

Lauder Morasha Jewish School

Warsaw, Poland

10/5/99

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

**Tour of the Lauder Morasha Jewish School
Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton**

**Warsaw, Poland
October 5, 1999**

Thank you for welcoming me back to your school. I am delighted to be here with all of you and I particularly am pleased to see so many children gathered here today. I know that this school is important to you, the students here. And I visited two of your classrooms to see the work that you are doing. But I also know that this school is important for other reasons, too. It is important because of what we have just heard from Ambassador Lauder: this school, and all of you who are the students and teachers, stand for something very important.

As I listened to the children sing your song of peace, I thought how hard you have worked to make sure that your voices are heard in today's Poland. And we can hear your voices because of the commitment of Ambassador Lauder who made sure that Jewish life and Jewish schools will revive throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Those voices also reflect the dedication of your principal and your teachers who ensure that the traditions that have enriched Poland for centuries will continue to enrich it now and into the next century.

I have visited symbols and places of Poland's past. In 1994, I went to the Warsaw Ghetto and saw monuments built with the courage and tears of those who suffered, fought, and died there. No words can express what I felt in 1996 when I walked through Auschwitz and Birkenau and saw the doorways and tracks that separated Jews from the rest of humanity. No person of conscience can ever forget what happened in those places. But also on my trips I met people who are vowing not to forget the past, but also not to be imprisoned by it.

Three years ago, at the Lauder Community Center, I sat with three generations of Poles. As we sat in the circle, I listened to the stories of people who told us with great emotion their discovery of their own Jewish roots. But roots, you know, are usually under ground, in the dark. Roots can only be seen by what they produce and what flowers from them. That is why this school and the others like it are so important.

You are making it clear that the best way to combat the evil and violence that plagued this century is to teach children respect for one another and the way to live with that respect in the next century.

One of my favorite Bible passages is in the book of Deuteronomy. God has gathered his people together to explain their obligations to him and to each other. And He tells them, "Before you I have placed life and death, the blessing and the curse. You must choose life, so that you and your descendants will survive."

Even in the darkest hours, that is the choice this community has made. Here in this new building, filled with the powerful and clear voices of children, you have chosen hope over despair, healing over pain. You have chosen a future of freedom and justice - a future you have

committed to make better than the past. You have chosen life. And there is no better way to begin a new century.

So thank you very much for letting me come back to see and hear for myself the energy and hopefulness that this school represents. Shalom - and I hope to return again in the future. Thank you very much.