WARSAW GHETTO
PROGRAM

ACTIVITIES MANUAL
No. 1
FOR JFFO LODGES

Issued By:
Activities Dept., National School and Educational Committee
Jewish Peoples Fraternal Order of the International Workers Order, IWO
60 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N. Y.
April, 1946.
ATTENTION: EDUCATIONAL DIRECTORS OF ALL LODGES

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

The National Activities Department of the JFFO has recently been organized and has begun to prepare plans and materials for lodge programs. It was decided to institute a policy of providing educational directors of all lodges with guidance material for at least one program every month around a specific subject.

It is our intention to provide you with ideas, and wherever possible, materials to help you conduct an interesting and valuable meeting at least once a month. It is not our objective to provide a straitjacket for the conduct of meetings or the choice of subject matter. It is your job to adapt those plans which are best fitted to your own needs. Choose what you need, or adapt anything we send you to the kind of program you desire.

The subjects for the following few months are:

APRIL - PASSOVER AND THE WARSAW Ghetto
MAY - LABOR SOLIDARITY IN PRESENT WORLD CRISIS
       (For May Day, or as follow-up)
JUNE - SHOLEM ALEICHEM ANNIVERSARY

Enclosed is program material for the April program. It consists of a "make-believe" radio presentation adapted for lodge meetings and a short reading (or speech) called "Passover - Warsaw, 1943". An evening's program may look this way:

1. Opening by Chairman
2. Reading of "Passover - Warsaw, 1943".
3. Short talk on the JFFO booklet "Never to Forget"
4. Presentation of mock "radio play".
5. Sale of "Never to Forget"
6. Passover refreshments and entertainment (if available).

The booklet NEVER TO FORGET is an exceptional and beautiful job. It will sell for 25 cents. It was written by Howard Fast and the drawings are by William Gropper. Members should be encouraged to purchase more than one copy for distribution and gifts to friends. Quantity orders by lodges will receive a discount. Order copies from your district office or from the national office, if you have no district committee.

In order to establish direct contact with your Educational (or Cultural) Director, please fill out enclosed card and mail it to us.

Fraternally,

Sam Pezner
National Activities Director
The Passover week of 1943 was the beginning of the revolt of the Warsaw Jews against their Nazi oppressors. This event will be recorded in Jewish history as one of the most heroic moments of its life. The whole of Warsaw Jewry arose, men, women and children — and threw themselves into the unequal combat with the foe. With few arms, but with the spirit of the Maccabees and the courage of Bar Kochba, these people, tortured, emaciated and terrorized in the Ghetto, stood up as one against the murderous, well-armed Nazi foe.

Where did they come from, these warriors? From everywhere. All classes of the people, all views and tendencies were represented. Here are some of the names of the martyrs:

a) Attenberg, Esther — Young Zionist Organization
b) Berman, Frankel — Communist
c) Goldstein, Isaac — Bund
d) Dembinsko, Dora — Communist
e) Wichter, Isaac — Left Poale-Zion
f) Seifman, Aaron — Right Poale-Zion
g) Bodosh, Isaac — Watchman

Such is the list of these fallen martyrs. The whole list is similar.

They kept up the struggle for 42 days. Listen to the story of one who participated in the revolt. On the first night of Passover, April 19th, 1943, German soldiers entered the Ghetto in six tanks and began to fence off the streets to deport the Jews. The Ghetto-fighters opened fire on the tanks and killed the occupants... That was the signal for the uprising. Someone shouted: "The Jews will fight to the last drop of blood".

The Jews had organized themselves. They dug trenches; they turned the Ghetto into a fortress. Some of the fighters seized German uniforms which Jewish workmen were made to tailor, so that some of them wore German uniforms. In the morning they raised the flags of revolt... The German police which then entered the Ghetto, never left it alive... About noon on the first day of Passover, the Ghetto was turned into a battlefield. It was fenced off. The Germans entered fully-armed. The battle lasted until late in the evening. Snipers aimed at the Nazis from every house. The Nazis retreated and abandoned wrecked tanks and machine-guns. Many Germans were made prisoners.

The Nazis learnt they had an organized revolt on their hands and prepared to crush it. The Jewish fighters left the Ghetto at night, fell upon the storehouses of the Gestapo and carried off their arms and brought them back to the Ghetto in German trucks... On the third night of Passover, 6000 Jewish workmen joined the revolt. These were chiefly young people who were located in a separate, so-called "Little Ghetto".

On the seventh night, came a petition from the prisoners in the Paviak jail: "Save us and we will fight with you"... On the eighth night, 500 Ghetto fighters in German uniforms, came to the Paviak, dressed the prisoners in German uniforms and brought them to the Ghetto.
One day later, hell broke loose. The Germans attacked with tanks and cannon. The special "suicide" division with hand-grenades, wrecked the German tanks, perishing in the fire. The following night, the Germans attacked the Ghetto from the air, flooding it with incendiary bombs and burying hundreds of women, men and children in the buildings. The Ghetto was in the midst of a sea of flames. Only 30,000 men remained on the morrow, but the battle continued the whole day. The Germans had to do battle in each house and even in every room.

