

A Dream That Never Came True

In a troubled dream, revolvers and rifles gleam before my eyes. I hear the labour camp trumpet at daybreak. The time of reckoning has finally come. I stand together with everyone and command the trumpet to give its signal without stopping: Long! Long! Until all, to the last man, emerge from their poor nests, including the elderly people from the cellars and the children from the stables. I call to the march to Treblinka! Parents to children, children to parents, brothers to sisters, sisters to brothers. All of us wish to [go] there to discover the horrifying truth. To see their dead bodies with our own eyes. We wish to see if such gruesome deeds are indeed possible in the world. We are going to the tomb of the six million.

The ghetto gate is torn down! Posts are flung away and barbed wire is cut! We are no longer slaves! We march down long roads, through fields, woods, mountains, valleys and rivers, until we are standing by fences and tall walls. The gates are pulled down. The masses knock down the obstacles and we find ourselves on the spacious grounds of the Treblinka extermination factory. But there is no one here, not a single person - no Germans, no Ukrainians and also no Jews. The warehouses are empty and deserted.

All of us - five thousand people - stand throughout the large fields and dig for the graves. I start to dig. At first, I scrape away the sand easily. Once I deepen the pit and the soil becomes hard, I use the pick. I do this with a mechanical force and am deaf and blind to my surroundings, immersed in my work. I look into the ground with deep, inquisitive glances and, when the spade goes down deeper into the soft ground under my feet, the idea comes to me that the whole legend is a base lie invented by evil people.

But all of a sudden, unbelievably, it occurs to me that, here, I will soon be able to see my parents, my brother, my close ones and the Jewish people of Europe. I excavate further, and suddenly the blade of the spade emits a hollow screech, which makes my heart tremble, as if something inside had exploded. The clay under the sand becomes like a stripe of black and rich dust. I start taking the earth out slowly and carefully. I run the spade across the length and feel bones. I recognise fingers, feet, and an entire body. I continue scraping away the soil more carefully and perceive arms to the length of each body. Standing thus, bowed between the walls of earth over the dead bodies, I scrape away the soil with my hands to the right and to the left, and the last curtain falls away. In the soil, my hands feel hacked brains, mouths opened by spasms. Hundreds of times, I caress their limbs and their faces. With thousands of words filled with feeling, intermingled with tears, I take in every beaten limb and every maimed [body] part.

I immerse myself in the agony of my parents before their death. With the subtlest words, with the sound of my voice filled with emotion, I speak to them, even if they are not to be recognised. All of them are my parents! All of them are my brothers! I rise and see my thousands of living people deep in the pits. They stand before the uncovered earth, before the millions of naked

bodies. Everyone breaks out in a mournful wail, which carries on incessantly. One does not see the other next to him. Each individual is absorbed with what he sees before him.

My dream continues.

We suddenly hear high, long and wild trumpet tones, which are immediately answered by other trumpet tones, and then even more trumpets respond from all sides. I perceive great masses of people arriving here from the east, west, north and south. Horns blow ever stronger, and our eyes turn to all directions. They are coming ever nearer, until they all are standing here in the large fields of Treblinka.

The first ones are Jews from all countries in the world, but other nations soon march in - English and French, Serbians and Russians, Dutch and Norwegians, Americans and Turks. And then people arrive from very, very far away - Japanese and Chinese, Indians and Arabs, Abyssinians [viz. Ethiopians] and Africans; people from the most distant deserts, white, black and yellow-coloured. Everyone is gathered here by the huge open graves of the millions of innocent Jews, who were murdered in the most horrific manner.

I dream on.

I climb a tall hill and read out the testament, which the tortured left to the Jewish People and all of humanity - the testament which we took down from the beat struck by the steel wheels and railway tracks with which they had been brought here.

Tell your nations what you have seen here in Treblinka. Adopt a resolution here, on this soil, swear by the open graves, use Nature itself as your witness, that you, the mankind of the entire globe, will more than redouble the revenge upon that nation, which was capable of perpetrating such a crime; that you will spare them no evil, as they have not spared us. Tear them with your teeth and claws and do everything for their destruction, as they did to us. Once the guilty are punished, the worst of the savages, a new, peaceful life will begin.

Let this day be a sorrowful day of remembrance and, every year, let this day be a reminder of the march to Treblinka. This memorial anniversary will deepen our thoughts on the suffering of nations. When we bow our heads before the millions of martyrs, all the victims, [who have] hitherto [fallen], shine forth. The millions of noble martyrs from our Jewish nation must bring, for general humanity, the ending to all the pogroms and murders which the stronger wreak upon the weaker.

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I felt a hand, a heavy hand, which woke me with the shout, *"Get up! It's already late for rollcall!"* Drenched in sweat, I came to, opened my half-asleep eyes and saw the tragic reality of the ghetto.