

# **The Fighting Pioneer**

## *He-Haluz ha-Lohem*

# **The Heroic Story of the Jewish Resistance in Krakow During the WWII**

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# What was the Fighting Pioneer? Who were the Pioneer Fighters?

- The Fighting Pioneers were founded in 1942 in Krakow, the Jewish Youth Organization
- This underground resistance was consisted of youth movements, like:
  - Akiva - a pioneer-oriented but Jewishly traditi group affiliated with the General Zionist Party
  - Hashomer Hatzair – red flag oriented
  - Zionist Youth Union; and more...
- The group had an underground newsletter under the same name: The Fighting Pioneer
- The Editor-in-Chief was **Shimon Drenger**, my uncle.
- The other leaders of the resistance were Dolek Libeskind and Gusta Davidson Drenger, Shimon's wife



# Gusta Davidson Drenger

- She was a member of the Akiva youth movement
- She escaped twice from German jail
- During her prison time she wrote the “*Justina’s Diary*” on a toilet paper. It was smuggled and survived
- The Diary displays the history of the resistance and shows, both her power of expression and her penetrating observation of people and situations.

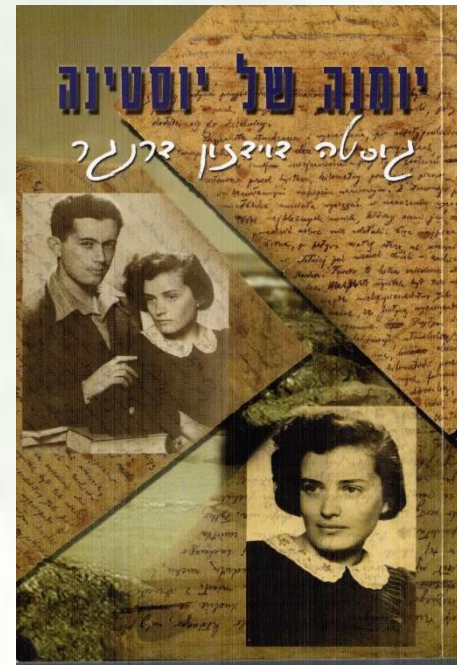
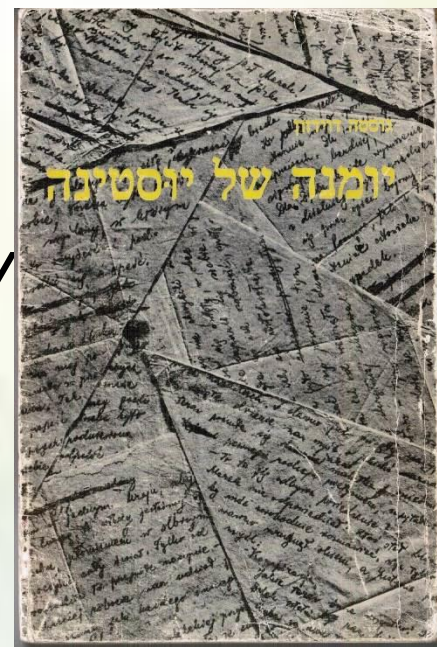


# Justina's Diary

“Of the walls of the prison, which certainly we will not leave alive, we are sending you this greetings, the last blessing of young fighters

While we die in battle for this lofty and sacred goal to us, it is our wish - that our memory will be kept and will be remembered in the future.

If only few memories of those listed on these scattered pages, will describe you a true picture of the most intense revolt of our lives”



- Gusta survived the prison, escaped and reunited with her husband Shimon Drenger
- They vowed that the next time one of them will be caught, they will tell the whereabouts of their beloved and will die together
- They were caught on the same day, although the arrest was carried out regardless the informing of their mutual location and both were executed.



# The Fighting Pioneer

- A fighting underground literature, is an essential element of warfare as a sword and pistol; and such was the weekly "The fighting Pioneer".
- The journal indicated the fallen warriors and the battles, political analysis, philosophical ideas and practical tips for organizing and survival, such as the construction of bunkers in the woods, and attainment of equipment and food.
- Despite the difficulties, shortage and risk, every week it was published with typewriter in 250 copies, including the requests to forward the newsletter to more readers
- 11 issues survived and are kept in museum in Israel



# Termination of the Jewish Community in Krakow

On the eve of WWII the Jewish community in Krakow was consistent of 60,000 inhabitants



# MI ABUELA Y YO

Mi Historia, La Historia de Israel

Prepared by my daughter Adi Drenger for the school pupils in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where she served as an Education Liaison

1921-2011

- After the first few month of fighting – 80,000
- 18.5.1940 – the Jews were offered to leave with their belongings – 30,000 stayed
- 3.3.1942 – the Jewish Ghetto was erected – 20,000

