

Article published Apr 15, 2007

EDITORIAL

Horror of Holocaust can't fade into history

Today is Holocaust Remembrance Day, the 27th of Nissan on the Hebrew calendar. This week, April 15-22, has been designated Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust by the United States Holocaust Memorial Council and proclaimed locally by the Battle Creek City Commission.

Why these dates? They fall within the period 64 years ago when Jewish inhabitants of the Warsaw ghetto rose up in arms against German troops and police. From April 19, 1943, until May 16, 1943, hundreds of fighters, greatly outnumbered, valiantly resisted efforts to deport them to Nazi death camps. While the resistance eventually was crushed, it is a testimony to the courage of those willing to stand up to the forces of evil.

So it is fitting that in 1951 the Israeli parliament declared this Day of Remembrance to recall the suffering and deaths of six million Jews in the Holocaust. As the survivors of that shameful period in human history age and their numbers dwindle, it becomes ever more important that the world not forget what happened.

It was a time when fear and hatred gripped much of Europe, and the fate of the free world was very much in doubt. More than a half-century later, it is easy to look back in the triumph of good over evil, but we must always remember the lessons of the past and how the Third Reich was allowed to become a powerful force that threatened much of the globe.

On Monday, Battle Creek area residents will have an opportunity to hear a first-hand account of the horrors of World War II from someone who survived the Holocaust.

Gerda Weissman Klein will speak to hundreds of area school children during the day, and then will present a free, public address at 7 p.m. Monday at W.K. Kellogg Auditorium. She was a child in Poland when the Nazis invaded, and she endured separation from her family (all of whom died), labor camps, factories and a death march before finally being freed by the Allied troops.

Klein has devoted much of her life to making the world aware of what she and millions of others endured during the Holocaust, and of spreading a message of tolerance and hope for mankind.

At age 82 and despite her horrific experiences, she continues to share her belief in freedom and the triumph of the human spirit. Hers is a story we all should hear - and never forget.