

# *Message from*

## HIS EXCELLENCY RON PROSOR

Ambassador of the State of Israel

With every passing year, commemorating Yom HaShoah becomes ever more vital. As the hands of time risk blurring the collective memory of the world, it is crucial we remember the horrors suffered by the Jewish people at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators. We remember the magnitude of the crime, the enormity of the suffering and the sheer scale of devastation visited on European Jewry by an ideology of hate.

The Shoah remains history's most startling example of mankind's potential for inhumanity. We must continue to pass the baton of remembrance for future generations. Holocaust education is as important now as it has ever been. The annual Yom HaShoah commemoration at Logan Hall is a valuable asset in the education of the next generation.

Whatever the pain of memory, ignorance is a curse which carries far greater risks. Yet as the years pass by, it becomes easier and easier for those with malicious intent to manipulate, distort or even deny the realities of the Shoah. We have recently witnessed attempts to subvert the language and memory of the Shoah. Words such as "Holocaust" and "genocide" are being used and abused for destructive political agendas and for the delegitimation of the State of Israel.

The date of Yom HaShoah coincides with the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. We remember the bravery of those Jewish men and women who, even in their darkest hour, summoned the strength and courage to fight in the face of evil. Yet today there are those who profane the memory of the Warsaw Ghetto with a grotesque, inappropriate and dishonest analogy that compares Warsaw and Gaza. Such historical distortions are an insult to the victims of the Shoah, a threat to the intellectual integrity of the world and an affront to all who cherish truth.

As men such as President Ahmadinejad of Iran encourage the evil of Holocaust denial, we must be vigilant. Ideas that start on the pages of extremist propaganda cannot be allowed to drift unchallenged into the mainstream of public discourse. When evil, extreme ideas remain unchallenged, the consequences can be devastating. In the words attributed to Edmund Burke, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." Today we remember the horrors of the past and in so doing lay down our challenge to those who would attempt to recreate them.

In Jewish tradition we maintain a healthy balance between commemoration and celebration. Today we commemorate the victims of the Shoah. Later this month we celebrate Yom Ha'Atzmaut and the Anniversary of the State of Israel. As we remember the past, and face the challenges of the future, we do so as a free people, with a thriving state within our ancient homeland, ready, willing and able to defend our freedom from those who would take it away.