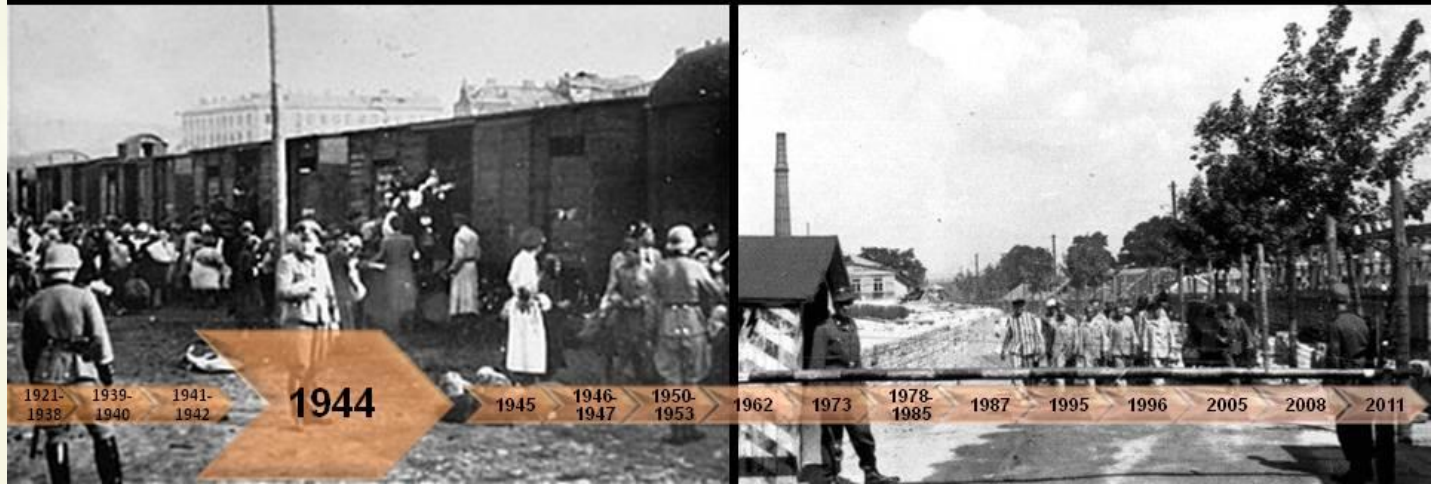


- June – October 1942 – in 2 “Akzia” (Transportations) 11,000 were killed or sent to the Gas Chambers



The scene is taken from the movie – The Schindler's List by Steven Spielberg

- 13-14.3.1943 – the Ghetto Termination
  - 1000 sent to Auschwitz
  - 2000 were shot
  - 8000 were sent to Plaszow Concentration Camp



# The Fighting Pioneer – War Activities

- With no chance for armed struggle within the restricted area of the ghetto, it was decided to take the battle to the town and forests
- Provocators who tried to inform on Partizans were shot.
- Organized warfare units carried out acts of sabotage in the labor camps. Giving help hiding the fleeing Jews



- When the akzion came to the ghetto, a group of fighters broke the blockade
- Unfortunately, only few Jews from the ghetto used the loophole to escape. Most were frozen by a terrible fear and missed the last chance to stay alive, or at least a chance for respectable death



# The Attack on the Cyganeria SS Club

- Jewish underground attacked on Dec. 22, 1942 the Cyganeria coffee shop and officers club, killing 13 SS officers and wounding many
- The action made a tremendous impression. For the first time after three years of Nazi occupation, someone dared to kill Germans in the General Government zone
- A rumor spread which gave credit to Russian paratroopers. The action was so bold, that no one could conceive that Jews are capable of such heroism



# "The moral and existential dilemma of armed resistance in the ghetto: The realist-idealist philosophy of Simon Dranger" - By Eliezer Schwed

- Armed resistance is the only way that matches their humane values, and it is the only way they can protect their image as human beings and as Jews versus the absolute evil of the Nazis
- What is the concept of "**absolute evil**"? This is the evil that forces them to cooperate with their own destruction, evil that is not satisfied with inflicting extreme physical and mental, but causes victims to feel sub-human and raping them to adopt values of their bitter enemy

- Shimon Dranger expressed the most prominent and daring thought, revealing his depth and breadth of expression:
- His sober and realistic analysis about the situation of the Jews under the Nazi regime who behaved in such a barbaric manner, led them to the belief that they must fight for themselves, slow down even slightly the condemned to death.
- They had the fervent belief that Nazism will be overthrown and eventually the Jewish people will get salvation in his own country, Israel

- In his article on 8/13/1943 Halutz warrior, exactly 72 years ago, in an article called "the perspective of the future", Shimon wrote:
- “When the existence of the single depends on mere chance, and the existence of the general public has reached its lowest, it is appropriate to adopt a broad view: personally we are all lost, but we must demonstrate to ourselves the historical significance, and to say courageously, that death is not the end.
- The history of the Jews, will continue to move in its path. Individuals have no hope of life, but there is still hope for our people. Even if we can not be saved, we can give a national significance for their struggle, this is a kind of immortality of the soul.

