

which cooperation, empathy and knowledge are so essential, each and every particular group ought to think carefully about the consequences of increased self-segregation. The follies of pseudo-universalism that betray the vitality of particularistic fidelities are poorly counteracted by turning Jews into enclaves of detachment and disconnection with their gentile environment. When the pride of particularism is converted into alienating parochialism, Balaam's alleged blessing slips into a curse. Among the many lessons the Holocaust has to teach us are the dangers to the Jewish people and to the grand vision of Judaism that isolation brings in its wake. □

### **Israel—price and pain, hope and duty**

*Eliezer Whartman*

Each year we gather here for the heartbreaking task of recalling to mind our beloved husbands and sons and brothers—and a few daughters—who have given their lives that this hard pressed nation might live. For us, the bereaved, this day is not a special event. We live—if that is the word—with our private anguish 365 days a year. But it is important that we assemble here if for no other reason than to draw comfort from each other, and to strengthen one another.

We are not alone. The nation mourns with us. I can think of no other country which feels as acutely the pain for its military dead, and expresses that collective grief in memorial after memorial, as if to immortalize the love felt for the dead to whom we owe our lives.

The searing pain which we feel is unfathomable and uncommunicable. But we must not allow it to overwhelm us, and, through suffering to forget the goal for which they gave their lives: to safeguard the ideals on which this nation and this people were founded. We have a sacred duty—almost a command from the grave—to speak out against injustice, intolerance, and indifference. Our sons died not only for the security of the state, but for something far more precious: what the state stands for. If, in the name of "security," we allow men in high places to render false witness, to distort justice, to conceal the truth, then our dead have died in vain. They did not die just to create one more Levantine state.

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**ELIEZER WHARTMAN**, a journalist in Jerusalem, delivered one of the addresses at the 1986 Annual Memorial Service of the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel at the AACI Memorial Forest near Jerusalem. We appreciate his permitting us to publish it in abridged form.



Let us choose life—a double life, if you will. One for us and one for our sons and husbands who live through us: we must lead meaningful rich lives, each in his own way stretching out his hand to help those in need, to forge a better society, to make Israel a country worthy of the sacrifices made for it by our fallen comrades. I think that all of us gathered here have one prayer in our hearts: That no more names be added to this stone!

#### **Read These Words, Remember and Do**

We often ask ourselves—sometimes alone in the dead of night—"What did our sons and husbands feel as they went forth to battle? What message would they have wanted to transmit to us?" We can only know this from the writings of the men themselves.

One of the most heart-rending documents to come out of the War for Independence was the will of Noam Grossman, a student at the Hebrew University who had been born in Brooklyn. He had a premonition of his forthcoming death. He wrote: "Last will and testament. This will is written in haste without time to say goodbye. Bury me in the Nahlat Yitzhak Cemetery in Tel Aviv. Do not print any tributes to me in the newspapers. My salary and any sums due me are to be turned over to my family to establish a fund to buy rifles for the Hagana. Do not mourn for me. I did only that which I was called upon to do."

Chicago-born Avraham Kritzman came to Palestine as a child in 1921. Avraham fell in the War of Independence, alone, hurling grenades to protect the withdrawal of his friends. Three days before he met his death he wrote to his wife: "I know that when I die, for you I shall continue to live. No one will take from me your faithful and tender heart. But if you meet a friend who will understand your sor-

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OUR ARTIST this time, is Shendl Diamond, a paper cutter from Poway, Ca.

row, and you love him a bit and your love brings forth a new life and a son is born to you—let him carry my name and let him be my continuation. . .

“And when it comes to pass that a new settlement is built here, come and plant poppies in this place: they grow so beautifully here and thrive so well! And let this be the place of my grave. . .”

Rebecca Guber lost her two sons, Ephraim and Zvi, in the War of Independence. Shortly before he fell, Zvi dedicated these lines to Ephraim next to whom he was shortly to lie. “Mother do not weep. Our dear one still lives. He lives in the zest for life of his comrades. He lives in the shining-eyed children who have sprouted in this land which has been satiated with his blood. He lives in the spring flowers and the tender green shoots of our fields. He lives and pulses in everything that has life and flowers under these skies. Can a bullet destroy the valiant heart and pure soul, the longings and hopes that live in a heart of twenty? No. The soul never dies! Who knows, perhaps it blooms in the summer butterfly, or in the bee that sups the nectar from the flower. And perhaps Mother Earth feeds upon it when it has come back to her bosom and returns it to us in the blades of grass, and the soul that once peeped out of sparkling eyes now smiles out of the bell of the flower.”

“Mother do not weep. If he has fallen, see, I remain, and will try to carry the burden on my shoulders. And if it should be that I, too, fall, you still have many sons left. For know, Mother, that each lad who goes forth into the night, into the blackness and the hidden terror, each youth who with his body stops up the breach, each soldier who enters the jaws of death with an exuberant

song of youth and faith; he is your son, Mother.”

Our soldiers were to be given no rest. Even after the wars ended, the terror along the borders continued. One of those who fell in that ongoing struggle was our son, Moshe, (named in memory of his uncle who had fallen not far away during the War of Independence.) In command of an infantry unit, Moshe was killed in a clash in Lebanon while pursuing a gang of terrorists. Shortly before his death our son wrote to us: “I feel the fatigue of these last three years, the gnawing responsibility and the grayness of life. But, on the other hand, I’m mature enough to understand that without me and my friends being here along the border, I shall never be able to enjoy the pleasures of home. These are two polarities, and there is no bridge between them. It’s as simple as that.” □

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