. The disciplines of Hassidism may seem most extreme to the outsider, as if the goal was to create not merely a kingdom of priests, but a community of saints. But where love exists, nothing is difficult, and where love for God is absolute, even sainthood may not be an overwhelming goal.

In this light the goal of all worship and observance is to attain a high. It may seem strange to borrow the term “high” from the drug culture, but it seems to be the only term that adequately expresses the feelings involved. It is a high that comes from one’s attachment to the Source of all sources, and worship and observance are the primary means of attaining it. Rather than being a dry formalism, the law now becomes the precise opposite — a handbook on how to attain the highest ecstasy.

Hassidism depended greatly on the personalities of the masters. Many groups emerged, each gathered around a *Zaddik*, a righteous master. They would come to him as often as they could, especially for the high holy days, to spend a few precious days in his presence, bringing their needs, written on scraps of paper, that he might heal them by his miraculous powers. In him they saw a human being so perfect, so fully able to concentrate upon his task to help God and man, that God’s grace could not possibly be denied him. To them he was a personality so powerful that he might well influence the powers on high. As a man free from vanity and selfishness, he was to them the true co-worker with God in the work of salvation. In his presence they felt exalted and hallowed. The cryptic words of his instruction held deepest meaning for them. The Zaddik was surrounded by his courtiers, disciples attended to his every need. With them he



Title page of first edition of the Zohar, Mantua, 1558.

would spend the twilight hours of the departing Sabbath. The third Sabbath meal — a piece of fish, a drink of whisky — and the rabbi's words, or even his silence in meditation, became hours of communion and of unity. Thus did they taste the moment of redemption in the midst of their toil, and the spirit of salvation in the midst of persecution.

Hassidism has had a profound impact on Jewish life and religion. Modern Israel reflects some of its ideals. Here Jews went to work to build. No task was too difficult, no job too lowly, no duty too insignificant. In all of them they saw a challenge; though secularized, it was work of redemption, so they gave their utmost. Hassidism has thus helped to create the spirit of equality in Israel; everyone's work is of highest significance, and so is every person. In the spirit of Hassidism, pioneers developed unparalleled endurance and unflinching dedication to their goals, but also joy, exuberance, dance and celebration.

Hassidism has inspired the work of modern Jewish thinkers, especially Martin Buber, who was formed by it, and whose influence is reaching out into the world at large. Standing up to God, hearing his command out of the task at the moment, finding Him in the eternal dialogue of "I and Thou", these are the foundations of Buber's thinking. They are Hassidic ideas. The shortest road from man to God goes through humanity, and the goal of all human striving must be the unity of all men in unity of God. Both Buber and Hassidism see it thus. This is the way to redemption; this leads to the coming of Messiah.

The Hassidim found God existentially, by living before Him. Their message and their goal — as interpreted by Buber and exemplified in Israel — are reaching into the field of universal ideas discussed and evaluated in general philosophy and theology. From the point of view of general impact, Hassidism is one of the significant contributions of modern Jewry to religion as a whole.

Oyfn Pripetshok



On the Little Hearth

This cradle song was written in the Czarist Pale of Settlement, where trials and tribulations were the natural environment of the Jewish Community. It was on the eve of the mass migrations to America and the lullaby actually anticipates the "exodus".

Mark Warshawsky authored more than fifty-texts and tunes, many of which were current among the people before they were published. Oyfn Pripetshok, however, became the most popular of his songs, and is known wherever Yiddish-speaking Jews reside the world over.

Text and Tune by Mark Warshawsky (1848-1907). English text by Ruth Rubin, ©1964 by Applesseed Music, Inc.

Em B7 Em B7

Oy - fn pri - pe - tshok brent a fay - er - l, Un in shtub iz
On the lit - tle hearth, A fire is burn - ing bright, The school - room is so

Em (E7) Am Em

heys. Un - der re - be ler - nt kley - ne kin - der - lech,
warm. The old teach - er's tell - ing all the child - ren there, How the

1. B7 Em 2. B7 Em

Dem - a - leph beys Dem - a - leph beys.
al - pha - bet was born. al - pha - bet was born.

Refrain Em B7 Em B7

Zet - zhe kin - der - lech Ge - denkt - zhe tay - e - re, Vos ir lern - t
Lis - ten chil - dren Lis - ten pre - cious ones, Lis - ten to our

Em (E7) Am Em

do. Zogt - zhe noch a - mol un ta - ke noch a - mol,
lore. But first you have to read the an - cient al - pha - bet,

1. B7 Em 2. B7 Em

Ko - mets a - leph, O. Ko - mets a - leph O!
Be - fore you can learn more. Be - fore you can learn more.

Oyfn pripetshok brent a fayerl,
Un in shtub iz heys.
Un der rebe lernt kleyne kinderlech
Dem alef-beys.

Refrain:

Zet-zhe kinderlech, gedenkt-zhe
tayere,
Vos ir lernt do;
Zogt-zhe noch amol, un take noch amol:
Komets-alef: O!

Lernt kinder, mit groys cheyshek,
Azoy zog ich aych on,
Ver s'vet gicher fun aych kenon ivre,
Der bakumt a fon. (Ref.)

Lernt kinder, hot nit moyre,
Yeder onhoyb iz shver,
Gliklech der vos hot gelernt toyre,
Tsi darf der mentsh noch mer? (Ref.)

Ir vet kinder, elter vern,
Vet ir aleyn farshteyn,
Vifil in di oysyes lign treern,
Un vifil geveyn. (Ref.)

Az ir vet kinder, dem goles shlep, n,
Oysgemutshet zayn,
Zolt ir fun di oysyes koyech shepn,
Kukt in zey arayn! (Ref.)

On the little hearth a fire is burning
bright,
The schoolroom is so warm -
The old teacher's telling all the children
there,
How the alphabet was born.

Refrain:

Listen children, listen precious ones,
Listen to our lore,
But first you have to read the ancient
alphabet
Before you can learn more.

It will lead you to the holy books,
Remember what I say -
Then I'll give a banner to the best of you,
On the holiday. (Ref.)

Pay attention, children listen well,
Its always hard to start -
Happy is the man who lives with knowl-
edge,
Takes learning to his heart. (Ref.)

When you'll grow up into men some day,
Then you'll surely know,
How full of human tears is our old
alphabet,
How full of trials and woe. (Ref.)

And if one day, we should be driven out
From this land of pain -
May you seek and find in our old alphabet
The strength to build again. (Ref.)



*Haarlem, Holland, October 1942.
Max Cohen in his hiding place.*

Lezajsk

The first mention of Jews in Lezajsk dates back to 1538. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Jewish population of Lezajsk had their own synagogue and cemetery. The Jews were involved in the trade in grain, which was sent by river all the way to Gdansk, as well as in brewing, the cloth trade, tavern-keeping and money lending.

In 1635, Władysław IV granted a privilege to the Jews of Lezajsk, which was later confirmed by Jan II Sobieski and Stanisław August and continued to be in force until the Commonwealth ended as a result of the first partition in 1772. This document recognized the right of Lezajsk's Jews to own property anywhere within the town's limits, guaranteed them freedom of trade and allowed them to produce various types of alcohol. After the partition, the Austrian authorities limited the Jewish community's autonomy, obligated them to serve in the military, introduced taxes and implemented a policy of Germanization.

In the late eighteenth century, there were 756 Jews living in Lezajsk; over the course of the next century, this number almost tripled, and by the mid-eighteenth century, an independent Jewish Community was founded. When Elimelech settled here, the town became an important Hassidic center, and Elimelech himself was the originator of the concept of *tsaddikism* and the first *tsaddik* in the history of Judaism. His pupils became great *tsaddikim* themselves, and included the Seer of Lublin and Menachem Mendel of Rymanów. Elimelech presented his concepts in a work titled *The Mildness of Elimelech* (Noam Elimelech). *Tsaddikism* strictly regulated the norms of Jewish life and isolated them from outside influences.

During the nineteenth century, fires in the town worsened its economic situation. During the interwar period, the Jews comprised about 20% of the town's population, and there were many youth organizations and schools (*Tarbut*, *Yavne* and *Beit Yaakov*). Zionists were particularly active.

When the Second World War began, about 2,000 Jews lived in Lezajsk. The first day after the Germans occupied the town, they set the synagogue on fire, and on 12 September most of Lezajsk's Jews were expelled beyond the San River, to the Soviet zone of occupation. (The Soviet army entered Polish territory on 17 September, 1939.) About 350 Jews remained in the town, whom the Germans put into a ghetto in 1941. These were primarily older people, women and children. They were forced to work on construction sites and building roads, and many died as a result of the difficult conditions prevailing in the ghetto. Many were killed in executions that were carried out at the Lezajsk cemetery. In late April and early May 1942, the ghetto was liquidated, and some of the people were moved to a transit camp in Pełkinie and to the labor camps in Rozwadów and Radymno.

The remaining approximately one hundred people were killed on the spot. The population of Lezajsk, repressed by the Germans, nevertheless aided the Jews in the ghetto, despite the fact that this was punishable by death. A group of Jews from Lezajsk did survive the war — primarily those who had been deported by the Soviets to the East.

Some fragments of the synagogue are still visible inside what is now a bank, next door to the former *yeshiva* building, which is also still standing. Near the cemetery, a restaurant now exists in what used to be the *cheder*. A particularly important site recalling the Jewish presence in Lezajsk is the cemetery, which is situated to the east of the market square, on ul. Studzienna. It occupies an area of approximately two hectares (4.94 acres), and is currently fenced and overgrown with trees. The cemetery has an *ohel* (rebuilt in 1963) and several dozen *matsevot* that were excavated in the 1980's when work was being done on the Lezajsk market square. During the occupation, the Germans had reinforced the market's pavement with the headstones.

The *ohel* of Tsaddik Elimelech, erected in 1776, is located in the cemetery. During the war, it was heavily damaged by the Germans, who had been searching for the gold that was supposedly hidden inside it. After the war, it was restored at the initiative of Rabbi Frydman of Vienna, a former pupil of the Kraków Rabbinical School, as a symbol of thanks for his life having been saved during the German occupation.

Elimelech's *ohel* is currently the object of pilgrimages by Hasidim from all over the world, who gather there on the anniversary of his death — the 21st day of the month of Adar — in order to pray together and ask for health, a good spouse or good luck in ones business. They believe that the Tsaddik's spirit is present at his grave on the anniversary of his death and takes the little pieces of paper with requests — *kvitelech* — to God. The figure of Tsaddik Elimelech, and his grave itself, are surrounded by an aura of miracles and legends. It is believed that he is capable of influencing God's decisions, curing incurable diseases, ensuring a good old age, money and fertility. He had supernatural abilities, such as seeing the future, the power to expel evil demons from people, and the capacity to speak with animals. Among the spectacular miracles attributed to him was the case in which a little girl's bones ceased to deteriorate after she had been brought to his grave from the United States. According to the Hasidim, Elimelech had within him a little of Moses's soul, and that he was one of the thirty-six righteous ones, who in each generation support the existence of the world through their virtues and their fear of God.

Not far from the cemetery there is a house of prayer and a *mikvah*, as well as overnight accommodation for Jewish pilgrims in a building that belongs to the Nissenbaum Family Foundation.

Einsatzgruppen

(Full name: *Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitsdienstes [SD] und der Sicherheitspolizei [SIPO]*)

German term, meaning “action-groups,” that originally referred to Nazi police intelligence units that worked with the German army following the invasion of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Later, the term referred to mobile SS killing units that traveled with the German forces that invaded the Soviet Union in 1941.

When the Germans invaded Austria in March 1938 and Czechoslovakia in March 1939, the *Einsatzgruppen*’s role was to follow the advancing military and serve as portable offices of the Nazis’ Security Service and Security Police until permanent offices could be set up. The *Einsatzgruppen* were in charge of security in these regions, which involved locating and imprisoning opponents of the Nazis.

In preparation for the Nazi invasion of Poland in September 1939, the *Einsatzgruppen* were commanded to combat elements deemed hostile to the Reich; this was interpreted as an order to murder thousands of Jews and members of the Polish upper class. Soon after, on September 21, 1939, the *Einsatzgruppen* received instructions concerning Jews in the newly conquered regions: they were to arrest and transfer them to ghettos near railway lines, in order to facilitate future population movement. They were also instructed to set up *Judenraete* (Jewish Councils). These *Einsatzgruppen* were disbanded in November, 1939; their members joined the permanent Security Services and Security Police offices in occupied Poland.



Uzbornia, Poland; Jews executed by members of the Einsatzgruppen.

As Germany prepared to invade the Soviet Union in June, 1941, Hitler made it clear to the army that the upcoming war was based on a fundamental conflict between two completely opposing ideologies. It was imperative to destroy those elements that perpetuated the conflicting ideology. Thus, special units called *Einsatzgruppen* were formed to accompany the advancing military forces. Their job was to search for opponents of the Reich, including Communists and all Jews — and execute them.

When Operation “Barbarossa” began, the *Einsatzgruppen* followed the German army *Wehrmacht* into the Soviet Union. Four units had been established,

Einsatzgruppen A, B, C, and D. Each was assigned to liquidate the Jews in its region, and each was divided into sub-units called *Sonderkommandos* or *Einsatzkommandos*. *Einsatzgruppe* A, the largest group with about 1,000 men, was attached to Army Group North. They operated in the Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) and the area between their eastern borders and Leningrad. *Einsatzgruppe* B, 655 men attached to Army Group Center, worked in Belorussia and the Smolensk district, east of Moscow. *Einsatzgruppe* C, a group of 700 attached to Army Group South, covered the northern and central Ukraine. *Einsatzgruppe* D, with 600 men attached to the Eleventh Army, operated in the southern Ukraine, the Crimea, and Ciscaucasia. These groups did not carry out the destruction of Soviet Jewry alone — they were regularly assisted by other German soldiers, German police units and local collaborators in various locations. By the spring of 1943, the *Einsatzgruppen* had exterminated 1.25 million Jews and hundreds of thousands of Soviets, including prisoners of war.

The *Einsatzgruppen* killed their victims — men, women, and children — by gathering them in ravines, mines, quarries, ditches, or pits dug specifically for



Nuremberg, Germany;
The defendants' dock at the
Einsatzgruppen Trial.

this purpose. Jews were forced to hand over their possessions and remove their clothing, and were then shot. Their bodies were thrown into the ditches. The commanders would file daily reports of these activities.

The constant up-close contact with murder had a terribly destructive effect on the *Einsatzgruppen* members. This led the Nazis to search for other execution alternatives. Soon the *Einsatzgruppen* were provided with gas vans for the murder of the remaining Jews.

After the war, leaders of the *Einsatzgruppen* were tried at Nuremberg and at later trials. Of 24 defendants, 14 were sentenced to death. Only four were actually executed; the rest received reduced sentences.

— *The Concise Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*,
The International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem.
<http://www1.yadvashem.org/education/entries/english/16.asp>

One Day in Jozefow: Initiation to Mass Murder

Excerpts from Christopher R. Browning in The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

Browning describes the first assignment to murder the Jews of Jozefow:

Just as daylight was breaking, the men arrived at the village [of Jozefow] and assembled in a half-circle around Major Trapp, who proceeded to give a short speech. With choking voice and tears in his eyes, he visibly fought to control himself as he informed his men that they had received orders to perform a very unpleasant task. These orders were not to his liking either, but they came from above. It might perhaps make their task easier, he told the men, if they remembered that in Germany bombs were falling on the women and children. Two witnesses claimed that Trapp also mentioned that the Jews of this village had supported the partisans. Another witness recalled Trapp's mentioning that the Jews had instigated the boycott against Germany. Trapp then explained to the men that the Jews in Jozefow would have to be rounded up, whereupon the young males were to be selected out for labor and the others shot.

Trapp then made an extraordinary offer to his battalion: if any of the older men among them did not feel up to the task that lay before him, he could step out. Trapp paused, and after some moments, one man stepped forward. The captain of 3rd company . . . began to berate the man. The major told the captain to hold his tongue. Then ten or twelve other men stepped forward as well. They turned in their rifles and were told to await a further assignment from the major.

Trapp then summoned the company commanders and gave them their respective assignments. Two platoons of 3rd company were to surround the village; the men were explicitly ordered to shoot anyone trying to escape. The remaining men were to round up the Jews and take them to the market place. Those too sick or frail to walk to the market place, as well as infants and anyone offering resistance or attempting to hide, were to be shot on the spot. Thereafter, a few men of 1st company were to accompany . . . Jews selected at the market place, while the rest were to proceed to the forest to form the firing squads. The Jews were to be loaded onto battalion trucks by 2nd company and shuttled from the market place to the forest.

Having given the company commanders their respective assignments, Trapp spent the rest of the day in town, mostly in a schoolroom converted into his headquarters but also at the homes of the Polish mayor and the local priest. Witnesses who saw him at various times during the day described him as bitterly complaining about the orders he had been given and "weeping like a child." He nevertheless affirmed that "orders were orders" and had to be carried out. Not a single witness recalled seeing him at the shooting site, a fact that was not lost

on the men, who felt some anger about it. Trapp's driver remembers him saying later, "If this Jewish business is ever avenged on earth, then have mercy on us Germans."

The two following texts are Browning's conclusions:

Most simply denied that they had any choice. Faced with the testimony of others, they did not contest that Trapp had made the offer but repeatedly claimed that they had not heard that part of his speech or could not remember it. A few who admitted that they had been given the choice and yet failed to opt out were quite blunt. One said that he had not wanted to be considered a coward by his comrades. Another—more aware of what truly required courage—said quite simply: "I was cowardly." A few others also made the attempt to confront the question of choice but failed to find the words. It was a different time and place, as if they had been on another political planet, and the political vocabulary and values of the 1960s were helpless to explain the situation in which they found themselves in 1942. As one man admitted, it was not until years later that he began to consider that what he had done had not been right. He had not given it a thought at the time.

[...]

[It is] doubtful that they were immune to "the influence of the times," . . . to the incessant proclamation of German superiority and incitement of contempt and hatred for the Jewish enemy. Nothing helped the Nazis to wage a race war so much as the war itself. In wartime, when it was all too usual to exclude the enemy from the community of human obligation, it was also all too easy to subsume the Jews into the "image of the enemy."

The two following texts, quotes from Hitler's *Willing Executioners*, are Jonah Goldhagen's conclusions:

These chapters demonstrate the development in Germany well before the Nazis came to power of a virulent and violent "eliminationist" variant of anti-Semitism, which called for the elimination of Jewish influence or of Jews themselves from German society. When the Nazis did assume power, they found themselves the masters of a society already imbued with notions about Jews that were ready to be mobilized for the most extreme form of "elimination" possible. (pg. 23)

[...]