- He added: "We did not know days of so complete destruction and never we ran into such a dead end, that exterminate away the Jews of Europe, who were until now the most healthy part of the Jewish nation".
- "How painful to see the tens of thousands of women, children, the elderly, and even men in their full strength, and led like sheeps to the slaughter - and do not respond.
- They are silent, the World is silent, even we are silent.
- Enough, do not be silent any longer! We will not go as slaughtered cattle, We shall not submit our throats to the slaughterer, we escape from deportation, defend ourselves and it will be an active resistance ...

- We want to survive to be a generation of avengers, therefore, if we can survive, we will survive with weapons in our hands! history calls on us to rise to a new way. we'll go ... “
- Shimon Dranger adds: “The truth about our solitude was confirmed, just us we can trust. We pay the price of being deceived in Europe, scattered our strength in foreign countries, rather than building our independence.
- The Jewish state is the guarantee of the resurrection of our people, and it the promise that the Jews would return to be independent. Settling in Israel is the only hope. It guarantees that the Jews could defend themselves in their own country.
- Even the face of inevitable death, our hearts are with the people living in the Land of Israel. all our act paves the people through to their freedom, promotes building an independent homeland.

- We want to die in a way that in the future, the disgrace shame of slavery will not weigh heavily on our Jewish people in Israel
- **“We will not go like lambs to the slaughter !!”**
- But Simon Drenger describes the future of its implication to the present: "It's easier to die knowing where the land of Israel is still the beating pulse of the Jewish life, and when we are not alive, they will remind with excitement our dids to the future generations“
- "Justina's Diary" and 11 issues of “Fighting Pioneer” are thrilling certificates of the magnitude of courage of the Jewish Fighting Pioneer Youth who stood in front of his German murderers in Krakow, struggled for life and dignity of the Jewish people.



# CAMPO DE EXTERMINIO BERGEN BELZEN



1921-1938 1939-1940 1941-1942 1944 **1945** 1946-1947 1950-1953 1962 1973 1978-1985 1987 1995 1996 2005 2008 2011



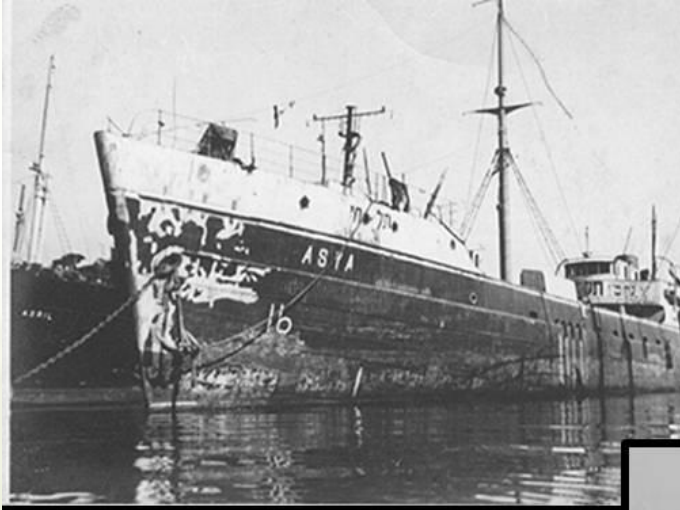
# My Parents Mira & Arie Drenger – Holocaust Survivors In Rehabilitation Camp in Hanover

1946 1950-1953 1962 1973 1978-1985 1987 1995



1921-1938 1939-1940 1941-1942 1944 1945 1946 1950-1953 1962 1973 1978-1985 1987 1995 1996 2005 2008 2011

# Immigration to Palestine



1962 1973 1978-1985 1987 1995 1996 2005 2008 2011

1921-1938 1939-1940 1941-1942 1944 1945

1946

1950-1953 1962 1973 1978-1985 1987 1995 1996 2005 2008 2011

# In Memory







# In Memory





The Cafe Cyganeria on Szpitalna Street in Krakow. This was a meeting place for Wehrmacht and Gestapo officers, and was attacked by members of Krakow's Jewish underground on December 22, 1942. Eleven Germans were killed and 13 wounded in this action

Members of the Jewish underground in the Krakow ghetto, beside underground headquarters. Photographed in 1940. These were members of the Akiva movement. In the photo: Aharon - Dolek Liebeskind (on the right), Shimshon Draenger (second from the left), and Gusta Dawidson - Draenger (on the left).



# Gusta Davidson-Drenger (Justina) – The diary which survived the prison

## Type of resistance: Underground activity



Dolek Liebeskind and Shimshon Draenger, among the leaders of the Akiva movement and the Jewish underground in the Kraków ghetto



Minka Liebeskind and Gusta Davidson - Draenger, members of the Akiva movement and the Jewish underground in the Krakow ghetto

More





*Menachem Begin, the Irgun's leader*



The naval brigade helps new Jewish immigrants reach the shore of Palestine

- But Begin said the "legend of terror" was worth half a dozen battalions, because Arabs were seized with panic when they heard *the Irgun* was coming.
- *The Irgun* has been blowing up too many British installations.
- The Zionists fighters Organization



British police center  
jerusalem