

Second Place (Tie)

Division I – Writing

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Mordecai Anielewicz's Last Diary Entry

Word Count 521

Mordecai Anielewicz's Last Diary Entry

It is May 8, 1943. I am huddled in the back of one of our Warsaw bunkers as I hear the unwavering force of the Nazis pressuring us. I am writing this today to commemorate what we have been fighting for, and our battle must never be forgotten. The ZOB was what we called our Jewish resistance group, and the process to even form it was a great effort on everyone's part. There were around 700 of us when we started our resistance group inside the camp. We started it because we saw what was happening to people inside Warsaw. They were being sent to camps where most of them probably met their demise, and what did we have to lose? Conditions inside the camp were horrid anyway. Warsaw was riddled with disease and illness, and the cramped spaces made it a living nightmare.

Before we could even start resisting, we all had to plan. It started by creating some of our own homemade weapons. We also were able to obtain weapons from the Polish Home Army through smuggling. After we had our weapons, everything else had to be sorted out to help give us a fighting chance. This planning stage included getting our weapons, making many of these underground bunkers, and planning our defense. I was named their chairman, and we decided that every time we would attack the dirty Germans, we would then retreat back to one of our bunkers inside the camp.

After that, the planning stage was behind us. I still remember when our plan went into motion and we attacked our opposition for the first time. It was April 19, and the Germans were so stunned by our attack that they actually retreated! We fought them off with our weapons, and this small victory left a wave of relief and ecstasy among us. We finally felt like we made our families, the elders, the women, and the poor children deported to death camps proud.

Sadly, these victories did not last. Little by little the Germans recovered. As they kept invading our ghetto, taking back more and more of their camp, they would demolish or burn everything in their path. We all watched as our bunkers formed through hard work and grit were destroyed. I could see how their weapons and numbers were compared to ours, and it was not looking good. However, we had to try to persevere, because what did we have to lose? As more of Warsaw was burned or destroyed, our spirits were simultaneously depleting.

Now, it has been around one month since our first attack. For what we had, and the circumstances we are in, I know we put up a good fight. I just wish we could have done more. I know now that we are most likely going to get caught, and be sent to a death camp just like the others before us. However, I still have a sliver of hope that at least one member

of the ZOB may survive this terrible war, and if not, maybe this entry will survive to tell the world what we did.

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