The inescapable truth is that, regarding Jews, German culture had evolved to the point where an enormous number of ordinary, representative Germans became—and most of the rest of their fellow Germans were fit to be—Hitler's willing executioners. (pg. 454)

Krakow Area

Auschwitz • Birkenau



Key to Krakow map:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Wawel Castle | 8. Poper's Synagogue |
| 2. New Jewish Cemetery | 9. Izaak's Synagogue |
| 3. Bernardine Church | 10. High Synagogue |
| 4. Restaurant U Jędrusia | 11. Old Synagogue and Museum of History
and Culture of Krakow Jewry |
| 5. Temple Synagogue | 12. Corpus Christi Church |
| 6. Kuppa Synagogue | 13. St. Catherine's Church |
| 7. Remu'h Synagogue and
Cemetery | 14. "Skałka" Pauline Church |
| | 15. Town Hall and Ethnographic Museum |

Krakow

This city is situated in S. Poland. Its location on the Vistula river and the commercial route to Prague attracted an influx of immigrants from Germany, with whom the first Jews arrived, in 1257.

In 1335 King Kazimir founded the rival city of Kazimierz, nr. Krakow and Jews settled there soon after its establishment.

The 16th, and first half of the 17th century, was a period of considerable cultural achievement in the Krakow-Kazimierz community. By 1644, the community had seven main synagogues, among them the *Alte Schule* and the Rema Synagogue (named after Moses Isserles). During the second half of the 16th century, a number of Yeshivot were founded in Kazimierz whose fame made Krakow a most important center of Jewish learning.

In the 1630's, large numbers of Jews fled from Germany to Krakow during the Thirty Years' War. Many others from the Ukraine and Podolia also sought refuge in Krakow in 1648-49 from the Chmielnicki massacres.

In 1809 Krakow was incorporated into the grand duchy of Warsaw. At the congress of Vienna the Krakow Republic (1815-46) was established. Outside Kazimierz, only those Jews who qualified by a certain defined degree of education, who were assimilated in their dress, and who owned more than 5,000 zlotys were permitted to reside in Krakow (only 196 out of a total of 13,000 Jewish residents qualified for this in 1848).

In 1869 there were 25 Jewish students studying at the University and then at the Technical College. During the early 1870's about 200 Jewish pupils attended secondary schools and teacher training colleges in Krakow. In 1874 the first Hebrew School in the town was established. Towards the close of the 19th century, the Jewish educational system of Krakow included Chedarim and Yeshivot, as well as elementary and secondary schools with Polish and German as the languages of instruction.

At the close of the 19th century, the Jewish national revival began to penetrate Krakow. From 1897 political Zionism won supporters and an academic national society, *Shachar*, was founded.

The rise of Polish nationalism, widespread unemployment, the return of armed soldiers and deserters, and famine throughout the city and its vicinity, all combined to intensify anti-Semitism. The entry of the anti-Semitic troops, led

by Polish General Haller, into Krakow, set off a wave of riots which were warded off by the Jewish self-defence groups.

In 1931, the Jewish population of Krakow numbered 56,800, and the city became an important center of Jewish political and social life in Poland.

There were 60,000 Jews living in Krakow on the eve of World War II. The first “*aktzia*” took place on the 5th and 6th December, 1939 and in that month the Germans appointed a *Judenrat*. In April, 1940, the German authorities issued an order for most of the Jews to evacuate the city within four months. On March 31, 1941, a ghetto was erected and some 20,000 Jews, including 6,000 from neighboring communities, were crowded in. The physical extermination began in June, 1942, when 5,000 victims were deported to the Belzec death camp in three successive “selections”. The patients at the Jewish hospital, the old-age home inmates, and the 300 children at the orphanage were murdered on the spot. Final liquidation came in the middle of March, 1943, when the inhabitants in the work camps were transferred to the nearby Plaszow labor camp, and anyone found hiding was shot. The majority of Jews in the other section were either killed on the spot or sent to Auschwitz.

By the end of World War II, only a few Jews, who had been in hiding, remained in Krakow. Most of the Jews left Kazimierz in 1968. The oldest synagogue, “*Hoyche Schul*”, was transformed into a Jewish Museum. The old cemetery was renewed and reformed, as a result of contributions from American and Canadian Jews. After the exodus of 1967-69, 700 Jews, mainly elderly ones, remained in the city.

Krakow: The Jewish Quarter

Unlike Warsaw, which was destroyed, the Jewish sites in Krakow still exist — and have been preserved. The Jewish Quarter located in the old city is called Kazhamaizh. There are three synagogues in this quarter.

“Die Alte-Schulle”

This is considered to be Poland’s most ancient synagogue. It was built in the fourteenth century, and was designed to serve as a fortress in times of need. Nowadays, it is a museum of Judaica.

“The Remu’h Synagogue”

Or, as it is more commonly known, “The New Synagogue.” Named for Rabbi

Moshe Aisserslash, this synagogue was built in 1553. After being burnt down, it was rebuilt by Rabbi Israel — but this time, of hewn stone. Near the synagogue, which still operates today, lies the ancient Krakow graveyard. The synagogue and graveyard were renovated, and reopened in 1948.

“The Temple”

The large modern synagogue, opened in 1860. Affiliated to the *Haskala* stream.

Additional Synagogues

“The Kuppa”; “Hor Schulle”; “Itchikel Midrash”; the Lachak Midrash.

Additional Sites

The market square; street names.

Krakow: The Ghetto Area

The Ghetto Wall

In 1983, part of the renovated Ghetto wall, which surrounded a few streets, was opened to the public.

The Apothecary

The “Food Apathca”, half of which was in the Ghetto, while its front faced outside the Ghetto. This served as a secret passage and hideaway for the Ghetto residents, with the permission and assistance of the apothecary’s Polish owner. In 1983 the Krakow Ghetto Museum opened here.

JFO House

Nearby, next to the apothecary and outside the Ghetto, a building is located with a plaque, explaining that this was where the Krakow Jewish Fighting Organization (JFO) was founded.

Cigneria Coffee House

The JFO’s Krakow activity was carried out outside the Ghetto. In one of the operations, on December 22nd, 1942, they attacked three coffee houses in the center of town, in the market square, near the German officers’ barracks. One of the coffee houses was Cigneria, where many Germans were killed. The operation was widely discussed, and was attributed to the Polish underground, without mention of the fact that it was mostly, if not completely, performed by the JFO. The sign commemorating this fact was replaced several years ago (in 1983) and the JFO’s role is now mentioned.

The JFO Headquarters

In the “Akiva” youth movement building, on 13 Josephinska Street.

The Skavinska Street Hospital

This was where the JFO gathered, after the operation. This was also where they were betrayed.

The Montiluppi Prison

Krakov: Sites of General Interest

Vavel Hill

On a tall hill, on the banks of the Vistula, the Polish King’s Castle was erected in the 9th century. This castle was rebuilt in the 14th century, and renovated, in the Gothic style, in the 16th century. During the Holocaust, Krakow became the capital of the “General Government” and the German Governor, Hans Frank, settled in the castle. After the war, the castle’s treasures were returned. Today this is a tourist attraction.

The Cathedral

In the 14th century, a Gothic cathedral was erected near the palace. This is where the Polish kings held their coronation ceremonies. Here, too, the Polish kings and national heroes are buried.

Sukiniza

The reconstructed cloth market.

The Clock Tower

A tower stands in the market square where, every hour, a trumpet sounds — and is cut off, in memory of the trumpeter who was wounded by the Tartars who attacked Krakow in the 13th century.

The Yagelonian University

Established in 1364, this is the oldest university in Poland, and one of the oldest in all of Europe. Originally built by King Kazimir, it was reconstructed in 1400 by Vladislav the Second Yagilo — wherefrom it gets its name. This university has become the focal point of Polish spiritual and cultural life.

There is no single word which represents the atrocities of the Holocaust better than the name “Auschwitz”. Auschwitz was the nerve center for over 30 camps under its control. Auschwitz I was the main headquarters and housed one gas chamber and one crematorium. This relatively small camp almost never housed Jews (except for a period in 1944 when a group of Hungarians were placed there). The camp was originally built by the Poles as an army facility.



- ### PLACES OF SPECIAL INTEREST

- ## NATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

- 14 U.S.S.R.
15 Poland
16 Czechoslovakia
17 Yugoslavia, Austria
18 Hungary
20 France, Belgium
21 Italy, Holland
27 *Suffering and Struggle of the Jews*

**K
R
A
K
O
W**

Auschwitz: Testimony from a Survivor

This is actually the history of the Auschwitz planet — the chronicles of Auschwitz. I, myself, was at Auschwitz camp for two years. The time there is not a concept as it is here on our planet. Every fraction of a second that passed there was at a different rate of time. And the inhabitants of that planet had no names. They had no parents, and they had no children. They were not clothed as we are clothed here. They were not born there and they did not conceive there. They breathed and lived according to different laws of Nature. They did not live according to the laws of this world of ours, and they did not die. Their name was a number, K. Zetnik number so-and-so... And I believe wholeheartedly that I must carry this name as long as the world does not awaken after the crucifying of the nation to erase this evil, as humanity has risen after the crucifixion of one man...

— Testimony of Yehiel Di-Noor (the writer K. Zetnik) at the Eichmann Trial, June 7, 1961.

Auschwitz: The Place

(Polish: Oswiecim) Nazi Germany's largest concentration and extermination camp. Auschwitz was established by order of Himmler on April 27, 1940. The camp was located near the small provincial Polish town Oswiecim (in German: Auschwitz), in Galicia, near the border of Upper Silesia. On May 20, 30 German criminals were brought to Auschwitz as officials: the first transport of Polish political prisoners arrived on June 14, 1940 and they were boarded in old Austrian barracks.

The camp was relatively small at first. It contained, apart from a small number of Germans, mostly Polish inmates, among them only a few Jews who were sent there not for racial reasons but political ones. This part of the camp, with permanent buildings, was later called the mother camp; "Auschwitz I" never held a large number of Jewish prisoners.

In October 1941, a second, extensive camp of wooden barracks was established, by the name of Birkenau (in Polish: Brzezinka, the name of the neighboring hamlet) or "Auschwitz II". This camp held Russian prisoners-of-war, at first, almost all of whom died shortly after arrival because of camp conditions, or were killed. After March 1942, the new arrivals were mainly Jews, and there were also some gypsies. From March 26, 1942, Auschwitz I also contained women, but after August 16, 1942, the women were held in Birkenau.

At the beginning of 1941, after the IG-Farben-Werke firm pronounced the Auschwitz region suitable for the establishment of chemical factories, the Buna-Works were built

in Monowitz (Monowice) for the manufacture of synthetic rubber. A special camp, later called "Auschwitz III", was assigned to IG-Farben-Werke in May 1942. An immense number of Jewish slave workers died here.

In June 1941, Himmler ordered the camp commandant Rudolf Hoess to make preparations for the systematic mass murder of European Jewry: the "final solution". Hoess and Eichmann decided to use a poison gas to carry out the murders. Provision of the gas would be Eichmann's concern. On September 3, 1941, approximately 900 prisoners (Russian prisoners-of-war and sick inmates) were driven into the cellar of the "bunker" (the term for the camp prison) and there killed by means of the evaporation of prussic acid, known under the trade name of "Zyklon B." This gas was used to kill Jews in Auschwitz for a period of two years and ten months. The number of Jewish casualties will never be known for certain, as most were not registered. Estimates vary between 1,000,000 and 2,500,000; the lower figure probably comes nearer to the truth. Thousands of gypsies and other prisoners were also killed.

Apart from the Jewish political prisoners, who were sent to Auschwitz individually, special trains called "R.S.H.A.-transports" (R.S.H.A. = *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* "Reich Main Security Office"), were sent there. Since the Gestapo's Judenreferat, led by Eichmann, was responsible for their despatch, the colloquial term for the Jewish transports was "Eichmann-transports".

The mass murders by gas began in January 1942, in Birkenau, in a farmhouse adapted for this purpose. Gold teeth were extracted, and, in the case of women, the hair was frequently cut off before the corpses were roughly buried (and later exhumed and burned). All personal effects were appropriated by the SS. New gas chambers, disguised as shower rooms, and four crematoriums, with a combined capacity of burning 4,456 corpses a day, were in use from March 22 until June 28, 1943. Since the crematoriums could not cope with the number of people killed in the gas chambers, and frequently broke down through overuse, corpses were also buried in pits.

The inmates of the first R.S.H.A. transports, which came from Poland, were completely exterminated. From March 26, 1942, transports arrived from Slovakia and, from March 30, 1942, from France. At first the Jews from abroad were not immediately killed.

As of July 4, 1942, almost every Jewish transport underwent a *Selektion* ("selection") on arrival: strong men and women were sent to the camp for forced labor, while older and weaker people, and children together with their mothers, were killed. Most of those who survived the first selection did not do so for long, especially since there were frequent selections in the camp itself. The sick were killed by injections of Phenol to the heart. Many prisoners, especially Jews, were beaten to death, executed for minor reasons, or destroyed through pseudo-medical experiments (Clausen and Schumann carried out sterilization experiments; Mengele tried to investigate into the subject of twins).

The first transport from Holland arrived on July 17, 1942; its "selection" and gassing were supervised by Himmler. As far as can be ascertained, the first R.S.H.A. transports from

other countries arrived on the following dates: Belgium — August 5, 1942; Yugoslavia — August 13, 1942; The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (from Theresienstadt) — October 28, 1942; Norway — December 1, 1942; Germany — December 10, 1942; Greece — March 20, 1943; Austria — December 2, 1943; Hungary — May 17, 1944. A number of Jews also arrived from North Africa.

In the last phase of the war, Himmler changed his policy toward the Jews. On his orders, the selection and gassing of Jews on arrival ceased on November 2, 1944. The order for the destruction of the gas chambers and crematoriums was given on November 26, 1944, so that the advancing allies would find no evidence of the mass murders. The last R.S.H.A. transport, containing a small number of Jews from Berlin, arrived on January 5, 1945.

In spite of the hopelessness of the situation, a resistance movement had been organized and Jews took a notable part in it. On October 7, 1944, the Jewish “special squad” (*Sonderkommando*), auxiliaries forced to assist in the exterminations, set fire to a crematorium, killed several SS men, cut the barbed wire and escaped; few of them survived. Occasionally transports offered resistance on arrival, but their efforts never proved to be successful.

In the course of time, numerous “outside squads” (*Aussenkommandos*) were organized, chiefly of Jewish slave labor, most of them in Upper Silesia.

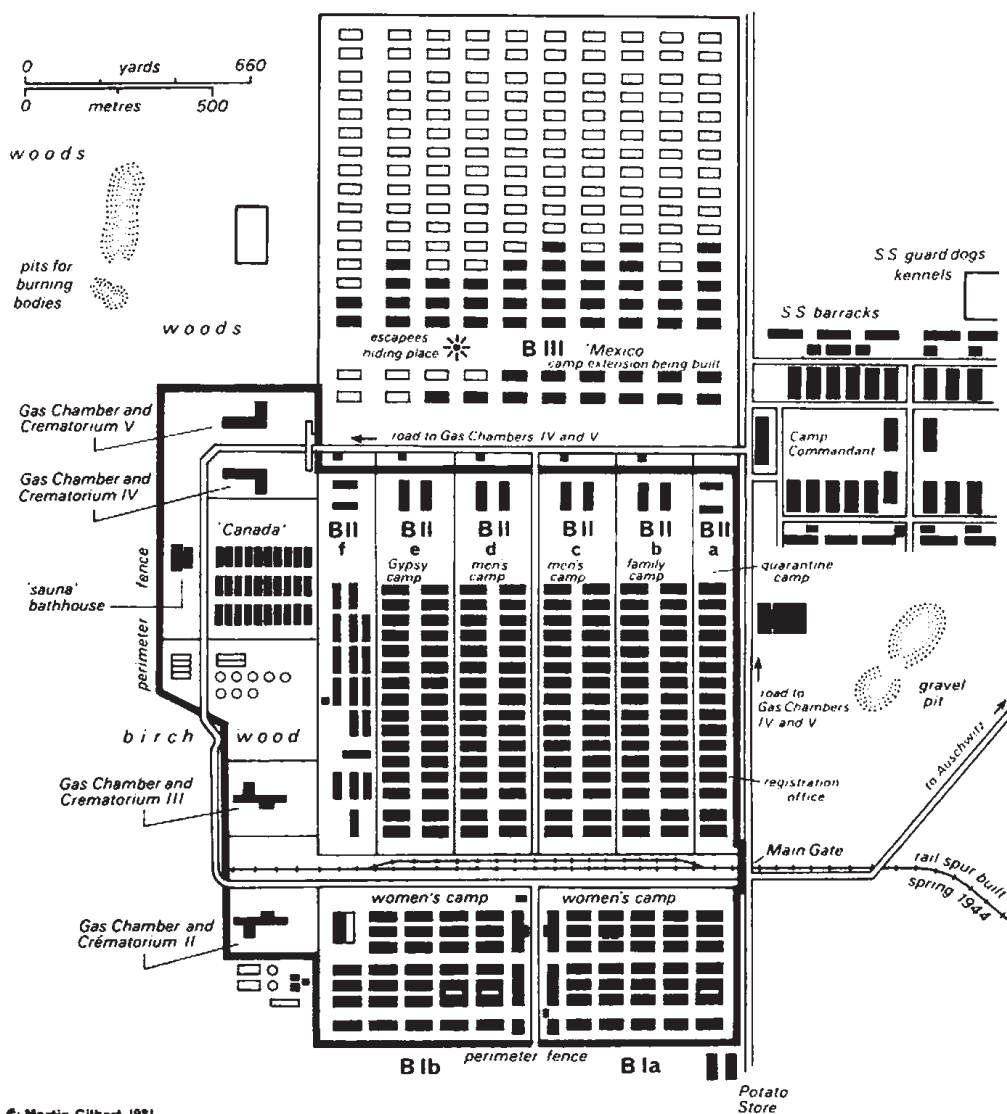
In the spring and especially the autumn of 1944, large contingents of Jews were sent to forced labor in concentration camps in Germany and Austria, in preparation for the evacuation of Auschwitz and its “outside squads” on Jan. 17, 1945. Prisoners were forced to cover large distances on foot with pitiful footwear; those unable to continue were shot. Exhausted, in open freight cars holding as many as 120 people each, without provisions in the middle of winter, they were dispatched westward to Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Mauthausen, and to smaller camps.

The precise number of Auschwitz victims is not known (see above) because no record was kept of those who were killed immediately on arrival of an R.S.H.A. transport. Berlin was in fact notified of each transport, but few of the relevant documents survived. All Jews and non-Jews (except Germans) who reached the camp alive received a number which was tattooed on the left forearm. Altogether, more than 405,000 numbers were issued (including children) to 271,000 males and 134,000 females. The number of registered camp prisoners who died in Auschwitz is 261,000. About 134,000 were transferred to other camps, or evacuated before liberation; it is estimated that about 80,000 of these also died. Two thousand non-Jews were released; 200, including Jews, escaped: 7,650 were freed on January 27, 1945, by the Soviet Army.

Apart from the extermination installations, the camp remained undamaged; many documents also survived. A museum with official Polish historical archives, Panstwowe Museum w Oswiecciemiu, has been established in Auschwitz and Birkenau. It issues publications and maintains the memorial opened in 1967.

