

Starting on 14 October 1942 the **deportation** began of 24,000 Jews from the Piotrkow ghetto. The deportation lasted for seven days. When it was over, only 2,000 Jews remained in Piotrkow. The Germans maintained that the destination of the deportees was a labour camp in the east. It was in fact a death camp, **Treblinka**, where all the deportees were murdered.

Harry Spiro recalled that early on the morning of the first day ‘a general curfew was declared, and we knew that the ghetto was going to be deported. An announcement was made that all those who worked in factories outside the ghetto including Hortensja (a glass factory using slave labour from the ghetto) should leave their homes and meet outside the synagogue. I refused to leave my family, but my mother told me to go. I still refused, and then she physically pushed me out of the house.

Her last words to me were, “At least let one of our family survive.” I still can’t get over the strength and courage it must have taken for her to push me out, but she obviously had a premonition of what was going to happen. That was the last I ever saw of my mother, father and sister. I walked away with a heavy heart, completely forlorn as not only had I left my family, but the streets were empty and I was convinced I was going to be shot. That, in my mind was the longest walk I ever took, away from my dearly loved family whom I never saw again.

Our family is our greatest achievement. When I look at my three children, all happily married, and seven (soon to be eight) grandchildren, I think about my mother and her last words, that at least one member of the family should survive...I look on my family as her victory – and my victory over what the Nazis failed to do.

