

International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

Memorial Ceremony, General Assembly Hall 28 January 2015

Speech by Mr. Boris Feldman, veteran of the Second World War, soldier of the Red Army

I'm glad I lived up to this point, when humanity, thanks to the efforts of the United Nations, commemorates the "Day of the Holocaust" - the tragedy of my people and of all mankind. This day should remind mankind of the cost that was paid to destroy the Fascism. World War II took over 50 million lives, and, as I understand it, there wouldn't be a victory without the alliance of the USSR, the USA and Canada.

But before this victory, for 4 years peoples endured inhumane tests. The Ghetto established in town Chernivtsi, Vinnitsa region in Ukraine, where I resided, was inhabited with 3000 local residents and also Jews from Romania and Bukovina.

When in ghetto the young people created battle groups of 3 persons that were supposed to protect the lives of the ghetto residents. Perhaps it was naïve, but we knew well that the Nazis and their henchmen will not spare us. We took an oath, signed with our blood, that if we were brought to the execution, we would retaliate. We had 5 pistols and 5 cartridges. Once my parents, digging through the basement walls, found these yellowed pages of oath and handed them over to the Holocaust Museum.

Here are a few memories of that life.

First day of occupation began with a tragedy - the Nazis caught 12 young men and killed them by throwing them off a 15 meter-high bridge down on the rocks. Only 2 days after we were allowed to bury them. Then, from time to time they shot 2-3 people for no visible reason.

Not only adults were turned into the slaves, but also children from 9 years old. They were assigned to different labors. During winter, 50-60 people were sent daily to clean the roads from snow, where they worked for 10-12 hours without a break.

One day the commandant and officers of the Nazi garrison had a desire for fresh fish, and in this region ponds are firmly frozen. Six men from Ghetto were selected, including myself. We were taken to a lake and were ordered to pierce the ice and then we were forced to catch fish chest-deep (while the frost was strong). Of course, soon we all got sick, and two of my friends died. Numerous times groups of young people were taken destination unknown, where they performed the hardest work, and did not always come back. I did such work and had to endure beatings, bullying and humiliation.

Truth about the Holocaust extermination camps across Europe, where millions of people, mostly 6 million Jews, were killed, burned, gassed and tortured should be passed from generation to generation.

We, the soldiers of the Soviet Union, in coalition with the United States, UK, Canada and others defeated Nazism.

In May 1945 it seemed that the world is now forever free from the danger of destruction. We triumphed!!! That's why today it is painful for us to realize that new monsters – like terrorists and their supporters, anti-Semites, neo-Nazis are trying to destroy civilization. What our children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren should expect, when militant Islamism is merciless to the civilized world? They do not hide their goal –to bring to knees all progressive mankind using the most inhuman, ruthless ways.

I have the right to appeal to you from this podium. I am a 95 year-old man who survived wars, famine, camps, ghettos, poured the land of Europe with my own blood.

I was wounded twice freeing Romania, Hungary and Austria and was awarded with the highest soldier award - "Order of Glory"!

“People, beware!” called Julius Fuchik before the World War II.

I ask you to salute veterans of that war, they are here with us today!