Bibliography: J. Sehn, *Concentration Camp Auschwitz-Birkenau* (1957); O. Kraus and E. Kulka, *Death Factory* (1966); B. Naumann, *Auschwitz... Proceedings Against R.K.L. Mulka and Others...* (1966); K. Michalik (ed.), *Reminiscences of Former Auschwitz Prisoners* (1963); H.G. Adler (ed.), *Auschwitz; Zeugnisse and Berichte* (1962); Rudolf Hoess, *Commandant of Auschwitz* (1960); L. Adelsberger, *Auschwitz: ein Tatsachenbericht* (1960); G. Perl, *I was a Doctor in Auschwitz* (1948); O. Lengyel, *Five Chimneys* (1947).

A Historian's Map of Birkenau



Primo Levi: *Survival in Auschwitz*

"The Journey"

Sooner or later in life everyone discovers that perfect happiness is unrealizable, but there are few who pause to consider the antithesis: that perfect unhappiness is equally unattainable. The obstacles preventing the realization of both these extreme states are of the same nature: they derive from our human condition which is opposed to everything infinite. Our ever-insufficient knowledge of the future opposes it: and this is called, in the one instance, hope, and in the other, uncertainty of the following day. The certainty of death opposes it: for it places a limit on every joy, but also on every grief. The inevitable material cares oppose it: for as they poison every lasting happiness, they equally assiduously distract us from our misfortunes and make our consciousness of them intermittent and hence supportable.

It was the very discomfort, the blows, the cold, the thirst that kept us aloft in the void of bottomless despair, both during the journey and after. It was not the will to live, nor a conscious resignation; for few are the men capable of such resolution, and we were but a common sample of humanity.

The doors had been closed at once, but the train did not move until evening. We had learnt of our destination with relief. Auschwitz: a name without significance for us at that time, but it at least implied some place on this earth.

The train traveled slowly, with long, unnerving halts. Through the slit we saw the tall pale cliffs of the Adige Valley and the names of the last Italian cities disappear behind us. We passed the Brenner at midday of the second day and everyone stood up, but no one said a word. The thought of the return journey stuck in my heart, and I cruelly pictured to myself the inhuman joy of that other journey, with doors open, no one wanting to flee, and the first Italian names ... and I looked around and wondered how many, among that poor human dust, would be struck by fate. Among the forty-five people in my wagon only four saw their homes again; and it was by far the most fortunate wagon.

We suffered from thirst and cold; at every stop we clamored for water, or even a handful of snow, but we were rarely heard; the soldiers of the escort drove off anybody who tried to approach the convoy. Two young mothers, nursing their children, groaned night and day, begging for water. Our state of nervous tension made the hunger, exhaustion and lack of sleep seem less of a torment. But the hours of darkness were nightmares without end.

There are few men who know how to go to their deaths with dignity, and often they are not those whom one would expect. Few know how to remain silent and respect the silence of others. Our restless sleep was often interrupted by noisy and futile disputes, by curses, by kicks and blows blindly delivered to ward off some encroaching and inevitable contact. Then someone would light a candle, and its mournful flicker would reveal an obscure agitation, a human mass, extended across the floor, confused and continuous, sluggish and aching, rising here and

there in sudden convulsions and immediately collapsing again in exhaustion.

Through the slit, known and unknown names of Austrian cities, Salzburg, Vienna, then Czech, finally Polish names. On the evening of the fourth day the cold became intense: the train ran through interminable black pine forests, climbing perceptibly. The snow was high. It must have been a branch line as the stations were small and almost deserted. During the halts, no one tried any more to communicate with the outside world: we felt ourselves by now 'on the other side'. There was a long halt in open country. The train started up with extreme slowness, and the convoy stopped for the last time, in the dead of night, in the middle of a dark silent plain.

On both sides of the track rows of red and white lights appeared as far as the eye could see; but there was none of that confusion of sounds which betrays inhabited places even from a distance. By the wretched light of the last candle, with the rhythm of the wheels, with every human sound now silenced, we awaited what was to happen.

Next to me, crushed against me for the whole journey, there had been a woman. We had known each other for many years, and the misfortune had struck us together, but we knew little of each other. Now, in the hour of decision, we said to each other things that are never said among the living. We said farewell and it was short; everybody said farewell to life through his neighbor. We had no more fear.

The climax came suddenly. The door opened with a crash, and the dark echoed with outlandish orders in that curt, barbaric barking of Germans in command which seems to give vent to a millennial anger. A vast platform appeared before us, lit up by reflectors. A little beyond it, a row of lorries. Then everything was silent again. Someone translated: we had to climb down with our luggage and deposit it alongside the train. In a moment the platform was swarming with shadows. But we were afraid to break that silence: everyone busied himself with his luggage, searched for someone else, called to somebody, but timidly, in a whisper.

A dozen SS men stood around, legs akimbo, with an indolent certain moment they moved among us, and in a subdued tone of voice, with faces of stone, began to interrogate us rapidly, one by one, in bad Italian. They did not interrogate everybody, only a few: 'How old? Healthy or ill?' And on the basis of the reply they pointed in two different directions.

Everything was as silent as an aquarium, or as in certain dream sequences. We had expected something more apocalyptic: they seemed simple police agents. It was disconcerting and disarming. Someone dared to ask for his luggage: they replied, 'luggage afterwards'. Someone else did not want to leave his wife: they said, 'together again afterwards'. Many mothers did not want to be separated from their children: they said 'good, good, stay with child'. They behaved with the calm assurance of people doing their normal duty of every day. But Renzo stayed an instant too long to say good-bye to Francesca, his fiancée, and with a single blow they knocked him to the ground. It was their everyday duty.

Elie Weisel: *Night*

"Arrival at Birkenau"

The cherished objects we had brought with us this far were left behind in the train, and with them, at last, our illusions.

Every two yards or so an SS man held his tommy gun trained on us. Hand in hand we followed the crowd.

An SS noncommissioned officer came to meet us, a truncheon in his hand. He gave the order:

'Men to the left! Women to the right!'

Eight words spoken quietly, indifferently, without emotion. Eight short, simple words. Yet that was the moment when I parted from my mother. I had not had time to think, but already I felt the pressure of my father's hand: we were alone. For a part of a second I glimpsed my mother and my sisters moving away to the right. Tzipora held Mother's hand. I saw them disappear into the distance; my mother was stroking my sister's fair hair, as though to protect her, while I walked on with my father and the other men. And I did not know that in that place, at that moment, I was parting from my mother and Tzipora forever. I went on walking. My father held on to my hand.

Behind me, an old man fell to the ground. Near him was an SS man, putting his revolver back in its holster.

My hand shifted on my father's arm. I had one thought — not to lose him. Not to be left alone.

The SS officer gave the order:

'Form fives!'

Commotion. At all costs we must keep together.

'Here, kid, how old are you?'

It was one of the prisoners who asked me this. I could not see his face, but his voice was tense and weary. 'I'm not quite fifteen yet.'

'No. Eighteen.'

'But I'm not,' I said. 'Fifteen.'

'Fool. Listen to what I say.'

Then he questioned my father, who replied:

'Fifty.'

'No, not fifty. Forty. Do you understand? Eighteen and forty.'

He disappeared into the night shadows. A second man came up, spitting oaths at us.

'What have you come here for, you sons of bitches? What are you doing here, eh?'

Someone dared to answer him.

'What do you think? Do you suppose we've come here for our own pleasure? Do you think we asked to come?'

A little more, and the man would have killed him.

'You shut your trap, you filthy swine, or I'll squash you right now! You'd have done better to have hanged yourselves where you were than to come here. Didn't you know what was in store for you at Auschwitz? Haven't you heard about it? In 1944?'

No, we had not heard. No one had told us. He could not believe his ears. His tone of voice became increasingly brutal.

'Do you see that chimney over there? See it? Do you see those flames? (Yes, we did see the flames.) Over there — that's where you're going to be taken. That's your grave, over there. Haven't you realized it yet? You dumb bastards, don't you understand anything? You're going to be burned. Frizzled away. Turned into ashes.'

He was growing hysterical in his fury. We stayed motionless, petrified. Surely it was all a nightmare? An unimaginable nightmare?

I heard murmurs around me.

'We've got to do something. We can't let ourselves be killed. We can't go like beasts to the slaughter. We've got to revolt.'

There were a few sturdy young fellows among us. They had knives on them, and they tried to incite the others to throw themselves on the armed guards.

One of the young men cried:

'Let the world learn of the existence of Auschwitz. Let everybody hear about it, while they can still escape...'

But the older ones begged their children not to do anything foolish:

'You must never lose faith, even when the sword hangs over your head. That's the teaching of our sages...'

The wind of revolt died down. We continued our march toward the square. In the middle stood the notorious Dr. Mengele (a typical SS officer: a cruel face, but not devoid of intelligence, and wearing a monocle); a conductor's baton in his hand, he was standing among the other officers. The baton moved unremittingly, sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left.

I was already in front of him:

'How old are you?' he asked, in an attempt at a paternal tone of voice.

'Eighteen.' My voice was shaking.

'Are you in good health?'

'Yes.'

'What's your occupation?'

Should I say that I was a student?

'Farmer,' I heard myself say.

This conversation cannot have lasted more than a few seconds. It had seemed like an eternity to me.

The baton moved to the left. I took half a step forward. I wanted to see first where they were sending my father. If he went to the right, I would go after him.

The baton once again pointed to the left for him too. A weight was lifted from my heart.

We did not yet know which was the better side, right or left; which road led to prison and which to the crematory. But for the moment I was happy; I was near my father. Our procession continued to move slowly forward.

Another prisoner came up to us:

‘Satisfied?’

‘Yes,’ someone replied.

‘Poor devils, you’re going to the crematory.’

He seemed to be telling the truth. Not far from us, flames were leaping up from a ditch, gigantic flames. They were burning something. A lorry drew up at the pit and delivered its load — little children. Babies! Yes, I saw it — saw it with my own eyes... those children in the flames. (Is it surprising that I could not sleep after that? Sleep had fled from my eyes.)

So this was where we were going. A little farther on was another and larger ditch for adults.

I pinched my face. Was I still alive? Was I awake? I could not believe it. How could it be possible for them to burn people, children, and for the world to keep silent? No, none of this could be true. It was a nightmare... Soon I should wake with a start, my heart pounding, and find myself back in the bedroom of my childhood, among my books...

My father’s voice drew me from my thoughts:

‘It’s a shame... a shame that you couldn’t have gone with your mother... I saw several boys of your age going with their mothers...’

His voice was terribly sad. I realized that he did not want to see what they were going to do to me. He did not want to see the burning of his only son.

My forehead was bathed in cold sweat. But I told him that I did not believe that they could burn people in our age, that humanity would never tolerate it...

‘Humanity? Humanity is not concerned with us. Today anything is allowed. Anything is possible, even these crematories...’

His voice was choking.

‘Father,’ I said, ‘if that is so, I don’t want to wait here. I’m going to run to the electric wire. That would be better than slow agony in the flames.’

He did not answer. He was weeping. His body was shaken convulsively. Around us, everyone was weeping. Someone began to recite the Kaddish, the prayer for the dead. I do not know if it has ever happened before, in the long history of the Jews, that people have ever recited the prayer for the dead for themselves.

‘*Yitgadal veyitkadach shmé raba...* May His Name be blessed and magnified...’ whispered my father.

For the first time, I felt revolt rise up in me. Why should I bless His name? The Eternal, Lord of the Universe, the All-Powerful and Terrible, was silent. What had I to thank Him for?

We continued our march. We were gradually drawing closer to the ditch, from which an infernal heat was rising. Still twenty steps to go. If I wanted to bring about my own death, this was the moment. Our line had now only fifteen paces to cover. I bit my lips so that my father would not hear my teeth chattering. Ten steps still. Eight. Seven. We marched slowly on, as though following a hearse at our own funeral. Four steps more. Three steps. There it was now, right in front of us, the pit and its flames. I gathered all that was left of my strength, so that I could break from the rank and throw myself upon the barbed wire. In the depth of my heart, I bade farewell to my father, to the whole universe; and, in spite of myself, the words formed themselves and issued in a whisper from my lips: *Yitgadal veyitkadach shmé raba...* May His Name be blessed and magnified.... My heart was bursting. The moment had come. I was face to face with the Angel of Death...

No. Two steps from the pit we were ordered to turn to the left and made to go into a barracks.

I pressed my father's hand. He said:

'Do you remember Madame Schächter, in the train?'

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.

Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever.

Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never.

Bread

...because within five minutes begins the distribution of bread, of bread, Brot, Broid, Chleb, pain, lechem, kenyer, of the holy grey slab, which seems gigantic in your neighbor's hand, and in your own hand so small as to make you cry. It is a daily hallucination, to which — in the end — one becomes accustomed; but at the beginning it is so irresistible that many of us after long discussions on our open and constant misfortune and the shameless luck of others, finally exchange our ration, at which the illusion is renewed inverted, leaving everyone discontented and frustrated.

— Primo Levy, *If This is a Man*

Viktor E. Frankl: *Man's Search for Meaning*

I once had a dramatic demonstration of the close link between the loss of faith in the future and this dangerous giving up. F—, my senior block warden, a fairly well-known composer and librettist, confided in me one day: “I would like to tell you something, Doctor, I have had a strange dream. A voice told me that I could wish for something, that I should only say what I wanted to know, and all my questions would be answered. What do you think I asked? That I would like to know when the war would be over for me. You know what I mean, Doctor — for me! I wanted to know when we, when our camp, would be liberated and our sufferings come to an end.”

“And when did you have this dream?” I asked.

“In February, 1945,” he answered. It was then the beginning of March.

“What did your dream voice answer?”

Furtively he whispered to me, “March thirtieth.”

When F— told me about his dream, he was still full of hope and convinced that the voice of his dream would be right. But as the promised day drew nearer, the war news which reached our camp made it appear very unlikely that we would be free on the promised date. On March twenty-ninth, F— suddenly became ill and ran a high temperature. On March thirtieth, the day his prophecy had told him that the war and suffering would be over for him, he became delirious and lost consciousness. On March thirty-first, he was dead. To all outward appearances, he had died of typhus.

Those who know how close the connection is between the state of mind of a man — his courage and hope, or lack of them — and the state of immunity of his body will understand that the sudden loss of hope and courage can have a deadly effect. The ultimate cause of my friend's death was that the expected liberation did not come and he was severely disappointed. This suddenly lowered his body's resistance against the latent typhus infection. His faith in the future and his will to live had become paralyzed and his body fell victim to illness — and thus the voice of his dream was right after all.

The observations of this one case and the conclusion drawn from them are in accordance with something that was drawn to my attention by the chief doctor of our concentration camp. The death rate in the week between Christmas, 1944, and New Year's, 1945, increased in camp beyond all previous experience. In his opinion, the explanation for this increase did not lie in the harder working conditions or the deterioration of our food supplies or a change of weather or new epidemics. It was simply that the majority of the prisoners had lived in the naive hope that they would be home again by Christmas. As the time drew near and there was no encouraging news, the prisoners lost courage and disappointment overcame them. This had a dangerous influence on their powers of resistance and a great number of them died.

Pigtail

*When all the women in the transport
had their heads shaved
four workmen with brooms made of birch twigs
swept up
and gathered their hair*

*Behind clean glass
the stiff hair lies
of those suffocated in gas chambers
there are pins and side combs
in this hair*

*The hair is not shot through with light
is not parted by the breeze
is not touched by any hand
or rain or lips*

*In huge chests
clouds of dry hair
of those suffocated
and a faded plait*

*a pigtail with a ribbon
pulled at school
by naughty boys.*

— Poem by Tadeusz Rozewicz;
Trans. Adam Czerniawski

If This is a Man

*you who live safe
In your warm houses,
You who find, returning in the evening,
Hot food and friendly faces:
 Consider if this is a man
 Who works in the mud
 Who does not know peace
 Who fights for a scrap of bread
 Who dies because of a yes or a no.
 Consider if this is a woman,
 Without hair and without name
 With no more strength to remember,
 Her eyes empty and her womb cold
 Like a frog in winter.
Meditate that this came about:
I commend these words to you.
Carve them in your hearts
At home, in the street,
Going to bed, rising;
Repeat them to your children,
 Or may your house fall apart,
 May illness impede you,
 May your children turn their faces
 from you.*

— Primo Levi

Reading Matzevot (Jewish Gravestones)

from *Time of Stones* by Monika Krajewska, Warsaw; Interpress, 1983.

REMEMBRANCE



Alms box = charity; books = learned in scriptures; lion = sign of the names Arie and Lieb or symbol of belonging to the Jewish people (Judah).



Ewer and bowl = on the tombs of Levites, descendants of the tribe of Levi, who, together with the priests, served in the Tent of the Assembly and the Temple in Jerusalem. One of their duties was to wash the priest's hands before the blessing.



Crown = symbol of the Torah, of learning and piety; winged griffins = motif from the Biblical bestiary; hands are indicating the priestly blessing.



Sheep at the well = frequent allusion to the Biblical story of the meeting of Rebecca with Eliezer or of Rachel with Jacob at the well.



Three-, five-, seven-, or nine-branched candelabra = on women's graves because women light candles for the Sabbath. This form of candelabrum is unusual.



Broken tree = life interrupted; griffin = a frequent motif on Jewish gravestones.



Stag = after the names Zvi (Hebrew) and Hirsh (Yiddish) meaning "stag", also an allusion to Jacob's blessing: "Naphtali is a hind let loose."



Candelabrum = a woman's tomb; broken candles = life interrupted.



Alms-box = charity, the deceased gave alms to the poor or was a treasurer.



Tombstone on tombstone: the letters יה after the Hebrew words "here lies"; lion = illustration of the names of Arie (Hebrew) and Leib (Yiddish), symbol of the tribe of Judah taken from Jacob's blessing: "Judah is a lion's whelp... who shall rouse him up?"



Books and *yad* (pointer for indicating the verses in Scriptures) = the deceased studied the Torah and the Talmud, may have been a teacher or used to read the Scriptures in the synagogue.



Hands in the gesture of blessing = tombs of priests (*kohenim*), descendants of high priest Aaron, who conducted sacrifices in ancient Israel. They raise their hands in the synagogues to bless the congregation during certain prayers.



Eagle = symbol of many meanings, it may illustrate the verse from Ethics of the Fathers: "Be strong as a leopard, light as an eagle, fleet as a hart, and bold as a lion, to do the will of thy Father who is in heaven."



Serpent swallowing its own tail = symbol of the infinite, probably a transformation of Leviathan shown in the same attitude in synagogues as a symbol of the time of the Messiah. Hourglass = symbol of transitoriness known from non-Jewish tombstones.