The leaders of the revolt felt that the unavoidable end was approaching. They proposed to the Polish Underground that the Christian district of Warsaw also proclaim an uprising. The reply that they received was that it was premature. The fight now took on an aspect of despair and of vengeance. The fighters would tear out of the Ghetto and kill off groups of Germans on the roads, or surrender and then destroy the German guards and themselves with hand-grenades.

On the 42nd day only one central building of four stories remained, flying the blue and white flag. The battle for possession of this house lasted eight hours. When all the defenders had been killed, one youth who had watched over the flag, wrapped himself in it, and threw himself down from the fourth story.

That is how the heroes of Warsaw died. We must remember these men, women and children who raised high the banner of their people, who in 42 days wrote a glorious page in the heroic history of their martyred people. Let us honor their heroism and remember that only when we have completely eradicated fascism and anti-Semitism from the earth will we erect the proper monument for them.
LET NO TEARS BE SHED

This is a "make-believe" radio play adapted from a radio sketch written by Henry Goodman. It has been altered to make it possible for four people to present this sketch as if they were broadcasting over a studio microphone. The sketch is meant for presentation at lodge meetings, especially when the lodge is carrying out a program of commemoration for the battle of the Warsaw Ghetto during the month of April. It is a simple matter to rig up a real or bluff microphone in the meeting hall. We have purposely limited this sketch to four people, and because the original had a large cast, it is necessary for the cast to read the lines of several characters. In the script we have indicated the name of the person who is being enacted.

It is necessary only for the actors to suggest the new character whose lines they are reading. A slight change in voice and tempo may be enough.

Actors may read from the scripts, since that is the practice in radio presentations. However, a few rehearsals should be held to assure smooth reading of the lines and proper teamwork.

Remember that this is not written as a play so it is not necessary to try to act out the parts. The important thing is to get a reading of the lines which is intelligent, clear and possesses the proper emotional content. Both the actors and audience are called upon to use their imaginations.

Introduction by the Chairman of the Meeting

Tonight we celebrate Passover. Passover is a time for celebration because it commemorates the victorious struggle of the Jewish people against oppression and tyranny.

Passover also marks the anniversary of the most heroic struggle of the Jews against the enemies of mankind ever recorded in history: the Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto. To give substance to our commemoration, to recreate only partially the essence of the heroism, fighting spirit, and sacrifice of the Jews of Warsaw we are tonight presenting a "make-believe" radio program. Four of our members will give this program. The radio sketch they will present originally employed a very large cast. Naturally, for our purposes it was not possible for us to have a large cast. Therefore, we ask that you allow your imaginations to enrich what is performed here. We thought that the feelings and actions delineated by the lines in this sketch are sufficient grounds for presentation, despite the physical and technical handicaps our players have to face.

It gives me great pleasure to present (Give names of the performers) in LET NO TEARS BE SHED.
LET NO TEARS BE SHED
By Henry Goodman

NARRATOR: Flash! March 1943. Jews of Warsaw revolt against Nazis! Flash! Jews break Nazi prisons to join brothers in Warsaw Ghetto! In Warsaw cellars and secret hiding places the defenders call on every one who can help. They organize committees to plan their defense. Now I take you to a meeting of one of these committees.

FIRST MAN (as Chairman): The Committee for Defense has met and worked out the plans for operation. You, Shmuel Saltzman, as a trusted shop leader must assign each of the workers to his post.

SECOND MAN: (as Saltzman): Right.

FIRST MAN (as Chairman): The Shomer Hatzair group has asked that one of them be permitted to guard the flag. Moishe Zweig, you have been selected. I know you will guard it well.

NARRATOR (as Zweig): With my very life.

FIRST MAN (as Chairman): Dora Fishman, when the attack begins it will be your duty to carry the hand grenades from the cellar to the fighters in the house on the corner.

WOMAN (as Dora): When you carry eggs in an apron you learn to walk without breaking anything.

FIRST MAN (as Chairman): I see Reb Aaron has a question.

SECOND MAN (as Reb Aaron): (Dogmatic, pietistic) For us, as Jews who keep... it is forbidden... we Jews do not fight... We are not fighters.

WOMAN AND NARRATOR: No! No! What is he saying? What's this?

FIRST MAN (as Chairman): Quiet please. Reb Aaron, you mean we Jews have not been given the chance to fight - the weapons with which to fight. And even now - with the little we have, with almost nothing but our bare hands, we are ready to fight as all men fight who want to be free. We will fight because liberty must be kept alive in the world... But here is Rabbi Gottesfreund, Rabbi, we invited you to this meeting so you may tell the members of your Congregation, like Reb Aaron, what to do. We Zionists, the Shomer Hatzair, Communists and other workers, we know what we shall do. We shall fight to the last man.

SECOND MAN (as Reb Aaron): Rabbi, in the Book it is written "Thou shalt not kill!"

