

# Until Our Last Breath: A Holocaust Story of Love and Partisan Resistance

by Michael Bart and Laurel Corona. (New York: St Martin's Press, 2008).

At Michael Bart's father's funeral, an older man came up to Michael to tell him that the grave stone should include a reference to the Freedom Fighters of Nekamah, to honor his late father's involvement in the Jewish resistance movement in Vilna at the

end of World War II. Michael had never heard the term before. After his father's death and his mother in the beginning stages of Alzheimer's, Michael embarked on a 10-year research project to find out more details about his parents' time in the Vilna Ghetto, where they met, fell in love, and married, and about their activities

as members of the Jewish resistance. *Until Our last Breath* is the culmination of his research, and parents' story of love and survival is seamlessly tied into the collective story of the Vilna Ghetto, the Partisans of Vilna, and the wider themes of world history.

Zenia, Bart's mother, was born and raised in Vilna. Leizer, his father, fled to Vilna to escape the Nazi invasion of his hometown of Hrubeiszow in Poland. Zenia and Leizer were married by one of the last remaining rabbis 90 days before the liquidation of the ghetto. Leizer was friends with Zionist leader Abba Kovner, and became a member of the Vilna Ghetto underground. Shortly before the total liquidation of the ghetto, Zenia and Leizer, along with about 120 members of the underground, were able to escape and reach the Rudnicki forest about 25 miles from Vilna. They became the Jewish Partisan fighting group led by Abba Kovner who were known as the Avengers. *Until Our Last Breath* is intensely personal, painstakingly researched, and a lasting memorial to the Jews from Vilna, to the partisans and resistance fighters, and to the author's family. ■

UNTIL  
OUR LAST  
BREATH



A Holocaust Story of Love  
and Partisan Resistance

Michael Bart  
and Laurel Corona