"There are three crowns: the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of kingdom, but the crown of the Good Name excels them all." (Ethics of the Fathers)

On Jewish Time: Computing the Hebrew Year

REMEMBRANCE

1839-40	ת"ר	1884-85	תרמ"ה	1928-29	תרפ"ט
1840-41	תר"א	1885-86	תרמ"ו	1929-30	תר"צ
1841-42	תר"ב	1886-87	תרמ"ז	1930-31	תרצ"א
1842-43	תר"ג	1887-88	תרמ"ח	1931-32	תרצ"ב
1843-44	תר"ד	1888-89	תרמ"ט	1932-33	תרצ"ג
1844-45	תר"ה	1889-90	תר"ן	1933-34	תרצ"ד
1845-46	תר"ו	1890-91	תרנ"א	1934-35	תרצ"ה
1846-47	תר"ז	1891-92	תרנ"ב	1935-36	תרצ"ו
1847-48	תר"ח	1892-93	תרנ"ג	1936-37	תרצ"ז
1848-49	תר"ט	1893-94	תרנ"ד	1937-38	תרצ"ח
1849-50	תר"י	1894-95	תרנ"ה	1938-39	תרצ"ט
1850-51	תרי"א	1895-96	תרנ"ו	1939-40	ת"ש
1851-52	תרי"ב	1896-97	תרנ"ז	1940-41	תש"א
1852-53	תרי"ג	1897-98	תרנ"ח	1941-42	תש"ב
1853-54	תרי"ד	1898-99	תרנ"ט	1942-43	תש"ג
1854-55	תרי"ה	1899-00	תר"ס	1943-44	תש"ד
1855-56	תרי"ו	1900-01	תרס"א	1944-45	תש"ה
1856-57	תרי"ז	1901-02	תרס"ב	1945-46	תש"ו
1857-58	תרי"ח	1902-03	תרס"ג	1946-47	תש"ז
1858-59	תרי"ט	1903-04	תרס"ד	1947-48	תש"ח
1859-60	תר"ך	1904-05	תרס"ה	1948-49	תש"ט
1860-61	תרכ"א	1905-06	תרס"ו	1949-50	תש"י
1861-62	תרכ"ב	1906-07	תרס"ז	1950-51	תש"א
1862-63	תרכ"ג	1907-08	תרס"ח	1951-52	תש"ב
1863-64	תרכ"ד	1908-09	תרס"ט	1952-53	תש"ג
1864-65	תרכ"ה	1909-10	תר"ע	1953-54	תש"ד
1865-66	תרכ"ו	1910-11	תרע"א	1954-55	תש"ה
1866-67	תרכ"ז	1911-12	תרע"ב	1955-56	תש"ו
1867-68	תרכ"ח	1912-13	תרע"ג	1956-57	תש"ז
1868-69	תרכ"ט	1913-14	תרע"ד	1957-58	תש"ח
1869-70	תר"ל	1914-15	תרע"ה	1958-59	תש"ט
1870-71	תרל"א	1915-16	תרע"ו	1959-60	תש"כ
1871-72	תרל"ב	1916-17	תרע"ז	1960-61	תשכ"א
1872-73	תרל"ג	1917-18	תרע"ח	1961-62	תשכ"ב
1873-74	תרל"ד	1918-19	תרע"ט	1962-63	תשכ"ג
1874-75	תרל"ה	1919-20	תר"ף	1963-64	תשכ"ד
1875-76	תרל"ו	1920-21	תרפ"א	1964-65	תשכ"ה
1876-77	תרל"ז	1921-22	תרפ"ב	1965-66	תשכ"ו
1877-78	תרל"ח	1922-23	תרפ"ג	1966-67	תשכ"ז
1878-79	תרל"ט	1923-24	תרפ"ד	1967-68	תשכ"ח
1879-80	תר"ם	1924-25	תרפ"ה	1968-69	תשכ"ט
1880-81	תרמ"א	1925-26	תרפ"ו	1969-70	תש"ל
1881-82	תרמ"ב	1926-27	תרפ"ז	1970-71	תשל"א
1882-83	תרמ"ג	1927-28	תרפ"ח	1971-72	תשל"ב
1883-84	תרמ"ד	1928-29	תרפ"ט	1972-73	תשל"ג

To Open Eyes

*To open eyes when others close them
to hear when others do not wish to listen
to look when others turn away
to seek to understand when others give up
to rouse oneself when others accept
to continue the struggle even when one is not the strongest
to cry out when others keep silent —
to be a Jew
it is that,
it is first of all that
and further
to live when others are dead
and to remember when others have forgotten.*

— Emmanuel Eydoux
(trans. from the French by Jonathan Magonet)

In Many Houses

*In many houses
all at once
I see my mother and father
and they are young
as they walk in.*

*Why should my
tears come,
to see them laughing?*

*That they cannot
see me
is of no matter:*

*I was once
their dream;
now
they are mine.*

— Diane Cole

A Jewish Cemetery In Germany by Yehuda Amichai

*On a little hill amid fertile fields lies a small cemetery,
a Jewish cemetery behind a rusty gate, hidden by shrubs,
abandoned and forgotten. Neither the sound of prayer
nor the voice of lamentation is heard there
for the dead praise not the Lord.*

*Only the voices of our children ring out, seeking graves
and cheering
each time they find one — like mushrooms in the forest, like
wild strawberries.*

*Here's another grave! There's the name of my mother's
mothers, and a name from the last century. And here's a name,
and there! And as I was about to brush the moss from the name —
Look! an open hand engraved on the tombstone, the grave
of a kohen,
his fingers splayed in a spasm of holiness and blessing,
and here's a grave concealed by a thicket of berries
that has to be brushed aside like a shock of hair
from the face of a beautiful beloved woman.*

Translated by Chana Bloch and Chana Kronfeld

נזכור / אבא קובנר Yizkor by Abba Kovner

נזכור את אחינו ואחיותינו, את בתי העיר ואת בתי הכפר, את רחובות העיירה שסאנו כנהרות ואת הפונדק הבודד עלי אורח את הישיש בקלסתר פניו את האם בסודרה את הנערה בצמותיה את הטף, את הטף.	<i>Let us remember our brothers and our sisters, The homes in the cities and houses in the villages The streets of the town that bustled like rivers And the inn standing solitary on the way. The old man with his etched-out features The mother in her sweater The girl with the plaits And the children.</i>
את אלפי קהילות ישראל על משפחות האדם את כל עדת היהודים אשר הוכרעה לטבח על אדמת אירופה מידי הכורת הנאצי את האיש שזעק פתאום ובזעקתו מת. את האישה שחבקה את תינוקה אל ליבה וזרועותיה צנחו תת התינוק שאצבעותיו מגששות אל פיט־ מת האם והיא כחולה וצוננת. את הרגליים את הרגליים שביקשו מפלט ולא היה מנוס עוד.	<i>The thousands of communities of Israel with their families The whole Jewish people That was brought to the slaughter on the soil of Europe by the German destroyer. The man who screamed out suddenly and died while screaming The woman who clutched her baby to her breast and whose arms tumbled down. The baby whose fingers groped for her mother's nipple which was blue and cold The legs, the legs that sought refuge and there was no escape.</i>
ואת שקפצו ידיהם לאגרוף האגרוף שחפן את הברזל הברזל שהיה לנשק החזון, הייאוש והמרד והם ברי הלבב והם פקוחי העיניים והם שהשליכו נפשם מנגד וידם קצרה מלהושיע. נזכור את היום. את היום בצהריו. את השמש שעלתה על מוקד הדמים את השמים שעמדו גבוהים ומחרישים נזכור את תלי האפר אשר מתחת לגנים הפורחים. נזכור החי את מתיו כי הנה הם מנגד לנו. הנה ניבטות עיניים סביב סביב ואל דומי, אל דומי לנו עדי יהיו חיינו ראויים לזכרם.	<i>And those who clenched their hands into fists The fist that gripped the steel The steel that was the weapon of the vision, the despair and the revolt. And those with staunch hearts and those with open eyes And those who sacrificed themselves without being able to save others. We shall remember the day The day in its noon, the sun That rose over the stake of blood The skies that stood high and silent We shall remember the mounds of ash beneath flowering parks. Let the living remember his dead for behold they are here before us. Behold their eyes cast around and about. So let us not rest, may our lives be worthy of their memory.</i>

Campo Dei Fiori (Rescue)

*In Rome on the Campo dei Fiori
Baskets of olives and lemons,
Cobbles spattered with wine
And the wreckage of flowers.
Vendors cover the trestles
With rose-pink fish;
Armfuls of dark grapes
Heaped on peach-down.*

*On this same square
They burned Giordano Bruno.
Henchmen kindled the pyre
Close-pressed by the mob.
Before the flames had died
The taverns were full again,
Baskets of olives and lemons
Again on the vendors' shoulders.*

*I thought of the Campo dei Fiori
In Warsaw by the sky-carousel
One clear spring evening
To the strains of a carnival tune.
The bright melody drowned
The salvos from the ghetto wall,
And couples were flying
High in the cloudless sky.*

*At times wind from the burning
Would drift dark kites along
And riders on the carousel
Caught petals in midair.
That same hot wind
Blew open the skirts of the girls
And the crowds were laughing
On that beautiful Warsaw Sunday.*

*Someone will read as moral
That the people of Rome or Warsaw
Haggle, laugh, make love
As they pass by martyrs' pyres.
Someone else will read
Of the passing of things human,
Of the oblivion
Born before the flames have died.*

*But that day I thought only
Of the loneliness of the dying,
Of how, when Giordano
Climbed to his burning
There were no words
In any human tongue
To be left for mankind,
Mankind who live on.*

*Already they were back at their wine
Or peddled their white starfish,
Baskets of olives and lemons
They had shouldered to the fair,
And he already distanced
As if centuries had passed
While they paused just a moment
For his flying in the fire.*

*Those dying here, the lonely
Forgotten by the world,
Our tongue becomes for them
The language of an ancient planet.
Until, when all is legend
And many years have passed,
On a great Campo dei Fiori
Rage will kindle at a poet's word.*

— Warsaw, 1943
(translated by Louis Iribarne and David Brooks)

Forget Not That Which Amalek Wrought Unto You by Avraham Shlonsky

*By these eyes that have seen the woe and the grief,
Their outcries heaving to my hearts' embrace,
By this compassion which taught me:
Forgive till the time did come too awful for grace —
I have taken this oath: as I breathe and live,
To forget not a thing of that which took place.*

*Till the tenth generation forget not,
Till each of my insults be completely assuaged,
Till the last of my lashes has chastened their lot
Cry heaven, if in vain passed that night of rage,
Cry heaven, if by morning I resume my trod,
not learning the lesson taught me by this age.*

R
E
M
E
M
B
R
A
N
C
E

נדר / אברהם שלונסקי

על דעת עיני שראו את השכול
ועמסו זעקות על לבי השחוח
על דעת רחמי שהורוני למחול
עד באו ימים שאיימו מלסלוח
נדרתי הנדר: לזכור את הכל
לזכור — ודבר לא לשכוח.

דבר לא לשכוח - עד דור עשירי
עד שוך עלבוני עד כולם עד כולהם
עדי יוכלו כל שבטי מוסרי.
קונם אם לריק יעבור ליל הזעם
קונם אם לבוקר אחזור לסורי
ומאום לא אלמד גם הפעם.

לכל איש יש שם - זלדה (1916-1984)

Each Man Has A Name - Zelda (1916-1984)

REMEMBRANCE

לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	<i>Each Man has a name</i>
שֶׁנָּתַן לוֹ אֱלֹהִים	<i>given him by G-d,</i>
וְנָתַנוּ לוֹ אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ.	<i>and given him by his father and mother.</i>
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	<i>Each man has a name</i>
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ קוֹמָתוֹ	<i>given him by his stature</i>
וְאָפֶן חִיּוּכּוֹ	<i>and his way of smiling,</i>
וְנָתַן לוֹ הָאָרֶיג.	<i>and given him by his clothes.</i>
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	<i>Each man has a name</i>
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ הַהָרִים	<i>given him by the mountains,</i>
וְנָתַנוּ לוֹ כְּתָלָיו.	<i>and given him by his walls.</i>
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	<i>Each man has a name</i>
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ הַמַּזְלוֹת	<i>given him by the planets,</i>
וְנָתַנוּ לוֹ שְׁכֵנָיו.	<i>and given him by his neighbors.</i>
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	<i>Each man has a name</i>
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ חַטָּאָיו	<i>Given him by his sins,</i>
וְנָתַנָּה לוֹ כְּמִיּהָתוֹ.	<i>And given him by his longing.</i>
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	<i>Each man has a name</i>
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ שׂוֹנְאָיו	<i>given him by his enemies,</i>
וְנָתַנָּה לוֹ אֲהֲבָתוֹ.	<i>and given him by his love.</i>
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	<i>Each man has a name</i>
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ חֲגִיו	<i>given him by his feast days,</i>
וְנָתַנָּה לוֹ מְלָאכְתּוֹ.	<i>and given him by his craft.</i>
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	<i>Each man has a name</i>
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ תְּקוּפוֹת הַשָּׁנָה	<i>given him by the seasons of the year,</i>
וְנָתַן לוֹ עִוְרוּנוֹ.	<i>and given him by his blindness.</i>
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	<i>Each man has a name</i>
שֶׁנָּתַן לוֹ הַיָּם	<i>given him by the sea,</i>
וְנָתַן לוֹ מוֹתוֹ.	<i>and given him by his death.</i>

התקוה HaTikva: Israel's National Anthem

כל עוד בלבב פְּנִימָה *As long as the Jewish*
נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדֵי הוֹמָה, *spirit is yearning deep in the heart,*
וּלְפָאֲתֵי מִזְרָח, קְדִימָה, *With eyes turned toward the East,*
עֵין לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפִיָּה, *looking toward Zion,*

עוד לא אָבְדָה תְּקוּתָנוּ, *Then our hope— the two-thousand-*
הַתְּקוּהָ בִּת שְׁנוֹת אֲלָפִים, *year-old hope— will not be lost:*
לִהְיוֹת עַם חֶפְשִׁי בְּאֶרְצֵנוּ, *To be a free people in our land,*
אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם. *The land of Zion and Jerusalem.*

R
E
M
E
M
B
R
A
N
C
E



Prayer for Martyrs

This prayer for martyrs is recited in some congregations only on the Shabbat before Shavuot, Tisha B'av, or Yom Ha-shoah.

REMEMBRANCE

אב הַרְחָמִים, שׁוֹכֵן מְרוֹמִים, בְּרַחֲמֵי הַעֲצוּמִים הוּא יִפְקֹד
בְּרַחֲמִים הַחֲסִידִים וְהַיֹּשְׁרִים וְהַתְּמִימִים, קְהֵלוֹת הַקֹּדֶשׁ
שֶׁמָּסְרוּ נַפְשָׁם עַל קִרְשֵׁי הַשָּׁם, הַנֶּאֱהָבִים וְהַנֶּעֱיָמִים בְּחַיֵּיהֶם,
וּבְמוֹתָם לֹא נִפְּרְדּוּ. מִנְּשָׁרִים קָלוּ, מֵאֲרִיּוֹת גָּבְרוּ, לַעֲשׂוֹת
רָצוֹן קוֹנֵם וְחַפֵּץ צוּרֵם. יִזְכְּרֵם אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְטוֹבָה עִם שָׂאֵר
צְדִיקֵי עוֹלָם, וְיִנְקוּם נִקְמַת דָּם עֲבָדָיו הַשְּׁפוּף בְּתוֹרַת
מֹשֶׁה אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים: הִרְגִּינוּ גּוֹיִם עַמּוֹ, כִּי דָם עֲבָדָיו יִקּוּם,
וְנִקָּם יָשִׁיב לְצָרָיו, וְכִפֹּר אֲדָמָתוֹ עִמּוֹ. וְעַל יְדֵי עֲבָדֶיךָ
הַנִּבְיָאִים בָּתוֹב לֹאמַר: וְנִקֵּיתִי דָמָם לֹא נִקֵּיתִי, נִיהוּה שׁוֹכֵן
בְּצִיּוֹן. וּבִבְתָּבִי הַקֹּדֶשׁ נֹאמַר: לָמָּה יֵאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֵיזָה
אֱלֹהֵיהֶם, יִנָּדַע בְּגוֹיִם לַעֲיִנֵּינוּ נִקְמַת דָּם עֲבָדֶיךָ הַשְּׁפוּף.
וְנֹאמַר: כִּי דוֹרֵשׁ דָּמִים אוֹתָם וְזָכַר, לֹא שָׂכַח צַעֲקַת עֲבָדָיו.

ותחלים כב

מִזְמוֹר לַיהוָה רִעִי לֹא אֶחָסֵר. בְּנֵאוֹת דָּשָׁא יִרְבִּיצְנִי, עַל מֵי מִנְחֹת
יִגְהַלְנִי. נִפְשִׁי יִשׁוּבֵב, יִנְחֵנִי כִמְעֹלֵי צֶדֶק לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ. גַּם כִּי אֶלֶף
בְּגִיָּא צִלְמֹנֹת, לֹא אִירָא רַע כִּי אֶתָּה עֲמָדִי, שִׁבְטֶךָ וּמִשְׁעֲנֶתְךָ הִמָּה יִנְחֵנִי.
תַּעֲרֶךְ לִפְנֵי שְׁלֹחַן גִּדְּרִי צִדְרִי, דְּשֻׁנֶּת בִּשְׁמֹן רֹאשִׁי, בּוֹסִי רִנָּתִי. אֵךְ טוֹב
נֶחֱסֵד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּי, וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית יְהוָה לְאֶרְךָ יָמִים.

May the compassionate Father, enthroned on high, remember with sublime compassion the pious, the good and the innocent, the holy communities who laid down their lives in the sanctification of His name. Beloved and beautiful in their lives, in their death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions in doing the will of their Creator. May our God remember them for good together with the other righteous of the world, and render retribution for His servants' blood which has been shed, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, man of God: "Acclaim His people, O nations, for He will avenge the blood of his servants, render retribution to His foes and cleanse His people's land." And by Your servant the prophet Joel it is written, "Though I cleanse them, I shall not cleanse them in regard to their bloodshed; and the Lord dwells in Zion." And in the Psalms it is said, "Why should the nations ask, 'Where is their God?' Let retribution for the blood of Your servants be made known among the nations, in our sight." And the Psalmist declares, "He who renders retribution for bloodshed remembers them; He has not forgotten the cry of the humble."

Psalm 121

A Song of Ascent

I lift my eyes up to the hills.
What is the source of my help?
My help comes from the Lord,
Maker of the heavens and the earth.
He will not allow you to stumble,
Your Guardian will not slumber.
Indeed, the Guardian of Israel
neither slumbers not sleeps.

The Lord is your Guardian, your shelter at your side.
The sun will not smite you by day nor the moon by night.
The Lord will guard you against all evil;
He will guard you, body and soul.
The Lord will guard our going out
and your coming home, now and forever.

שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת.
אֲשָׁא עֵינַי אֶל הַהָרִים, מֵאֵין יָבֹא עֲזָרִי.
עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה, עֲשֵׂה שְׂמִימִים נֶאֱרָץ.
אֵל זִמְנָן לַמּוֹט רִגְלִי, אֵל יְנוּם שְׁמִרָה.
הֲנֵה לֹא יְנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל.
יְהוָה שְׁמִרָה, יְהוָה צִלָּהּ עַל יָד וּמִינָה.
יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא יִכְבֶּה, וַיָּרֶחַ בַּלַּיְלָה.
יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרֶךָ מִכָּל-רָע, יִשְׁמַר אֶת-נַפְשְׁךָ.
יְהוָה יִשְׁמַר צֵאתְךָ וּבֹאֶךָ מִצֵּתָה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

Psalm 130

A Song of Ascent.

