

From the Diary of Hirsh Berlinski on Abraham Diamant, His Comrade in Arms During the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

The famed Uprising, in April and May, 1943 in the Warsaw Ghetto, is universally regarded as a turning point, an absolutely new departure, not only in the chronicles of Jewish resistance to the German oppressor, but also in the history of the general struggle for the liberation of Warsaw. This was the first time when Jews took part in a major, indeed large-scale battle of that struggle. For the first time, after the defeat in 1939, the thunder of cannon and the echoing clutter of machine-guns were heard again in the capital city of Poland. The Jewish Uprising induced changes in the struggle of the Polish underground movement, which until then had concentrated its efforts mainly on acts of sabotage, and on acquiring arms and ammunition by disarming German soldiers and police. April 19, 1943, became a symbol of the Jewish public's contribution to the fight for freedom from the Nazi regime, and a motivating factor in the war of the Polish underground.

To the Memory of a Fighter

It happened on April 20th, 1943, at 3 p.m.

The mine exploded, thus giving the signal for battle.

Abram Diamant kept watch at his position, camouflaged by a few mattresses, on No 32, Świętojerska Street, - his battle post. He was an elderly worker, educated by the workshop and the Party.

Some leaders at his job thought him too old for battle. We, his ideological companions, knew him well and were convinced that he would be peerless in battle and would better ten younger comrades.

We sensed his burning desire to give battle in each of his words, in each of his movements. He used to say "may the moment come, when instead of words the gun speaks, then we shall see who is old and who young."

Now the moment has come, here I stand admiring his exemplary stature, his exemplary attitude and tactics in battle.

Facing a heavy machine-gun and a field-piece which spew incessant fire on his barricade, he stands there alone, in battle.

The barricade destroyed, he leaps like a tiger, with his fiery eyes, from one point to another, leaps and keeps shooting at the Germans.

He has already hit six of them – this is what he whispers. “Have a taste, of a Jew, you Jerries. Let’s give them some powder to smell” – that’s what he says with distinct pleasure. The battle-post falls apart, the Germans take the lower floor. The group retreats. Diamant takes cover and implores: “Let me, only the one there at the machine-gun, I have him already on the sight” -. He fires, and the mighty SS man, the hero of the Herrenvolk leaps up and falls back, the bark of his gun is silenced. Diamant, and his group, retreat...

...The Germans found our bunker. Germans are in our bunker, someone reports from the first entrance. Z. Stolak runs to that entrance with a few fighters. They shoot salvos, Germans respond with grenades. The dugout-entry is blocked with debris, the command is given to slip through the other dugout and give battle in the yard. Among the first three out is Diamant. We fight tooth to tooth, eye to eye; two Germans are wounded, a third escapes. We – Jelen, Diamant, Abramek – take up positions among the debris, our purpose being not to let the Germans break through to the second entrance. This is partly achieved, most of the fighters are out in the yard and the battle goes on. As Diamant is hit, his hand grabs close to the heart, he struggles to hand me his gun, fails, falls down into the burning cellar with his rifle, disappears in the smoke and flames.

When we were burying our dead in the evening, his body was missing in that common grave.

Only his body was missing. His name survives. It shall remain as a symbol of a fighting spirit and readiness for sacrifice.

A companion in battle.

Source: Joseph Kermish (Ed.), *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor! Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S” [“Oneg Shabbath”], Yad Vashem 1986, pp. 604-606.*

