

Good evening,

The honor that you bestow on me tonight belongs to the Warsaw ghetto fighters and to all others who fought the Nazis, and to their descendants and supporters.

Learning about the Warsaw ghetto uprising in 1946 was a momentous event in my life.

As part of my responsibilities as Chief Interpreter and interrogator for the American prosecution at the Nuremberg trials, my team and I were searching for witnesses who had seen one or more of the Nuremberg defendants in a concentration camp or at the scene where Jews and others were murdered. This search was part of our effort to prove the defendants' knowledge of the atrocities, which all of them denied.

One witness we interrogated was SS General Juergen Stroop, the commander of the unit responsible for eliminating the Warsaw Ghetto. We knew that he had compiled and published a leather bound volume entitled "The Warsaw Ghetto is no more!"

In his account general Stroop mourned the death of heavily armed SS troops who were responsible for killing over a thousand ghetto fighters and for sending over 50,000 others to Treblinka to be exterminated. He had described how the Jews of the Warsaw ghetto fought his tanks and flame-throwers with handguns and Molotov cocktails. It took over five weeks to burn the buildings and gas the sewers from where the Jewish resistance fought. Only a handful escaped.

General Stroop was not the first or the only Holocaust perpetrator with whom I talked. I had a conversation with all the defendants and with several extermination camp Komandants. All of them were SS thugs robots with no conscience, who carried out orders from their criminal superiors with alacrity.

But Stroop's words affected me deeply. What I knew about the Holocaust filled me with grief, sorrow and anger at the perpetrators. Stroop's story, of course aroused the same feelings of sorrow for the victims and rage for the perpetrators. But now an enormous sense of pride overwhelmed me when I heard this miserable murderer who was soon to be hanged in Warsaw. Pride in the ghetto fighters of Warsaw who chose to resist and fight the Nazis.

Justice came too late for the victims but not for the perpetrators. After the war, world leaders decided to establish a tribunal where Nazi crimes would be tried and sentenced under the rule of law: The Nuremberg Trials.

Now we need to teach our children and grandchildren about the Holocaust and make sure that they learn the dangers of prejudice, racism and anti-Semitism. Germany's children before the war were not taught these values and these dangers. We must make sure that all children learn the value of freedom and tolerance.

Elie Wiesel said: "The fathers and grandfathers are guilty but the children are not!" And

Justice Jackson, the American chief prosecutor at Nuremberg said: "guilt can neither be transferred nor inherited." The children of today should live in a different world than that of the Nazis. All children, no matter where they live and no matter what their heritage is deserve to grow up in a world without hatred, knowing that they will not be singled out for their ethnicity, religion or race.

The Ghetto Fighters' Museum is an inspired monument to the valiant ghetto fighters and all others who fought and resisted the Nazis. With courage and unmatched vision the ghetto fighters, their descendants, supporters and admirers are now reaching out to all who want to share a common brotherly humanity that excludes only those who exclude themselves by practicing genocide, hatred and enmity.

It is with a feeling of great pride and humility that I stand before you as an honoree tonight, but the real honorees are the resistance fighters. May the almighty bless their work!

I bow my head in reverence for them.