Out of the depths I call to You;
Lord, hear my cry, heed my plea.
Be attentive to my prayers,
to my sigh of supplication.
Who could survive, Lord,
if You kept count of every sin?
But forgiveness is Yours,
that we may worship You.
My whole being waits for the Lord,
with hope I wait for His word.
I yearn for the Lord
more eagerly than watchmen for the dawn.
Put your hope in the Lord,
for the Lord is generous with mercy.
Abundant is His power to redeem;
He will redeem the people Israel from all sin.

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת.
מִמַּעְמְקִים קָרָאתִיךָ יְהוָה.
אֲרֹנִי שְׁמַעָה בְּקוֹלִי,
תִּהְיֶינָה אַזְנוֹתַי קָשְׁבוֹת לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָי.
אִם עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמְרֶנָּה, אֲרֹנִי מִי יַעֲמֶד.
כִּי עֲמָה הַסְּלִיחָה, לְמַעַן תִּגְרָא.
קִנִּיתִי יְהוָה, קִוְיָה נַפְשִׁי, וְלִדְבָרוֹ הוֹחֵלֵתִי.
נַפְשִׁי לֹא-דָנִי מִשְׁמֵרִים לְבָקָר, שְׁמֵרִים לְבָקָר.
יִחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל יְהוָה,
כִּי עַם יְהוָה הַחֲסִד וְהַרְבֵּה עֲמוֹ פְּדוּת.
וְהוּא יַפְדֶּה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו.

Let us say Kaddish by Elie Wiesel

Let us say Kaddish not only for the dead but also for the living who have forgotten the dead.

And let the prayer be more than a prayer, more than lament; let it be outcry, protest and defiance.

And above all let it be an act of remembrance. For that is what the victims wanted; to be remembered, at least to be remembered.

For just as the killer was determined to erase Jewish memory, so were the dying heroes and fighting martyrs bent on maintaining it alive.

They are now being defamed; or forgotten – which is like killing them a second time.

Let us say Kaddish together – and not allow others to betray them posthumously.

Mourner's Kaddish

Glorified and sanctified be God's great name throughout the world which He has created according to His will.

May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime and during your days, and within the life of the entire House of Israel, speedily and soon; and say, Amen.

May His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity.

Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted, extolled and honored, adored and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, beyond all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations that are ever spoken in the world; and say, Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen.

He who creates peace in His celestial heights, may He create peace for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen.

קדיש

יְתַגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא
בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ
וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ
בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ
וּבְחַיֵּי דִּי כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּעֻגְלָא וּבְזִמְנָא קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבֹרָךְ לְעֵלְמָא וּלְעֻלְמֵי עֻלְמֵינָא
יְתַבְרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
שְׁמֵהּ דְּקוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא
לְעֵלְמָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא תְּשֻׁבָּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא
דְּאָמְרִין בְּעֻלְמָא וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן
יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים
עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן

עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו
הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן

Memorial Prayer for the Martyrs of the Holocaust

*God full of mercy who dwells on high
 Protector of widows and father for the fatherless
 Please be not silent and show no restraint
 on behalf of the Jewish blood that has been spilled like water.
 But grant perfect rest on the wings of Your Divine Presence
 In the lofty abode of the holy, pure and valiant
 who shine as the brightness of the heavens
 to the souls of our brothers and sisters
 Six million Jewish
 men, women and children
 Who were put to death, slaughtered, burned,
 starved, buried alive
 Or who suffered other forms of unnatural death
 at the hands of the accursed Nazis
 and their associates - may their name be wiped out!
 In Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek, Mathausen
 and in other death camps in Europe
 And who gave up their lives in order to Sanctify God's name.
 Because we are at one with their memory
 and we pray for the elevation of their souls
 Their resting place shall be in the Garden of Eden.
 Therefore, shall the Master of mercy care for them
 under the protection of His wings for all time
 And bind their souls in the bond of everlasting life.
 O Earth! Do not conceal their blood
 and let there not be a resting place for their cry
 In their merit shall the remnant of Israel
 return to its rightful place
 And as for the holy ones, their righteousness
 shall be in front of the Lord as an everlasting memory
 They will come in peace and will rest in peace
 They will meet their rightful destiny at the end of days
 and let us say Amen.*

אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים
 דיין אלקמות ואבי יתומים
 אל נא תחשה ותתאפק
 לדם ישראל שנשפך כמים
 ותן מנוחה נכונה על כנפי השכינה
 במעלות קדושים וטהורים
 כזוהר הרקיע מאירים ומזהירים
 לנשמות אחינו ואחיותינו
 ששה מלינים מישראל
 אנשים ונשים ילדים וילדות
 שנהרגו ושנשחטו ושנשרפו
 ושגועו ברעב ונקברו חיים
 ועוד מיתות משונות
 על ידי הנאצים הארורים
 ועוזריהם ימח שמם
 באושביץ, טרבלינקה, מיידנק, מטהאוזן
 ובשאר מחנות השמדה באירופה
 ומסרו נפשם על קדוש השם
 בעבור שאנו מתיחדים עם זכרם
 ומתפללים לעלוי נשמותיהם.
 בגן עדן תהא מנוחתם.
 לכן בעל הרחמים יסתירם
 בסתר כנפיו לעולמים
 ויצרר בצרור החיים את נשמותיהם
 ארץ אל תכסי דמם
 ואל יהי מקום לזעקתם
 בזכותם נדחי ישראל
 ישובו לאחוזתם
 והקדשים לזכרון תמיד
 נגד אדני צדקתם
 יבאו שלום וינחו בשלום על משכבם
 ויעמדו לגורלם לקץ הימין
 ונאמר אמן.

REMEMBRANCE

Ash and Dust

Words: Yaakov Gilad
Music: Yehuda Poliker

A spring day, the fragrance of lilacs,
Among the ruins of your city.
A beautiful day for fishing in the river —
Inside of me, my heart is breaking.

Over there, there was — but no more —
Your childhood, little woman.
People that no one no longer knows,
And there's not even a house
to serve as a reminder.

(Chorus:)
And if you are going —
To where are you going?
Eternity is just ash and dust.
To where are you going?
To where are you going?
All those years, and still nothing has
been erased.

Take a coat — you'll be cold —
Spending money, a sugar cube.
If the days are hard
Remember me sometimes.

And if it becomes a journey of despair —
To the cabin, to the yard —
On the old town's railway tracks
No one will be waiting at the station.

(Chorus:) And if you are going...

Who's going to sweeten your nights?
Who's going to listen to your weeping?
Who's going to watch your step on your way?

(Chorus:) And if you are going...

Take a coat — you'll be cold —

אפר ואבק

מלים: יעקב גלעד
מוסיקה: יהודה פוליקר

יום אביב, ריחות לילך,
בין חורבות העיר שלך.
יום יפה לדג בנהר;
בתוכי הלב נשבר.

שם הייתה ואינה -
ילדותך אישה קטנה.
אנשים שאיש לא מכיר
אין אפילו בית שזכיר.

(פזמון)
ואם את נוסעת,
לאן את נוסעת?
הנצח הוא רק אפר ואבק.
לאן את נוסעת? לאן את נוסעת?
שנים - וכלום עוד לא נמחק.

קחי מעיל - יהיה לך קר -
כסף פיס, גביש סוכר.
אם יהיו קשים הימים,
הזכרי בי לפעמים.

ואם זה עוד מסע נואש -
אל הצריף אל המגרש -
במסילת העיר הישנה
איש לא יחכה בתחנה.

(פזמון) ואם את נוסעת...

מי ימתיק לילותייך?
מי יקשיב לבכיך?
מי ישמור צעדיך... בדרךך?

(פזמון) ואם את נוסעת...

קחי מעיל - יהיה לך קר -

Special Kaddish for Victims of the Holocaust

Some material from <http://www.ahbjewishcenter.org/hashoah24.htm>

One of the last exhibits you see at Yad Vashem is an excerpt from the book *The Last of the Just*, by André Schwarz-Bart.

It is painted on the wall. The opening phrase of the Mourners' Kaddish, the prayer for the dead, is interwoven with the names of concentration camps and death camps.

יתגדל. אושוויץ. ויתקדש. מיידאנק. שמה רבא. טרבלינקה. אמן. בוכנוואלד. יתגדל.
מאוטהאוזן. ויתקדש. בלזן. שמה רבא. סוביבור. אמן. חלמנו. יתגדל. פונאריו.
ויתקדש. טרזיינשטאדט. שמה רבא. ווארשה. אמן. ווילנה. יתגדל סקארז' יסקו.
ויתקדש. ברגן-בלזן. שמה רבא. יאנוב. אמן. דורה. יתגדל. נויאנגאמה. ויתקדש.
פוסטקוב. שמה רבא. אמן.

The Kaddish is a paean of praise to God; its language is Aramaic rather than Hebrew; it has an instinctive rhythm and a flow: "Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'may raba."

But on this wall in Yad Vashem, Schwarz-Bart breaks that quiet, rocking rhythm.

Eastern European place names, awkwardly transliterated into Hebrew, are wedged between the ancient words of prayer.

"And praised. Auschwitz. Be. Majdanek. The Lord. Treblinka. And praised. Buchenwald. Be. Mauthausen. The Lord. Belzec. And praised. Sobibor. Be. Chelmno. The Lord. Ponary. And praised. Theresienstadt. Be. Warsaw. The Lord. Vilna. And praised. Skarzysko. Be. Bergen-Belsen. The Lord. Janow. And praised. Dora. Be. Neuengamme. The Lord. Pustkow. And praised... Amen."

Some people read the poem as an affirmation that Jews continued to pray even in their darkest times.

American Conservative Judaism developed another Kaddish for death camps over 30 years ago. Also based in part on the last passages of Schwarz-Bart's 1960 novel, the rite was originally incorporated into the Martyrology of the *Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur*, of the Rabbinical Assembly (1972). Rabbi Jules Harlow, editor of the Mahzor, described the new Kaddish as follows:

"We interrupt these words [of the traditional Kaddish], this statement of faith, with the names of places where Jews were slaughtered, places which therefore cause us to raise questions, to have doubts. The tension is resolved, liturgically, by the last four lines, whose words are uninterrupted by the names which give rise to questioning, thus concluding in a framework of faith."

The original Aramaic text alternates with a register of the sites of extermination in this moving prayer as follows (cited from the *Siddur Sim Shalom*, ed. Jules Harlow, 1985):

יתגדל אושוויץ ויתקדש לודז שמה רבא. פונאר בעלמא די ברא כרעותה, באבי-יאר וימליך
מלכותה מיידאנק בחיכוך וביומיכוך בירקנאו ובחיי דכל בית ישראל, קובנו בעגלא ובזמן
קריב, ינובסקה ואמרו אמן. יהא שמה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי עלמא. יתברך וישתבח
טרזיינשטאדט ויתפאר ויתרומם בוכנוואלד ויתנשא ויתהדר טרבלינקה ויתעלה ויתהלל
וילנה שמה דקדשא ברגן-בלזן בריך הוא לעלא מאוטהאוזן מן כל ברכתא ושירתא דכאו
תשבתתא ונחמתא מינסק דאמירן בעלמא, ורשה ואמרו אמן. יהא שלמה רבא מן שמיא
וחיים לנו ולכל עמו ישראל, ואמרו אמן. עושה שלום במרומיו, הוא יעשה שלום עלינו,
ועל כל ישראל, ואמרו אמן.

Harlow explained in 1989 that there are intentionally seventeen places named, signifying that life, represented by the Hebrew *Chai*, numerically eighteen, "can never be complete, can never be the same, after such slaughter."

In another version, the more extensive Kaddish of the Martyrology of the Day of Atonement, the Kaddish includes Kishinev, Hebron, Mayence, Usha and Jerusalem, places where Jews were slaughtered during other tragic historical eras.

Elegy for the Little Jewish Towns

Gone now are, gone are in Poland those little Jewish towns
Hrubieszow, Karczew, Brody, Falenica
You look for candlelight in the windows
And for song in the woOden synagogue in vain.

REMEMBRANCE

Vanished the last leftovers, Jewish tatters
Blood was buried by sand, traces were cleared
And walls were lucidly whitened by glaucous lime
Just like afTer a plague or for big holiday

Here glitters one moon, cold, pale, alien
Already out of town, on the street, when night lights up
My Jewish relatives, poetic boys
Will not find two golden moons of Chagal

The moons are now above other planets
They flew away frightened by grim silence
Gone now are those little towns where the shoemaker was a poet,
The watchmaker a philosopher, the barber a troubadour

Gone now are those little towns where the wind joined
Biblical songs with Polish tunes and Slavic rue
Where old Jews in orchards in the shade cherry trees
Lamented for the holy walls of Jerusalem.

Gone now are those little towns, they went away by shadow
And the shadow will fall between our words
Until will come closer, brotherly, and will join again
The two nations fed by centuries of suffering.

— *Antoni Slonimski (1947; translation: P. Dorman)*

שירו לה' שיר חדש

אדרבה תן בלבנו שנראה כל אחד מעלת חברינו, ולא חסורונם, ושנדבר כל אחד את חברו בדרך הישר והרצוי לפניך ואל יעלה בלבנו שום שנהא מאחד על חברו חלילה.

Oh Lord! Instill it in our hearts that we see our friends' good attributes and not their shortcomings: and may each one of us speak with his friend in an honest and appropriate way in front of you and may no hate arise between one friend and another, God forbid.

(From the prayers of Rabbi Elimelech of Lejansk)



עבדו את ה' בשמחה,
באו לפניו ברננה.

Serve Hashem with
gladness; come
before him with
joyous song.

המלאך הגואל אותי מכל רע יברך את הנערים, ויקרא בהם שמי, ושם אבותי אברהם ויצחק, וידגו לרב בקרב הארץ.

May the angel who redeems me from all evil bless the lads, and may my name be declared upon them — and the names of my forefathers Abraham and Isaac — and may they proliferate abundantly like fish within the land.

(Jacob's blessings to his grandsons from Gen. 48, Dveykus IV)

אחינו כל בית ישראל, הנתונים בצרה ובשביה, העומדים בין בים ובין ביבשה, המקום ירחם עליהם ויוציאם מצרה לרוחה, ומאפילה לאורה, ומשעבוד לגאלה, השתא בעגלא, ובזמן קריב. ונאמר: אמן.

Our brothers the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land — may the Omnipresent One have mercy on them and remove them from distress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption, now speedily, and soon — and let us say: Amen.

Donah

דונה

Translation of a Yiddish song, decrying the condition of the Russian Jews during the pogroms in the early part of the twentieth century.

מלים ולחן: שלום סקונדה

On a wagon bound for market
There's a calf with a mournful eye
While above him, there's a swallow
Winging swiftly through the sky

עגל רך קשור בחבל
על העגלה מוטל
ולמעלה בשמים
עפרוני ממריא אל על.
פזמון:
רוח סתו נושב לו
צוחק ומתהולל
צחוק וצחוק מבקר אור
ועד חצי הליל.
דונה, דונה...

How the winds are laughing
They laugh with all their might
Laugh and laugh the whole day through
And half the summer's night.

למה זה תגעה אומר איפר
לעגל הפטל
לו צמחות שתי כנפים
והמראת גם אתה פזמון

Calves are easily bound and slaughtered,
Never knowing the reason why
But whoever treasures freedom
Like the swallow has learned to fly.

עגלים בלי דעת למה
אל הטבח הולכים תמיד
ואשר לבם לחפש
ממריאים כעפרוני פזמון

The Last Seder in the Warsaw Ghetto...

There was one Moishele, the last Moishele in the Warsaw Ghetto, asking his father the "Ma Nishtana".

"Ma nishtana halila ha'ze mikol haleilot?" "Why is this night so long and more terrible than any night before?"

While Moishele's asking God the questions, heaven and earth stood still.

The angels were afraid to make noise, and his father, his father wants to answer "Avadim ha'inu."

Moishele says: "Tata zisser [dear father], one more question of my own, and this is my question: I want to know, tata zisser — Will I be alive next year to ask you the 'Ma Nishtana'? Will there be any Jewish child left to ask the 'Ma Nishtana'? Will there be any Jewish father left to answer 'Avadim ha'inu'?"

And the father answers: "I don't know. I don't know if I will be alive, I don't know if you will be alive, but I know that there will always be one Moishele somewhere, asking the 'Ma Nishtana'. I don't know if we'll be alive but I now one thing: 'Ki beshem kodshecha nishbata lo she'lo yichbe nero le'olam va'ed.'"

”בי בשם קדשך נשבעת לו שלו יבבה נרו
לעולם ועד...”

“For by your holy name you swore to him that his lamp
will not be extinguished for ever and ever...”

Fire!

*Fire, brothers, fire!
Our poor town's on fire!
Raging, winds so full of anger
Shatter, scatter, tear asunder
Fanning the flames ever wilder
Everything's on fire!*

*While you stand there, looking on with folded hand.
While you stand there, looking on at the fire brand.*

*Fire, brothers, fire!
Our poor town's on fire!
The whole town's already devoured
By flaming tongues of force and power
And the wild wind howls and churns
As our shtetl burns.*

While you stand there, looking on ...

*Fire, brothers, fire!
The dreaded moment may soon come
When the town with us included
Will be turned to flames and ashes
As after battle a city falls,
With empty, blackened walls.*

While you stand there, looking on ...

*Fire, brothers, fire!
It all turns to you.
If you love your town,
Take pails, put out the fire,
Quench it with your own blood too.
Show what you can do!*

*Don't look and stand, with folded hand.
Brothers, don't stand around, put out the fire! Our shtetl burns!*

— Mordechai Gebirtig

"אני מאמין בשמש גם כאשר איננה זורחת. אני מאמין
באהבה גם כאשר אינני חש בה. אני מאמין באלוהים גם
כאשר הוא שותק"

*"I believe in the sun even when it isn't shining
I believe in love even when there's no one there
And I believe in God Even when He is silent*

*I believe in miracles; I believe in light
I believe there will always be a way; I believe that nothing is impossible
That all things are possible with God"*

"שׁוּבִי נַפְשִׁי, לְמִנוּחֶיכִי: כִּי־יְהוָה, גָּמַל עָלֶיכִי. כִּי חִלַּצְתָּ
נַפְשִׁי, מִמָּוֶת: אֶת־עֵינִי מִן־דְּמָעָה; אֶת־רַגְלִי מִדָּחִי"

*Return my soul to your rest; for Hashem has been good to you
For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from
stumbling*

"וְזִכְנִי לַגִּדּוֹל בָּנִים וּבָנֵי בָנִים חֲכָמִים וְנִבּוֹנִים. אוֹהֲבֵי יי.
יִרְאֵי אֱלֹהִים. אֲנָשֵׁי אֱמֶת. זֶרַע קוֹדֶשׁ בְּיִי. דְּבָקִים וּמְאִירִים אֶת
הָעוֹלָם בַּתּוֹרָה וּבַמַּעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים וּבְכָל מְלָאכַת עֲבוֹדַת הַבּוֹרָא."