NARRATOR (as Rabbi): It is true, Reb Aaron. Why then do we light candles to celebrate the bravery of the Maccabees? Why then do we glorify the name of Bar Kochba? (Slowly) It is a lesson we have long forgotten, but the whole world has learned it and retaught it to us, today. By defending ourselves we defend all that is holy.
FIRST MAN (as second Narrator): Now let us have this meeting and draw the curtain for a brief moment on the Nazi headquarters. If you do not hear it, I can tell you that a telephone bell is ringing.

SECOND MAN (as Nazi officer): (holds hands to mouth and ear as if speaking on telephone): Yah! Here is Warsaw Reich Control Headquarters... Yah, yah, we have counted everything we have taken from the Jews. From Treblinka Prison: 6,700 men's overcoats, 3,434 gold rings, 1,244 gold watches, 9,486 undershirts, 4,292 pairs of shoes, (Mockingly) and thousands of silk and woolen tallisims, you know, their prayer shawls. Yah, they gave them to us - a contribution to the Reich... What do you say? Yah, yah - you were just given a dispatch... Yah, yah - so.... What do you say? THEY ARE SHOOTING AT THE WEHRMACHT!... Gott in himmel!... (hangs up.)

NARRATOR: (Proudly) You see, the Nazi was dumbstruck. Warsaw was the Jewish fist smashing the face of fascism. The Jews were fighting. At first, some, overwhelmed by fear of the unspeakable bestiality of the Nazis, sought escape in self-inflicted death. Most of them prepared to fight to the end. Let's listen to a group of these people while preparing for the zero hour.

FIRST MAN (as Shapiro): (Emotionally overwrought) I saw it myself! The Nazi Commander ordered they should give a reception to his officers at the Seminary. I saw all of them - think of it - one hundred and forty of them in the Girls' Seminary - dead in their white bridal gowns when the Nazi officers walked in. I say that their names......

SECOND MAN (As Sonnenblum): (firm and passionate) Our Jewish daughters! They fought in the only way they knew. The women have learned to face death without flinching. Their courage is surpassed by no one.

WOMAN: You are right. What our men and boys do, our women must learn to do.

NARRATOR: Such was their spirit. And after a while, Warsaw's ghetto stood up bare-handed and fought. Out of the skeleton ribs of a dead ghetto rose the Jewish resistance to Nazi pansers and machine-guns. For two weeks, three weeks, for thirty — thirty-five days and more, the starved and the hungry, workers and shopkeepers, manufacturers, seamstresses, carpenters and peddlers, their eyes flashing with a new light and decision, their arms tireless in labor, mocked the Nazi might and struck, struck for mankind. They knew that death was there for each of them, but they struck for the dignity of man, for the self-respect of the Jew. They became plotters and conspirators. They became skillful in trapping Nazi tank patrols outside the ghetto walls, thus arming themselves to continue the unequal struggle. Now let's see what went on in the cellars of the ghetto.
FIRST MAN (as David): (Whispering) As soon as they back into this street, I'll give the signal. You've seen that Aaron and the others are in the houses on both sides? Are you sure the tunnel will cave in under the tank?

SECOND MAN (as Meyer): (whispering) Sure I'm sure. There's only the cover of asphalt over the tunnel. I was in it an hour ago and could see sunlight through the cracks of the asphalt.

(Loud crash backstage)

FIRST MAN (as David): (exultant) There it is! ... Quick, Meyer, after them ... no one must get away. And don't destroy their uniforms. We can use them as well as their weapons.

NARRATOR: You may rest assured it won't go well with those Nazis when these Jewish fighters get their hands on them.

WOMAN: No, my friend. It didn't go well with them. But the overwhelming odds had to toll in the end. The iron will and steely hearts of a people could not forever match the iron and steel of the massive weapons possessed by the Nazis.

NARRATOR: Russian guerrillas and Red Army men, and the quiet ones returning to the heaps of ashes blessed these Jewish fighters. In England and the United States the hearts of millions pulsed with pride because of this handful of fighting Jews. Out of the dirt and degradation of the ghetto, out of the suffering and the unspoken despair leaped a flame of courage. An island of human will had risen out of the troubled waters.

FIRST MAN: On that island of will you Jewish fighters of Warsaw became one with the fighters of China, the partisans of Yugoslavia, the fant-tireur of France!

NARRATOR: You shop organizer, how well you explained to your fellow unionists the meaning of the betrayal of Paris - how well you heartened them now that their bitter turn had come!

SECOND MAN: Rabbi, in your long caftan, we shall remember the calm voice of your confidence.

FIRST MAN: You woman, just a while ago rummaging around for some fish for the Sabbath meal, we shall remember the way you carried hand grenades in your apron.

WOMAN: (deeply moved) Boy, brave and defiant boy, wrapped in the blood-dipped flag, hurling yourself upon the Nazi beast when you were the last to remain - we shall remember you.

NARRATOR: Let no candles be lighted for these heroic dead.

SECOND MAN: Let no garment be rent to shreds,

FIRST MAN: Let no word of futile sorrow be spoken.
WOMAN: Let no tears be shed.

NARRATOR: (slowly, firmly) But we shall remember the fist of Warsaw. The Jews of all lands will remember. (Full voice) Never! Never will the people of this world forget!

FINIS