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**Year 9 and 10.**

**Resistance to the Nazis came in many forms, and from different avenues. Examine the different ways in which groups targeted by the Nazis were able to resist them and their collaborators.**

“In a war of less than a thousand people against a mighty army, no one doubted how it was going to turn out. This isn’t a subject for study in a military school but a major subject in a school of Human spirit.” - Yitzhak “Antaek” Zuckerman

During World War 2 it was a daily battle to survive for Jewish people. The Nazis use of death and concentration camps took the lives of millions and left millions more traumatised. However spiritual and physical resistance from Jews made living in these unimaginable circumstances almost bearable.

After the establishment of the Ghettos at the end of 1939 and the beginning of 1940, Jewish people were living in fear of the unknown. They attempted to preserve their cultural, religious and individual identities as well as their previous ways of life. Through the creation of hospitals, soup kitchens, orphanages, schools, and orchestra’s they provided each other with the will to live another day. This was the beginning of their spiritual resistance.

Roman Kent, a Holocaust survivor summed up the Jewish perspective perfectly when he said “Resistance in the Lodz Ghetto was the symphony orchestra. Our resistance was a mother giving a child a piece of bread to survive, because resistance doesn’t have to be with a gun and a bullet.” The Jews believed the biggest resistance to the Nazis was peacefully through unity. I believe this quote is an incredible representation of the Jews peaceful mentality. To me, this is proof that even in such a horrific event like the Holocaust there is always something to be grateful for.

On New Years Eve of 1942, Abba Kovner, a leader of the Partisan group in the Vilna Ghetto, realised Hitler’s plan. He gained the understanding that the Nazi’s intended to murder every Jewish person in Europe. He believed the youth needed to take responsibility in preventing it. Kovner created a message for all of the Jewish youth in the different Ghettos across the continent. “Jewish youth do not trust those who are trying to deceive you. In front of our eyes they tore our parents, our brothers, and sisters

from us. Hitler is plotting to annihilate all the Jews from Europe. Let us not go like sheep to the slaughter! The only response to the enemy is resistance. Brothers! It is better to fall as free fighters than to live at the mercy of murderers. Resist to our last breath!" Kovner managed to get his message into the other Ghettos. His communication was his personal way of resistance.

The plan of the mass deportation from the Warsaw Ghetto had begun by the 22nd July 1942. The largest Ghetto in Europe, it held over 450,000 people who were ordered to report for "resettlement in the east". This was a disguise for deportation and slaughter. As a result of the devastating event, underground organizations were created to fight against the Nazis. Even though these troops knew they couldn't win, they still believed their physical resistance would keep them alive a little bit longer. They had to decide between dying through fighting the Nazis with their human dignity intact or being murdered at the hands of the Nazis. The Jews were in terrible physical condition and didn't have a single weapon. However they trained tirelessly with sticks until a few weapons were smuggled in.

When the 18th of January 1943 came, the deportation of more Jewish people neared as the Nazis returned. For the very first time, a group of Jews fought back. The Nazi soldiers fled the Ghetto, though many died in that short street fight. This was believed to be the first time in the Warsaw Ghetto Nazis had been killed.

On the 16th of May 1943, the Great Synagogue of Warsaw was destroyed along with hundreds of years of Jewish history in Poland. This was the declaration of the end of the uprising.

"If you held a minute silence for every person killed in the Holocaust, you would stay silent for 11 years." To put that into perspective, that is more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of my life and my entire schooling years which is crazy. It's hard to believe that not only were the surviving victims mentally and physically scared from the actions of the Nazi's but had very little to return to after the war. Yet somehow they still remained positive. In my opinion that is a true example of human spirit that us future generations should learn from. Through the actions of brave Jews, they resisted the Nazi's. Through spiritual, physical and mental resistance, Jews proved that they would not go like sheep to the slaughter.