*"Privilege me to raise children and grandchildren who are wise and understanding,
who love Hashem and fear Hashem, people of truth, offspring that are holy,
who to Hashem are attached, (who) illuminate the world with Torah and with
deeds that are good, and with every labor in the service of the Creator."*

"וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֶדָה, לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׁלֹא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ
לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. אֲלֹא שְׁבָכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ.
וְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם."

*This promise has stood us and our parents in good stead. For not only has one
enemy stood over us to annihilate us. But in every generation enemies have
stood over us to annihilate us. Yet the Holy One keeps the promise to save us
from their hands.*

"גַּם כִּי־אֵלֶךְ בְּגִיא צִלְמוֹת, לֹא־אִירָא רָע כִּי־אַתָּה עִמָּדִי"

*"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no
evil, for you are with me;"*

יזכור לחסידי אומות העולם רני יגר, בית תפילה ישראלי

A New Yizkor for Righteous Gentiles
Written by Rani Jaeger
Translation by Yaron Ben-Ami

יִזְכֹּר עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת חֲסִידֵי אֲמוֹת הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר שָׂמוּ נַפְשָׁם בְּכַפְּם לְמַעַן אֲחִינוּ
וְאֲחִיותֵינוּ הַנִּרְדָּפִים וְהַמְעוּנִים בִּשְׁנוֹת
הַשּׁוֹאָה ת"ש-תש"ה וְהָיוּ כְּכוֹכְבִּים
מְאִירִים בְּאֶפֶלֶת הָרָשָׁע הָרוֹבֶצֶת.

*Remember, People of Israel, the Righteous Gentiles,
who have placed their own lives in danger
for the sake of our persecuted and tortured
brothers and sisters during the Shoah, 1939-
1945, and who were as shining stars in the
overwhelming darkness of evil.*

אֵת שֶׁהִשְׁמִיעוּ קוֹל בְּעֵת דְּמָמָה,

Those who spoke out at a time of silence,

אֵת שֶׁהִצִּיעוּ מִקְלָט וּתְעוּדַת חַיִּים בְּעֵין
סַעֲרַת הָרָצָח,

*Those who offered sanctuary and a lease on life in
the eye of the murderous storm,*

אֵת שֶׁסָּמְכוּ נוֹפְלִים וְהוֹשִׁיטוּ יָד, מְזוֹן
וְלִבּוֹשׁ,

*Those who upheld those who were falling and
extended a helping hand, food and clothing.*

אֵת שֶׁעָנוּ לְאִנְשִׁים, נָשִׁים וְטוֹף בְּעֵת שׁוּעָם.
גְּבָרִים וְנָשִׁים,

*Who answered the cry of men, women and
children:*

עוֹבְדֵי אֲדָמָה וְיוֹשְׁבֵי עִיר,

*Men and women, workers of the land and city-
dwellers*

פְּשוּטֵי עַם וְרַמֵּי מַעְלָה,

Of humble standing and of high rank,

אֲנָשֵׁי אֱמוּנָה וּמִצְפּוֹן.

People of faith and conscience.

בְּגִיא צִלְמוֹת עֲמָדוֹ כָּל אֱלֹהִים עִם בְּנֵי עַמָּנוּ
וְהִצִּילוּ מִן הַתַּפֶּת יְחִידִים, מֵאוֹת וְאֶף
רַבּוֹת. בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה אִישׁ הָיוּ הֵם
אֲנָשִׁים.

*In the very valley of the shadow of death, these
men and women stood by our people, and from
the fiery inferno they saved the few and the
many. And where there were no human beings
they were human.*

זְכֹּר עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת גְּדֻלַּת רוּחָם, גְּבוּרָתָם
וְטִהַר לִבָּם, יִצְרוֹר אֱלֹהִים בְּצִרוֹר
הַחַיִּים אֶת נַשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם, וְיִתְקַים בָּהֶם
וּבְנוֹ הַכְּתוּב: "כַּעֲבוּר סוּפָה וְאֵין רָשָׁע,
יִצְדִּיק יְסוֹד עוֹלָם" (משלי י 25).

*Remember, People of Israel, their grandness of
spirit, their heroism and their pure hearts.
May God bind their souls in the bundle of life,
and may it come to pass as it was written:
"As the whirlwind passes, so is the wicked
no more: but the righteous is an everlasting
foundation" (Proverbs 10, 25).*

Dr. Rani Jaeger is a Research Fellow of the Kogod Research Center and head of the recently formed Tanakh Initiative at the Shalom Hartman Institute.

Aharon Appelfeld: Reminiscences

from a meeting with a research group at the Van-Leer Institute in
Jerusalem, April 20, 2012

REMEMBRANCE

My reminiscences of the war, of the second world war – I hope it will not surprise you – are of love, endless love. Anyone who was in the Ghetto and saw mothers protecting their children, mothers not eating but feeding their children, young boys staying with their parents, defending them until the last minute, will understand. Asking myself from where do I derive my writing force, I know that not from horror scenes but of love scenes that existed there everywhere. My world was not formed by the executioner, it is not dominated by an irreparable, endless evil; I remained with people and I loved them.

אהרון אפלפלד:

זיכרונות המלחמה, מלחמת העולם השנייה, – אני מקווה שזה לא יפתיע אתכם – הזיכרונות האלה קשורים אצלי בהרבה אהבה. אינסוף אהבה. מי שהיה בגטו וראה איך אימהות מגוננות על ילדיהן, איך הורים, אימהות לא אוכלות ורק מאכילות, איך נערים ליוו את הוריהם כדי לא להשאיר אותם לבד, והגנו עליהם עד לרגע האחרון. כשאני שואל את עצמי מאין נובעים הכוחות לכתוב, זה לא מתוך מראות הזוועה אלא מתוך מראות האהבה שהיו שם בכל מקום. העולם שלי לא נשאר בדמות תליין, העולם שלי לא נשאר בדמות הרוע שאי אפשר לתקן אותו, הרוע האינסופי; נשארתי עם בני אדם ואהבתי אותם.

דברים שאמר אהרון אפלפלד במפגש עם קבוצת "העברת זיכרון ובדיון", מכון ון ליר
בירושלים 20.4.2012.

Aharon Appelfeld was born in Czernowitz, Romania, in 1932. When he was eight, his mother was killed, and he and his father were sent to a concentration camp. He escaped and spent three years in hiding, a child alone moving from village to village. He reached Israel in 1946 with "Aliyat Hanoar". Appelfeld's literary work reflects his experience as a child in the Holocaust and as a young Holocaust survivor in the young state of Israel. His books describe Jewish life in Europe before, during and after World War II.

On God and Auschwitz

Judaism has its silences, Elie Wiesel once said, but we do not speak about them. After the Holocaust, the *Shoah*, there was one of the great silences of Jewish history. A third of world Jewry had gone up in flames. Entire worlds — the bustling Jewish townships of Eastern Europe, the Talmudic academies, the courts of the Jewish mystics, the Yiddish-speaking masses, the urbane Jews of Germany, the Jews of Poland who had lived among their gentile neighbours for eight hundred years, the legendary synagogues and houses of study — all were erased. A guard at Auschwitz, testifying at the Nuremburg trial, explained that at the height of the genocide, when the camp was turning ten thousand Jews a day into ashes, children were thrown into the furnaces alive. When the destruction was over, a pillar of cloud marked the place where Europe's Jews had once been; and there was a silence that consumed all words.

More had died in the final solution than Jews. It was as if the image of God that is man had died also. We know in retrospect that Jews — both victims and survivors — simply could not believe what was happening.

Since the Enlightenment they had come to have faith that a new order was in the making, in which the age-old teachings of contempt for the chosen-or-rejected people were at an end, and in their place would come a rational utopia. It is hard in retrospect to imagine that sense of almost religious wonder which German Jews felt for the country of Goethe, Beethoven and Immanuel Kant. That Christian anti-Judaism might mutate into the monster of racial anti-semitism, that a Vatican might watch as the covenantal people went to its crucifixion, that chamber music might be played over the cries of burning children, that the rational utopia might be *Judenrein*: these, for the enlightened Jews of Europe, were the ultimately unthinkable thoughts. Since the early nineteenth century, humanity had seemed to many Jews a safer bet than God; and it was that faith that was murdered in the camps. Where was man at Auschwitz?

But where, too, was God? That He was present seemed a blasphemy; that He was absent, even more so. How could He have been there, punishing the righteous and the children for sins, their own or someone else's? But how could He *not* have been there, when, from the valley of the shadow of death, they called out to Him?

Jewish faith sees God in history. But here was a definitive, almost terminal moment, in Jewish history, and where was God's hand and His outstretched arm? It seemed as if the *Shoah* must have, and could not have, religious meaning.

Wiesel has written of that time: 'Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself.' But to whom could one speak of these things so much larger than man, if not

to God? It was a crisis of faith without precedent in the annals of belief. If God existed, how was Auschwitz possible? But if God did not exist, how was humanity after Auschwitz credible?

There is a line of theological reasoning which argues that a single moment of innocent suffering is as inexplicable as attempted genocide. The death of one child is as much a crisis for religious belief as the *Shoah*.

That is true. But it is to miss one essential of Jewish belief. There is theology, but beyond that there is covenant, the bond between God and a singular people. Even the most terrifying curse in the Bible ends with the verse, 'Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them.' The faith of Israel is peculiarly tied to the people of Israel, to its existence as God's witness. If there were no Christians, Christianity might still be true. If there were no Jews, Judaism would be false. The survival of the Jewish people is the promise on which the entire covenant rests.

Jews had faced inquisitions and pogroms before. They had even, in the book of Esther, recorded Haman's decision 'to destroy, kill and annihilate all Jews — young and old, women and children — on a single day'. But redemption had always come, or if not redemption, refuge. In the Holocaust, perhaps for the first time, Jews came face to face with the possibility of extinction. The covenant, the one Jewish certainty, was within sight of being broken. Not only the present and future, but the Jewish past too would have died.

And so, for twenty years after the *Shoah*, there was an almost total silence. The questions were too painful to ask. It was as if, like Lot's wife, turning back to look on the destruction would turn one to stone.

There were, in those years, a few attempts to break the silence. But they only served to show how broken the traditional categories were. The late Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, leader of the Hassidic community of Satmar and himself a survivor of Bergen-Belsen, invoked biblical theology and declared the Holocaust a punishment for sins. The Jewish people had, according to the Talmud, taken an oath to wait patiently in exile, but secular Zionism had broken this promise by forcing the course of Jewish history, and bringing a premature ingathering to the holy land. The *Shoah* was a punishment for Zionism.

An Israeli thinker, Menachem Hartom, pursued the same logic to its opposite conclusion. Throughout its history, he argued, the Jewish people had regarded exile as punishment, as not-being-at-home. That is, until the Emancipation. Then, for the first time, Jews argued that Europe was where they belonged. Some abandoned the hope for a return to Israel, others deferred it to a metaphysical end of days. For the first time Jews ceased to be Zionists. And for this they suffered a devastating retribution. Germany, the country more than any other that Jews had worshipped, became the avenger. The *Shoah* was a punishment for anti-Zionism.

This kind of argument led everywhere and nowhere. An American Jewish theologian, Richard Rubinstein, drew the radical conclusion. If there is a God of history, he argued, we must see the *Shoah* as a punishment for sin. But there is no sin that could warrant the deaths of a million children. There can be no vindication of the ways of Providence. Therefore there is no God of history. An ancient heresy had been proved true. There is no justice and no judge.

Rubinstein became a kind of religious atheist. But ironically, only a hair's-breadth away, was a position found in classic Jewish thought. And it was now taken up by such leading Orthodox thinkers as Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik and Eliezer Berkovits.

In the Bible there are references to *hester panim*, the hiding of the face of God. There are moments, perhaps eras, in which God withdraws from history. The rabbinic literature contained an extraordinary statement, which by a slight textual emendation, turned the phrase 'Who is like you, God, among the mighty?' into 'Who is like you among the silent?' God, as it were, holds Himself back in self-imposed restraint, allowing men freedom, including the freedom to do evil. God was neither present nor absent at Auschwitz: He was hidden. The line of thought was barely comforting, for it argued an exile of God from the human domain that was little short of complete eclipse.

But it was in 1967, in the weeks surrounding Israel's Six Day War, that an extraordinary transformation took place in Jewish sensibilities. It seemed, in the anxious days before the war, as if a second holocaust was in the making. And the memory of the first, so suppressed for two decades, broke through with terrible force, in the form of an imperative: Never again.

Israel's sudden victory released a flood of messianic emotion. For some it seemed as if God had finally re-entered history after His long exile. And when the mood subsided a deeper sense began to form — that the State of Israel was a powerful affirmation of life, a determination never again to suffer the role of victim. Virtues which had long been at the heart of Judaism in exile — martyrdom, passivity, trust — had been overthrown. They now seemed, in retrospect, to be unwitting accomplices to genocide. A quite new Holocaust theology began to emerge.

Its most articulate theoretician was Emile Fackenheim, who argued that the Holocaust was not to be understood, but responded to. His boldest move was to claim that the *Shoah* had created a new commandment — and he meant the word in its religious sense. Jews are forbidden to hand Hitler a posthumous victory. Because Hitler made it a crime simply to exist as a Jew, simply to exist as a Jew became an act of defiance against the force of evil. Choosing to have children after the *Shoah* was itself a monumental act of faith. The old dichotomy between religious and secular had now lost its meaning. For even the most secular Jew who chose to remain Jewish in the face of a possible future holocaust was making a religious act of commitment. Jewish survival became *a*, perhaps even *the*, religious imperative.

Fackenheim spoke to a new Jewish consciousness. There was a sense, shared by many, that secular activity had been charged with religious meaning. Israel's victory, her determination to survive, the intense involvement of Jews everywhere in her fate, all combined to place Jewish people-hood and survival at the centre of the religious drama. God may have hidden His face. But the Jewish people had disclosed a new one of its own. God may have withdrawn from history. Israel, at least, had re-entered it.

The American theologian, Irving Greenberg spoke of a new era in which the covenant had been voluntarily renewed, but in which man, not God, had become the senior partner. Never before had survival *per se* carried such religious weight.

But there was to be a further twist in the dialectic. In the twenty years since Fackenheim's commandment to survive, it has become clear that not all sectors of the Jewish world have heeded its call. In the Diaspora, Jewish birth-rates fell to below replacement levels. The momentum of assimilation has accelerated. Frustrating Hitler has proved to be no base for Jewish survival.

One group of Jews, though, has obeyed Fackenheim's command to the letter. They have had children in great numbers. They have rebuilt their lost worlds. They have proved themselves the virtuosi of survival. The irony is that they are a group who would deny the entire basis of Fackenheim's thought. They are the ultra-religious, for whom piety, not people-hood, is the dominant value, and to whom secular survival is not Jewish survival at all.

This was the one group whose responses to the Holocaust lay unconsidered, and only slowly has the written testimony come to light. It makes remarkable reading. For we now know that there were Jews in the concentration camps who lived in the nightmare kingdom as if it were just another day, patiently confronting the never-before-imagined questions and finding answers.

May a father purchase his son's escape from the ovens, knowing that the quotas will be met and another child will die in his place? May a Jew in the Kovno ghetto recite the morning benediction, 'Blessed are you, O Lord, Who has not made me a slave'? May one pronounce the blessing over martyrdom over a death from which there is no escape? What blessing does one make before being turned to ashes? The rabbis searched the sources and gave their rulings, and some of their writings have survived.

Over one who uninterruptedly studies God's word, said the rabbis, even the angel of death can win no victory. How true this was of the pious Jews of Auschwitz and Treblinka and Bergen-Belsen, discovering as they did that in the face of ultimate evil, the word of God was not silent. It had an awe-inspiring resonance. God did not die at Auschwitz, they said. He wept tears for His people as they blessed His name at the gates of death. Their bodies were given as burnt offerings and their lives as a sanctification of God's name. 'The fire which destroys our bodies', said Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman before he was killed, 'is

the fire which will restore the Jewish people.' And so it was. The Jews of faith, who were able to sanctify death *in* the Holocaust, turned out to be the most determined to sanctify life *after* the Holocaust.

So, once the silence was broken, Jewish responses to the *Shoah* have been many and conflicting. But one above all deserves mention, all the more remarkable for having been written fifteen hundred years before the event.

The Talmud contains an enigmatic passage, which says that when the Israelites stood at Mount Sinai they were reluctant to accept the covenant. They did so only because God threatened to let the mountain fall on their heads. For centuries they kept the faith only because they were coerced. When, then, did they finally accept it voluntarily? The Talmud answers: in the days of Ahasuerus, when Haman threatened to kill all Jews.

Only now, in retrospect, does the meaning of the passage become clear. The threat of genocide created a new dimension of covenant: the covenant of a shared fate. Every Jew, after Auschwitz, knows that in some sense he is a survivor, an accidental remnant, and he shares that knowledge with every member of his people. As the covenant of faith seemed to be breaking, the covenant of fate has risen to take its place.

And the stubborn people has shown its obstinacy again. Faced with destruction, it has chosen survival. *Lo amut ki echyeh*, says the Psalm: 'I will not die, but I will live.' And in this response there is a kind of courage which rises beyond theology's reach.

One writer about the *Shoah* records that he met a rabbi who had been through the camps and who, miraculously, seemed unscarred. He could still laugh. 'How', he asked him, 'could you see what you saw and still have faith? Did you have no questions?' The rabbi replied, 'Of course I had questions. But I said to myself, if you ever ask those questions, they are such good questions that God will send you a personal invitation to heaven to give you the answers. And I preferred to be here on earth with the questions than up in heaven with the answers.'

As with the rabbi, so with the Jewish people. Without answers, it has reaffirmed its covenant with history. The people Israel lives and still bears witness to the living God.

— Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Talk on BBC Radio 3, 22 December 1988;

Excerpted from his book *Faith in the Future*

At My Bar Mitzvah – and His

Dedicated to the memory of a thirteen-year-old hero of the Resistance

By Rabbi Howard Kahn

REMEMBRANCE

When I was thirteen, I became a Bar Mitzvah.

When he was thirteen, he became a Bar Mitzvah.

When I was thirteen, my teachers taught me – to put Tefillin on my arm.

When he was thirteen, his teachers taught him – to throw a hand grenade with his arm.

When I was thirteen, I studied – the pathways of the Bible and roadways of the Talmud.

When he was thirteen, he studied – the canals of Warsaw and the sewers of the Ghetto.

At my Bar Mitzvah, I took an oath to live as a Jew.

At his Bar Mitzvah, he took an oath to die as a Jew.

At my Bar Mitzvah, I blessed G-d.

At his Bar Mitzvah, he questioned G-d.

At my Bar Mitzvah, I lifted my voice and sang.

At his Bar Mitzvah, he lifted his fists and fought.

At my Bar Mitzvah, I read from the Scroll of the Torah.

At his Bar Mitzvah, he wrote a Scroll of Fire.

At my Bar Mitzvah, I wore a new Tallit over a new suit.

At his Bar Mitzvah, he wore a rifle and bullets over a suit of rags.

At my Bar Mitzvah, I started my road of life.

At his Bar Mitzvah, he began his road to martyrdom.

At my Bar Mitzvah, family and friends came – to say “L’chayim.”

