

## Fifth Child

Contributed by [Congress of Secular Jewish Organization](#)

Source: The Jewish Secular Community Passover Hagada

On this night, we also remember a fifth child. This is the child of the Holocaust who did not survive to ask, "Why was the night of Passover, 1943, different from all other Passover nights?" And so, we ask for that child.

Pesakh 1943 is a historic date in modern Jewish history. At that time began the revolt against the Nazis who had come into the Ghetto of Warsaw to complete the deportation of the remaining Jews. Few conflicts in history can compare with the impossibly unequal battle of the Warsaw Ghetto. On one side was the tremendous power of the German Army and the Gestapo. On the other was the remnant of Warsaw's starving Jews - 40,000 civilians led by the Jewish Fighting Organization, several hundred poorly armed young men and women. Confined in a small area within the Ghetto, they were unable to maneuver beyond a few city blocks.

Nevertheless, the Jews fought back for 42 days. A shot on Nalevki Street at dawn of April 20, 1943, the first day of Pesakh, was the signal for the revolt. The fighting units, concealed in nearby bunkers, attics and cellars, began firing at Nazi patrols. The Germans retreated. On that day Mordecai Anielewicz, the Commander of the Jewish Fighting Organization, wrote: "The dream of my life has come true. I have had the good fortune to witness Jewish defense in the Ghetto in all its greatness and glory."

The Jewish fighters knew in their hearts that it was an impossible struggle, that the odds were too great. But they hoped against hope and kept on fighting. As the days passed, the situation grew more and more desperate. One by one the defense positions were wiped out. On May 15th the leadership of the Jewish resistance perished in the bunker at 18 Mila Street. No one surrendered.

But for weeks thereafter small groups battled the Nazis from behind rubble and wreckage. And although the Germans were certain that not one Jew would escape from the Ghetto, several hundred did. They succeeded in making their way through the underground sewers and eventually joined Partisan bands in the woods and forests. Similar acts of resistance took place in Minsk, Vilna, Bialystock, and in cities and towns in Poland. Many of the escaped Partisans later testified at the war trials of the Nazi leaders.

The uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto will be a shining light in our history as a fight that was waged for the honor and dignity of our people. We were slaves in Egypt...and slaves in the death camps of fascism. We have much to remember.