At his Bar Mitzvah, Rabbi Akiba and Trumpeldor, Hannah and her seven sons – came to escort him to Heaven.

At my Bar Mitzvah, they praised my voice, my song, my melody.

At his Bar Mitzvah, they praised his strength, his courage, his fearlessness.

When I was thirteen, I was called up to the Torah – I went to the Bimah.

When he was thirteen, his body went up in smoke – his soul rose to G-d.

When I was thirteen, I became a Bar Mitzvah – and lived.

When he was thirteen, he became a Bar Mitzvah – and lives now within each of us.

רַקְמָה אֲנוֹשִׁית אַחַת

מילים ולחן: מוטי המר

One Human Tissue

Lyrics and music: Moti Hammer

כְּשֶׁאֲמוּת, מִשֶּׁהוּ מִמֶּנִּי,
מִשֶּׁהוּ מִמֶּנִּי
יָמוּת בָּךְ, יָמוּת בָּךְ.

*When I shall die,
something from me, will die
within you.*

כְּשֶׁתָּמוּת, מִשֶּׁהוּ מִמָּךְ בִּי,
מִשֶּׁהוּ מִמָּךְ בִּי
יָמוּת אִתְּךָ, יָמוּת אִתְּךָ.

*When you'll die,
something of yours,
will die with you, will die
within you.*

כִּי כָלֵנוּ, כֵּן כָּלֵנוּ
כָּלֵנוּ רַקְמָה אֲנוֹשִׁית אַחַת
חִיָּה
וְאִם אֶחָד מֵאֵתָנוּ
הוֹלֵךְ מֵעַמָּנוּ
מִשֶּׁהוּ יָמֻת בָּנוּ -
וּמִשֶּׁהוּ, נִשְׁאָר אִתּוֹ

*Because all of us, yes, all of
us
are all one living human
tissue
And if one of us,
Fades away
Something from us dies
along
And something else, stays
within him*

אִם יָדַע, אִיךָ לְהִרְגִיעַ, אִיךָ
לְהִרְגִיעַ
אֶת הָאִיבָה, אִם רַק יָדַע.

*If we only knew, how to
comfort,
the hostility, if only we'd
know how.*

אִם יָדַע, אִם יָדַע לְהִשְׁקִיט
אֶת זַעֲמָנוּ,
עַל אֵף עֲלֻבוֹנֵנוּ, לוֹמַר
סְלִיחָה.
אִם יָדַע לְהִתְחִיל מֵהֶתְחִלָּה.

*If we only knew how to
quiet our rage
To say we are sorry, though
we already got offended
If we only knew how to
begin fresh from the start.*

Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones:

יחזקאל פרק לז

Yechezkel (Ezekiel), Ch. 37

א הִיָּתָה עָלַי, יְד-יְהוָה, וַיּוֹצֵאֲנִי
בְרוּחַ יְהוָה, וַיְנִיחֵנִי בְּתוֹךְ
הַבִּקְעָה; וְהִיא, מְלֵאָה עֲצָמוֹת.

ב וַהֲעִבִירֵנִי עֲלֵיהֶם, סָבִיב סָבִיב;
וְהִנֵּה רַבּוֹת מְאֹד עַל-פְּנֵי הַבִּקְעָה,
וְהִנֵּה יְבֹשׁוֹת מְאֹד.

ג וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי--בֶּן-אָדָם, הֲתַחְיֶינָה
הָעֲצָמוֹת הָאֵלֶּה; וָאָמַר, אֲדֹנָי
יְהוִה אַתָּה יָדָעְתָּ.

ד וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי, הִנָּבֵא עַל-הָעֲצָמוֹת
הָאֵלֶּה; וָאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם--הָעֲצָמוֹת
הַיְבֹשׁוֹת, שְׁמָעוּ דְּבַר-יְהוָה.

ה כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, לָעֲצָמוֹת
הָאֵלֶּה: הִנֵּה אֲנִי מֵבִיא בָכֶם,
רוּחַ--וַחַיֵּיתֶם.

ו וְנָתַתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם גִּידִים וְהַעֲלֵתִי
עֲלֵיכֶם בָּשָׂר, וְקָרַמְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם
עוֹר, וְנָתַתִּי בָכֶם רוּחַ, וַחַיֵּיתֶם;
וַיִּדְעַתֶּם, כִּי-אֲנִי יְהוָה.

ז וְנִבֵּאתִי, כַּאֲשֶׁר צֻוֵּיתִי; וַיְהִי-קוֹל
כְּהִנָּבְאִי, וְהִנֵּה-רַעַשׁ, וַתִּקְרְבוּ
עֲצָמוֹת, עֶצֶם אֶל-עֶצְמוֹ.

ח וַרְאִיתִי וְהִנֵּה-עֲלֵיהֶם גִּידִים,
וּבָשָׂר עֲלֵה, וַיִּקְרַם עֲלֵיהֶם עוֹר,
מִלְּמַעְלָה; וְרוּחַ, אֵין בָּהֶם.

¹ The hand of the Lord came upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley, and that was full of bones.

² And He made me pass by them round about, and lo! they were exceedingly many on the surface of the valley, and lo! they were exceedingly dry.

³ Then He said to me; "Son of man, can these bones become alive?" And I answered, "O Lord God, You [alone] know."

⁴ And He said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.'"

⁵ So says the Lord God to these bones; Behold, I will cause spirit to enter into you, and you shall live!

⁶ And I will lay sinews upon you, and I will make flesh grow over you and cover you with skin and put breath into you, and you will live, and you will then know that I am the Lord."

⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded, and there arose a noise when I prophesied, and behold a commotion, and the bones came together, bone to its bone!

⁸ And I looked, and lo! sinews were upon them, and flesh came upon them, and skin covered them from above, but there was still no spirit in them.

ט וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי, הִנָּבֵא אֶל-הָרוּחַ;
הִנָּבֵא בֶן-אָדָם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל-הָרוּחַ
{ס} כֹּה-אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, מֵאַרְבַּע
רוּחוֹת בָּאִי הָרוּחַ, וּפָחִי בַּהֲרוּגִים
הָאֵלֶּה, וַיְחִיּוּ.

י' וַהֲנִבֵּאתִי, כְּאֲשֶׁר צֻוֵּנִי; וַתָּבוֹא
בָּהֶם הָרוּחַ וַיְחִיּוּ, וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ עַל-
רַגְלֵיהֶם--חֵיל, גָּדוֹל מְאֹד-מְאֹד.

יא וַיֹּאמֶר, אֵלַי, בֶּן-אָדָם, הֵעֲצָמוֹת
הָאֵלֶּה כָּל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵמָּה; הִנֵּה
אֹמְרִים, יָבֹשׁוּ עֲצָמוֹתֵינוּ וְאָבְדָה
תְּקוּתָנוּ--נִגְזְרָנוּ לָנוּ.

יב לָכֵן הִנָּבֵא וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם,
כֹּה-אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, הִנֵּה אֲנִי
פֹתֵחַ אֶת-קְבֻרוֹתֵיכֶם וְהֵעֲלִיתִי
אֶתְכֶם מִקְבְּרוֹתֵיכֶם, עַמִּי; וְהִבֵּאתִי
אֶתְכֶם, אֶל-אֲדֹמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל.

יג וַיֵּדְעֻם, כִּי-אֲנִי יְהוִה: בִּפְתָחִי
אֶת-קְבֻרוֹתֵיכֶם, וּבְהֵעֲלוֹתִי אֶתְכֶם
מִקְבְּרוֹתֵיכֶם--עַמִּי.

יד וְנָתַתִּי רוּחִי בָכֶם וַחֲיִיתֶם,
וְהִנַּחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם עַל-אֲדֹמַתְכֶם;
וַיֵּדְעֻם כִּי-אֲנִי יְהוִה, דְּבַרְתִּי
וַעֲשִׂיתִי--נְאֻם-יְהוִה.

טו וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוִה, אֵלַי לֵאמֹר.

⁹ Then He said to me, "Prophecy to the spirit, prophesy, O son of man, and say to the spirit, 'So says the Lord God: From four sides come, O spirit, and breathe into these slain ones that they may live.' "

¹⁰ And I prophesied as He had commanded me, and the spirit came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a very great army, exceedingly so.

¹¹ Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are all the house of Israel. Behold they say, 'Our bones have become dried up, our hope is lost, we are clean cut off to ourselves.' "

¹² Therefore, prophesy and say to them, So says the Lord God: Lo! I open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves as My people, and bring you home to the land of Israel.

¹³ Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and lead you up out of your graves as My people.

¹⁴ And I will put My spirit into you, and you shall live, and I will set you on your land, and you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and have performed it," says the Lord.

¹⁵ And the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

^{טז} וְאַתָּה בֶּן-אָדָם, קַח-לָךְ עֵץ
אֶחָד, וּכְתֹב עָלָיו לַיהוּדָה, וּלְבְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲבֵרֹו; וּלְקַח, עֵץ אֶחָד,
וּכְתוֹב עָלָיו לְיוֹסֵף עַץ אֶפְרַיִם,
וְכָל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲבֵרֹו.

^{יז} וְקָרַב אֹתָם אֶחָד אֶל-אֶחָד, לָךְ--
לְעֵץ אֶחָד; וְהָיוּ לְאֶחָדִים, בְּיָדְךָ.

^{יח} וְכַאֲשֶׁר יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ, בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ
לֵאמֹר: הֲלוֹא-תִגִּיד לָנוּ, מָה-אֵלֶּה
לָךְ.

^{יט} דִּבֶּר אֲלֵהֶם, כֹּה-אָמַר אֲדֹנָי
יְהוִה, הִנֵּה אֲנִי לֹקַח אֶת-עֵץ יוֹסֵף
אֲשֶׁר בְּיַד-אֶפְרַיִם, וְשִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
חֲבֵרֹו; וְנָתַתִּי אוֹתָם עָלָיו אֶת-עֵץ
יְהוּדָה, וַעֲשִׂיתֶם לְעֵץ אֶחָד, וְהָיוּ
אֶחָד, בְּיָדִי.

^כ וְהָיוּ הָעֵצִים אֲשֶׁר-תִּכְתֹּב
עֲלֵיהֶם, בְּיָדְךָ--לְעֵינֵיהֶם.

^{כא} וְדִבֶּר אֲלֵיהֶם, כֹּה-אָמַר אֲדֹנָי
יְהוִה, הִנֵּה אֲנִי לֹקַח אֶת-בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִבֵּין הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הָלְכוּ-
שָׁם; וְקִבַּצְתִּי אֹתָם מִסָּבִיב,
וְהִבֵּאתִי אוֹתָם אֶל-אֲדָמָתָם.

^{כב} וַעֲשִׂיתִי אֹתָם לְגוֹי אֶחָד בְּאֶרֶץ,
בְּהָרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּמֶלֶךְ אֶחָד יִהְיֶה
לְכָלָם, לְמֶלֶךְ; וְלֹא יִהְיֶה-יִהְיוּ-
עוֹד לְשְׁנֵי גוֹיִם, וְלֹא יִחָצוּ עוֹד
לְשֵׁתִי מִמַּלְכוּת עוֹד.

¹⁶ "And you, son of man, take for yourself one stick and write upon it, 'For Judah and for the children of Israel his companions;' and take one stick and write upon it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions.'

¹⁷ And bring them close, one to the other into one stick, and they shall be one in your hand.

¹⁸ And when the children of your people say to you, saying, 'Will you not tell us what these are to you?'

¹⁹ Say to them, So says the Lord God: Behold I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim and the tribes of Israel his companions, and I will place them with him with the stick of Judah, and I will make them into one stick, and they shall become one in My hand.

²⁰ And the sticks upon which you shall write shall be in your hand before their eyes.

²¹ And say to them, So says the Lord God: Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side, and I will bring them to their land.

²² And I will make them into one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be to them all as a king; and they shall no longer be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms anymore.

כג וְלֹא יִטְמְאוּ עוֹד, בְּגִלּוּלֵיהֶם
וּבִשְׁקוּצֵיהֶם, וּבְכָל, פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם;
וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּי אֹתָם, מִכָּל מוֹשְׁבֵי תֵיחָם
אֲשֶׁר חָטְאוּ בָהֶם, וְטַהַרְתִּי אוֹתָם
וְהָיוּ-לִי לְעָם, וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם
לֵאלֹהִים.

כד וְעַבְדִּי דָוִד מֶלֶךְ עָלֵיהֶם, וְרוּעָה
אֶחָד יִהְיֶה לְכָלֶם; וּבְמִשְׁפָּטִי
יֵלְכוּ, וְחֻקוֹתַי יִשְׁמְרוּ וַעֲשׂוּ
אוֹתָם.

כה וַיָּשְׁבוּ עַל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי
לְעַבְדִּי לִיעֶקֶב, אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ-בָהּ,
אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם; וַיָּשְׁבוּ עָלֶיהָ הֶמָּה
וּבְנֵיהֶם וּבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם, עַד-עוֹלָם,
וְדָוִד עַבְדִּי, נָשִׂיא לָהֶם לְעוֹלָם.

כו וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם, בְּרִית
עוֹלָם יִהְיֶה אוֹתָם; וּנְתַתִּים
וְהִרְבֵּיתִי אוֹתָם, וּנְתַתִּי אֶת-
מִקְדָּשִׁי בְּתוֹכָם לְעוֹלָם.

כז וְהָיָה מִשְׁכְּנִי עֲלֵיהֶם, וְהָיִיתִי
לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים; וְהֶמָּה, יִהְיוּ-לִי
לְעָם.

כח וַיֵּדְעוּ, הַגּוֹיִם, כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה,
מִקְדָּשׁ אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל--בְּהִיּוֹת
מִקְדָּשִׁי בְּתוֹכָם, לְעוֹלָם.

²³ And they shall no longer defile themselves with their idols, with their detestable things, or with all their transgressions, and I will save them from all their habitations in which they have sinned, and I will purify them, and they shall be to Me as a people, and I will be to them as a God.

²⁴ And My servant David shall be king over them, and one shepherd shall be for them all, and they shall walk in My ordinances and observe My statutes and perform them.

²⁵ And they shall dwell on the land that I have given to My servant, to Jacob, wherein your forefathers lived; and they shall dwell upon it, they and their children and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever.

²⁶ And I will form a covenant of peace for them, an everlasting covenant shall be with them; and I will establish them and I will multiply them, and I will place My Sanctuary in their midst forever.

²⁷ And My dwelling place shall be over them, and I will be to them for a God, and they shall be to Me as a people.

²⁸ And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, Who sanctifies Israel, when My Sanctuary is in their midst forever.

תפילה למדינת ישראל ולחיילי צה"ל

מִי שְׁבֹרֵךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבֹרָהֶם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרֶךְ אֶת מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְיַגְלֶה כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ לָתֵת לָנוּ. אָנָּה יְהוָה, יְהִי חֲסִדְךָ עִם רֹאשֵׁי הַמְּדִינָה, שְׂיִזְכּוּ לְבִנְיוֹתָהּ וּלְבִסְסָהּ בְּמִשְׁפָּט וּבִצְדָק מִעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם. יֵתֶן בְּלִבָּם וּבְלִבֵּנוּ אֶהְבֵּת אֲחֵינוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל מָקוֹם שֶׁהֵם, שְׁנַעֲשֶׂה בָּלָנוּ אֲגָדָה אַחַת לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ בְּלִבֵּב שָׁלֵם. יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, אֵל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׁמֹר נָא עַל חַיְלֵי צָבָא הַהִגָּנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַצִּילֵם מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל נֹגַע וּמַחֲלָה, וּשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה וְהַצֵּלְהֵם בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂי יְדֵיהֶם: צֵאתֶם לְשָׁלוֹם וּבּוֹאֶם לְבִתְיֵיהֶם וּלְיִקְרִייתָם לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם, וְשָׁבוּ כָּל שְׁבוּיֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנַעֲדְרֵיו לְחִיק בֵּיתֶם. אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים, שִׁים שָׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ וּשְׁמַחַת עוֹלָם לְכָל יוֹשְׁבֶיהָ, וְשֵׁב יַעֲקֹב וְשָׁקֵט וְשָׁאֲנָן וְאֵין מַחְרִיד. וְיָקִים בָּנוּ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ מִקְרָא שְׁכֵתוֹב: וְיִשְׁבּוּ אִישׁ תַּחַת גִּפְנוֹ וְתַחַת תְּאֲנָתוֹ וְאֵין מַחְרִיד, כִּי פִי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת דִּבֶּר. וּפִרְשׁ סִפְתָּ שְׁלוֹמָךְ עַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵּבֵל אֶרְצָךְ, וְכֵן יְהִי רְצוֹן, וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן.

From: Vaani Tfillati, Siddur Israeli

Published in 2009 by the Masorti Movement in Israel, the Rabbinical Assembly in Israel and 'Yedioth Books Publishing House'

Translation: Rabbi Peretz Rodman

Prayer for the State of Israel & IDF soldiers

May the One who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sara, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, bless the State of Israel and make the glory of God's sovereignty evident in the land that our ancestors were promised would be given to us. We ask you, Eternal One: may Your providential grace be extended to the leaders of our country, that they might be able to build it up and set it on a firm base of law and justice, now and for all time. Place in their hearts and in ours a love for our brothers and sisters, the House of Israel, wherever they may be, so that we may all become one union dedicated to doing Your will wholeheartedly.

Adonai Tzeva'ot, God of Israel, watch over those who serve in the Israel Defense Forces. Protect them and save them from all trouble and sorrow, all harm and illness, and grant blessing and success to all their deeds. May they go forth in peace, and may they return to their homes and their loved ones endowed with life and peace. May every one of our people who is held captive or missing return to the embrace of home.

Heavenly Father, grant peace to our land and everlasting joy to all its inhabitants. May "Jacob have calm and quiet, with none to trouble him" (Jer. 30:10), and may we soon witness the fulfillment of Your promise (Mic. 4:4), "Everyone shall sit under his grapevine or fig tree, with no one to disturb him, for it was the Lord of Hosts who spoke."

Spread Your shelter of peace over all who dwell on Your planet Earth. So may it be Your will, and let us say: Amen.

**Only by common effort,
By genuine and realistic work,
By great exertion,
By avoiding unproductive complaints
and vicious accusations,
By working with heart,
By using sense,
By patience,
Will it be possible to weather the
present grave times.**

**— Emanuel Ringelblum, Selected
Documents from Warsaw Ghetto
Archives, Oneg Shabbat pp. 352**

Suggested Reading List

Jewish Virtual Library: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/index.html>

Diapositive (Jewish Polish History): <http://www.diapozytyw.pl/en/site>

Rabbi Raymond Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People: From Legendary Times to Modern Statehood*.

Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Jewish Heritage Travel: A Guide to Central and Eastern Europe*.

Personal Memoirs

Terrence de Pres, *The Survivor*, NY, 1976.

Ida Fink, *A Scrap of Time*, NY, 1987.

Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Boston, 1967.

Anton Gil, *The Journey Back from Hell*, NY, 1988.

Etti Hillesum, *An Interrupted Life: the Diary of Etti Hillesum*, NY, 1983.

Chaim Kaplan, *Scroll of Agony*, NY, 1964.

Judith Magyar Isaacson, *Seed of Sarah*, Chicago, 1990.

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, Collier, NY, 1969.

Elie Wiesel, *Night*, NY, 1967.

Holocaust Studies

Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, NY, 1993.

Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*.

Martin Gilbert, *Atlas of the Holocaust*.

Yad Vashem Website: <http://www.yadvashem.org/>

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Website: <http://www.ushmm.org/>

Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum Website: <http://www.auschwitz.org.pl/>

Text Study

בס"ד

א.

דברים פרק ו

ד שמע, ישראל: יהוה אלוהינו, יהוה אחד.
ה ואהבת, את יהוה אלוהיך, בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך, ובכל מאדך.
ו והיו הדברים האלה, אשר אנכי מצוך היום--על לבבך.
ז ושננתם לבניך, ודברת בם, בשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך, ובשכבך ובקומך.
ח וקשרתם לאות, על ידך; והיו לטטפת, בין עיניך.
ט וכתבתם על מזוזות ביתך, ובשערך.

רש"י דברים פרק ו פסוק ה

- בכל לבבך - בשני יצריך. דבר אחד בכל לבבך, שלא יהיה לבך חלוק על המקום
- ובכל נפשך - אפילו הוא נוטל את נפשך
- ובכל מאדך - בכל ממונך יש לך אדם שממונו חביב עליו מגופו לכך נאמר ובכל מאדך

ב.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות, דף סא עמוד ב

רבי עקיבא אומר: בכל נפשך אפילו נוטל את נפשך: תנו רבנן פעם אחת גזרה מלכות הרשעה שלא יעסקו ישראל בתורה, בא פפוס בן יהודה ומצאו לרבי עקיבא שהיה מקהיל קהלות ברבים ועוסק בתורה, אמר ליה: עקיבא, אי אתה מתירא מפני מלכות? {הרשעה} אמר לו: אמשול לך משל, למה הדבר דומה - לשועל שהיה מהלך על גב הנהר, וראה דגים שהיו מתקבצים ממקום למקום, אמר להם: מפני מה אתם בורחים אמרו לו מפני רשתות שמביאין עלינו בני אדם. אמר להם: רצונכם שתעלו ליבשה, ונדור אני ואתם כשם שדרו אבותי עם אבותיכם? אמרו לו: אתה הוא שאומרים עליך פקח

לימוד

שבחיות? לא פקח אתה, אלא טפש אתה! ומה במקום חיותנו אנו מתיראין, במקום מיתתנו על אחת כמה וכמה! אף אנחנו, עכשיו שאנו יושבים ועוסקים בתורה, שכתוב בה [\(דברים 2\)](#) כי הוא חייך ואורך ימך - כך, אם אנו הולכים ומבטלים ממנה - על אחת כמה וכמה. אמרו: לא היו ימים מועטים עד שתפסוהו לרבי עקיבא וחבשוהו בבית האסורים, ותפסו לפפוס בן יהודה וחבשוהו אצלו. אמר לו: פפוס! מי הביאך לכאן? אמר ליה: אשריך רבי עקיבא שנתפסת על דברי תורה, אוי לו לפפוס שנתפס על דברים בטלים. בשעה שהוציאו את ר' עקיבא להריגה זמן קריאת שמע היה, והיו סורקים את בשרו במסרקות של ברזל, והיה מקבל עליו עול מלכות שמים. אמרו לו תלמידיו: רבינו, עד כאן? אמר להם: כל ימי הייתי מצטער על פסוק זה בכל נפשך - אפילו נוטל את נשמתך, אמרתי: מתי יבא לידי ואקיימנו, ועכשיו שבא לידי לא אקיימנו? היה מאריך באחד עד שיצתה נשמתו באחד. יצתה בת קול ואמרה אשריך: רבי עקיבא שיצאה נשמתך באחד. אמרו מלאכי השרת לפני הקב"ה: זו תורה וזו שכרה? [\(תהילים 101\)](#) ממתים ידך ה' ממתים וגו' אמר להם: חלקם בחיים. יצתה בת קול ואמרה: אשריך רבי עקיבא שאתה מזומן לחיי עולם הבא:

Rabbi Akiva said: "With all your soul, even if they take your soul." Our masters taught: Once the wicked Roman government issued a decree forbidding Jews to study and practice the Torah. Pappus ben Judah came by, and, upon finding R. Akiva publicly holding sessions in which he occupied himself with Torah, Pappus asked him: Akiva, are you not afraid of the government? R. Akiva replied: You, Pappus, who are said to be wise, are in fact a fool. I can explain what I am doing by means of a parable: A fox was walking on a river bank and, seeing fishes hastening here and there, asked them, "From whom are you fleeing?" They replied, "From the nets and traps set for us by men." So the fox said to them, "How would you like to come up on dry land, so that you and I may live together the way my ancestors lived with yours?"

They replied: "You, the one they call the cleverest of animals, are in fact a fool. If we are fearful in the place where we can stay alive, how much more fearful should we be in a place where we are sure to die!" So it is with us. If we are fearful when we sit and study the Torah, of which it is written, "For that is thy life and the length of thy days" (Deut. 30:20), how much more fearful ought we to be should we cease the study of words of Torah!

It is related that soon afterward R. Akiva was arrested and thrown into prison, and Pappus ben Judah was also arrested and put in prison next to him. R. Akiva asked: Pappus, who brought you here? He replied: Happy are you, R. Akiva, that you have been seized for occupying yourself with the Torah! Alas for Pappus, who has been seized for occupying himself with vain things!

When R. Akiva was taken out to be executed, it was the hour for the recital of the Shema, and the executioners were combing his flesh with iron combs, while he was lovingly making ready to accept upon himself the yoke of the kingship of Heaven. His disciples asked: Our teacher, even to such a degree? He replied: All my days I have been troubled by this verse "With all thy soul" (Deut. 6:5), which I have interpreted as meaning "Even if He takes your soul." But I said: When shall I have an occasion to fulfill the precept? Now that I have the occasion, shall I not fulfill it? He prolonged the Shema's concluding word, *ehad* ("one"), until he expired as he finished pronouncing it. A divine voice went forth and proclaimed: Happy are you, Akiva, that your soul has departed with the word *ehad*! The ministering angels spoke out bluntly to the Holy One: Such Torah, and such its reward? He should have been "of those that die by Thy hand, O Lord" (Ps. 17:14). God replied: "Their portion is in life" (ibid.). Just then, another divine voice went forth and proclaimed: Happy are you, R. Akiva, destined as you are for life in the world-to-come.

ג.

תלמוד בבלי סנהדרין, דף עד עמוד א.

אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יהוצדק: נימנו וגמרו בעליית בית נתזה בלוד: כל עבירות שבתורה אם אומרים לאדם עבור ואל תהרג - יעבור ואל יהרג, חוץ מעבודה זרה וגילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין, דף עמוד א' ועמוד ב'

כי אתא רב דימי אמר רבי יוחנן: לא שנו אלא שלא בשעת השמד אבל בשעת השמד - אפילו מצוה קלה יהרג ואל יעבור. כי אתא רבין אמר רבי יוחנן: אפילו שלא בשעת השמד, לא אמרו אלא בצינעא, אבל בפרהסיא - אפילו מצוה קלה יהרג ואל יעבור. מאי מצוה קלה? אמר רבא בר רב יצחק אמר רב: אפילו לשנויי ערקתא דמסאנא.

ד.

הלכות יסודי התורה פרק ה

א כל בית ישראל מצווין על קידוש השם הגדול הזה, שנאמר "ונקדשתי, בתוך בני ישראל" (ויקרא כב, לב); ומוזהרין שלא לחללו, שנאמר "ולא תחללו, את שם קודשי" (שם). כיצד--בשעה שיעמוד גוי ויאנוס את ישראל לעבור על אחת מכל מצוות האמורות בתורה או יהרגנו, יעבור ואל ייהרג: שנאמר במצוות, "אשר יעשה אותם האדם וחי בהם" (ויקרא יח, ה)--ולא שימות בהם. ואם מת ולא עבר, הרי זה מתחייב בנפשו.

ב במה דברים אמורים, בשאר מצוות--חוץ מעבודה זרה, וגילוי עריות, ושפיכות דמים. אבל שלוש עבירות אלו, אם יאמר לו עבור על אחת מהן או תיהרג, ייהרג ואל יעבור.

ג וכל הדברים האלו, שלא בשעת השמד. אבל בשעת השמד, והוא כשיעמוד מלך רשע כנבוכדנאצר וחבריו ויגזור שמד על ישראל לבטל דתם או מצוה מן המצוות--ייהרג ואל יעבור, אפילו על אחת משאר מצוות, בין נאנס בתוך עשרה, בין נאנס בינו לבין גוים.

ד כל מי שנאמר בו יעבור ואל ייהרג, ונהרג ולא עבר--הרי זה מתחייב בנפשו. וכל מי שנאמר בו ייהרג ואל יעבור, ונהרג ולא עבר--הרי זה קידש את השם. ואם היה בעשרה מישראל--הרי זה קידש את השם ברבים, כדניאל חנניה מישאל ועזריה וכרבי עקיבה וחבריו; ואלו הם הרוגי מלכות, שאין מעלה על מעלתם, ועליהם נאמר "כי עליך, הורגנו כל היום; נחשבנו, כצאן טבחה" (תהילים מז, כג).

1) Every Jew [including women] is commanded to sanctify God's name, for it is written, "... but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel." We are warned not to desecrate God's Name, as it is written, "Nor shall you desecrate My holy Name." What does this mean? If for example, a gentile forces a Jew to commit a sin by threatening to kill him if he doesn't, then he should commit the sin in order not to be killed, for concerning this commandment it is written, "... which if a man does he shall live by them" — and not die for them. If he allowed himself to be killed by not committing the sin, then he is liable as a suicide [in the World to Come].

2) This is talking about any sin other than idolatry, adultery and murder, for if a gentile told one to commit one of these sins or else he will kill one, one has to allow oneself to be killed by not committing the sin.

3) These matters do not apply during a time of non-persecution, but at a time of persecution, such as when a wicked king such as Nebuchadnezzar arises and decrees against the Jews that they should forego their religion or one of the commandments, then one may not sin and one should allow oneself to be killed, even if the decree concerns a commandment other than the three mentioned above, and whether one is forced into sinning in the presence of ten, or more, Jews, or not.

4) Anyone that says that he will sin and so not be killed but [in the end] was killed without having sinned is liable a suicide. Anybody who says that he will not sin and will allow himself to be killed, and is killed without sinning, is sanctifying God's name. *If this happened in the presence of ten, or more, Jews, then it is a public sanctification, like what Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, and Rabbi Akivah and his colleagues did. These are people who were persecuted by a kingdom and above whose level there isn't one, and about them it is written, "But for Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are considered as sheep for the slaughter..."*

ה

שולחן ערוך יורה דעה קנ"ז הלכות עבודת כוכבים

על איזה עבירות ייהרג ואל יעבור?

כל העבירות שבתורה חוץ מעבודת כוכבים וגלוי עריות ושפיכת דמים. אם אומרים לאדם שיעבור עליהם או ייהרג יעבור ואל ייהרג.

י

הרמ"א

ודווקא אם רוצים להעבירו במצות לא תעשה אבל אם גזרו גזירה שלא לקיים מצות עשה לא צריך לקיימו. אם השעה צריכה לכך ורוצה להיהרג ולקיימו, הרשות בידו.

Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah Chapter 157

Translation of the Holy Rema (Rabbi Moshe Isserles)

Specifically in the case where they [the non-Jews] want to cause him to sin through a **מצוה לא תעשה** but if they [the non-Jews] decreed that one could not fulfill a **מצוה עשה** one does not have to fulfill the **מצוה** and be killed. However, if the times demand it and he wants to fulfill [the **מצוה עשה**] and be killed he is permitted.

TEXT
STUDY

One day I was lying down on my bunk in the children's block at Auschwitz, and I saw one of the officials of the block coming with a thick rubber truncheon to beat someone. I jumped off my bunk to see whom he was going to beat. Beatings were given for every "sin," and the number of blows was according to the severity of the crime. This was the first time the rubber truncheon was used. Generally they would use a stick, which would often break in the middle of the beating...

I wanted to see how the rubber truncheon worked; perhaps some day I would meet up with it myself. The official approached one of the bunks. The boy who was there already knew what was in store for him...

He bent over and the beating began. The rest of us watched and counted. The boy neither cried nor screamed, he did not even sigh. We wondered, we did not understand what this meant. The count passed twenty-five — this was the usual maximum number of blows. When the count reached forty, he began to beat the boy on the head and feet. The boy neither sobbed nor cried out — a fourteen-year-old boy — and he didn't cry.

The official finished fifty blows and left wrathfully. I remember a tremendous red welt on the boy's forehead made by the rubber truncheon. We asked him what he had done to incur the beating. He replied, "It was worth it. I brought some siddurim to some of my friends so they could pray. It was worth it!" He said not another word. He got up, returned to his bunk and sat down...

— Rabbi Irving J. Rosenbaum, *The Holocaust and Halakhah*

The Garden

A little garden,
Fragrant and full of roses.
The path is narrow and a little boy walks
along it.

A little boy, a sweet boy,
like the growing blossom.
When the blossom comes to bloom
The little boy will be no more.

– Franta Bass
(written by a child in Terezin)



“Then They Came For Me, And There Was No One Left”

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me.

– Reverend Martin Niemöller, leader of the Confessional Church,
an anti-Nazi group that condemned the regime’s racial policies
and anti-Christian teachings.

“Suddenly, all those places where Jews had lived for hundreds of years, for over a thousand years, had vanished.

“And I thought that in years to come, long after the slaughter, Jews might want to hear about the places which had disappeared, about the life that once was and no longer is.”

— *Roman Vishniac*

Between 1934 and 1939, the noted Jewish photographer Vishniac documented the life of the Jews of Eastern Europe in thousands of photographs.



Think Israel. Think Ramah.

Ramah Israel Institute (RII)

The Ramah Israel Institute custom-designs and runs short-term Israel travel programs for synagogues (adult or family trips), Jewish organizations, and schools, in partnership with local rabbis, educators, and community leaders. Combining informal education and a high level of customer service, our trips are created *b'ruach* Ramah. The group's licensed guide is first and foremost an educator, actively involving the participants in a process of self-discovery and growth. Every itinerary is a unique blend of touring and learning experiences – with pace, style of presentation, and level of accommodations meeting the group's specific needs and requests. RII also runs Jewish-themed trips for adults to destinations outside of Israel, including Poland, Morocco, Prague, Spain, and Portugal.

RII Adult and Family Trips

- **Poland Journey:** Join us for an extraordinary journey where we trace the Jewish history of European Jewry and seek to understand the richness of Jewish life that existed in Poland over 70 years ago. The journey takes you to the Jewish communities of Warsaw, Lublin, Krakow, and more! Together, we will experience first-hand the remnants and, in some cases, the revival of the Jewish communities in Poland.
- **Morocco Experience:** Join us on a special trip through the history, culture, and landscapes of the Kingdom of Morocco. Explore Morocco's mysterious cities and historic Jewish communities. Observe the colorful markets and decorative artwork; learn about the folklore and history, both ancient and modern; and marvel at the spectacular scenery of this diverse land. Wake up before dawn and travel by jeep and then by camel to witness the sunrise over the endless rolling sand dunes of the Sahara Desert. Learn about the recent Israel-Morocco Peace Treaty.
- **Bnei Mitzvah Family Israel Adventure:** Celebrate this milestone with a fun and spiritually enriching family trip in the *ruach* (spirit) of Ramah. The trip is designed for families, including grandparents, with children celebrating their Bar or Bat Mitzvah in Israel, ages 11-13, from across North America. This exciting trip focuses on family and connecting to circles of life: me, my family, my *kehila* (community), and my Judaism.

Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim (TRY) / USY High

TRY is a semester-long study program for 10th, 11th, and 12th graders at the Ramah Jerusalem High School, a fully accredited international secondary school. During this semester abroad, students make Israel their classroom and Jerusalem their home. They meet their curricular requirements from their home high schools, immerse themselves in Israeli culture, study Hebrew in an *ulpan*-style class, engage with the *siddur* in meaningful *tefillah*, all while forming lifelong friendships with teens from across North America. During our Israel Core Course, students walk in the footsteps of their ancestors and connect with 4,000 years of Jewish history in the places it happened. The course includes a powerful 6-day journey to Poland. TRY is based in the Goldstein Youth Village in Jerusalem and is accredited by the Middle States Association Schools and Colleges. (TRY offers two-month and four-month options.)

More programs continued on other side.

Summer Programs in Israel

Ramah Jerusalem Day Camp

The Ramah Jerusalem Day Camp combines Israel, Jewish tradition, and summer fun! Based at the Goldstein Youth Village, the camp is an outstanding Israel summer experience for English-speaking children from abroad and local Israeli children entering grades K-6. When on campus, campers participate in a rich assortment of activities: sports, arts and crafts, nature, music, drama, and swimming. Many of these are related to special themes which the campers explore each week. Age-appropriate informal educational activities are integrated into the camp program as a whole and are led by our experienced staff. Campers also go on outings in and around Jerusalem. With a low staff-to-camper ratio, we proudly provide campers individualized attention and work with them in small groups.

Ramah Israel Seminar

Ramah Israel Seminar is a 6-week life-changing summer travel program for Ramah overnight camp "graduates" entering 12th grade. Seminar is an intensive adventure that connects participants to the land, history, people, and culture of Israel. It's an opportunity to explore the dream and the reality of Israel through in-depth study and discussions and hands-on experiences, and also to develop leadership skills through new and empowering challenges.

Optional Trips and Tracks Include:

- **Ramah Poland Journey:** open to participants from all of the Seminar tracks, the Poland Journey is an optional 10-day trip prior to Ramah Israel Seminar to study pre-war and Holocaust history, and to connect with contemporary Jewish life in Poland.
- **Ramah Israel Classic:** a 6-week travel program in Israel, open to all rising 12th graders from the Ramah overnight camps in North America. Participants will explore the many facets of Israel while hiking and touring the country.

Camp Ramah Israel

Our chanichim/ot will experience a 10 day-long enriching and exciting overnight summer camp experience for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade graduates. Camp Ramah Israel serves Israeli families from all streams and backgrounds of Israeli society. This Hebrew-speaking camp promotes values of Zionism, pluralistic Judaism and builds a *Kehila* that is based on inclusive interpersonal values – בין אדם לחברו. The campers connect with new friends, have fun and get to know children with different and similar lifestyles, through spirited, exciting, experiential, and educational programs run by professional staff.

North America

Ramah Israel
National Ramah Commission, Inc.
3080 Broadway
New York, NY
212.678.8883

Israel

Ramah Israel
Israel Goldstein Youth Village
8a Katznelson Street
P.O. Box 31709
Jerusalem 9131602
972.2.679.0243

www.ramah.org.il • info@ramah.co.il

Ramah Israel is a division of the National Ramah Commission, Inc. which operates under the educational and religious supervision of The Jewish Theological Seminary.