

## WARSAW GHETTO CELEBRATION

First: For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,  
and that the tender branch thereof will not cease;  
Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,  
And the stock thereof die in the ground,  
Yet through the scent of water it will bud,  
And put forth boughs like a plant.

Second: September 7, 1939. The enemy is at the gates of Warsaw, and we are a beleaguered city. The window of my bedroom faces toward Kamelicka Street, and even though I was sunk in slumber, voices and the noise of passers-by reached my ears. I got up and looked out the window, and I knew at once that the government was fleeing.

Third: September 29, 1939. Beautiful Warsaw -- city of royal glory, queen of cities -- has been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah. There are streets which have been wiped off the face of the earth. . . Today at 8:00 P.M., Hitler's soldiers will enter the gates of Warsaw like victorious heroes. Poland has fallen. . .

Fourth: Eve of Simhat Torah, 5700. Our holiday is no longer celebrated. . . The windows of the synagogues are dark. After 7:00 P.M. there is a curfew in the city, and in the hours before the curfew we live in dread. . .

Fifth: Our future is becoming increasingly clear. Today the legal destruction began, with an order barring Jews from the two branches of the economy in which 50 per cent of the Jewish community supported itself. A man is ready to commit suicide out of desperation. This is not just a small economic deprivation that makes things difficult but will not endanger our survival. It is a savage slash that has no equal in the history of the oppression of the Jewish people. The cruel decree is short and decisive, comprising only seven paragraphs, but it suffices to topple our economic structure. The decree says: It is strictly forbidden for the Jews to trade in textile goods and leather, and any sort of manufacturing that involves these materials. With terrible savagery the ax has struck at the most active artery of the Jewish economy. All violators of this order will be severely punished.

Sixth: The Germans proclaimed the revival of the Kehilla, or Jewish Community Council, which they rechristened the Judenrat. It was no longer a religious but a racial institution, and had to assume jurisdiction over all matters affecting the Jewish "race." Adam Czerniakov, a Jewish engineer, was appointed president.

Although the heads of the Judenrat carried out the orders of the German authorities, they also had their own program. The Judenrat opened departments of social welfare, maintained schools and religious services. In time it became the Jewish Government of the Warsaw Ghetto, which became the center of Polish Jewry.

First: Under the guidance of CENTOS, an organization for child care, sport clubs sprang up, and little gardens for the children were improvised on vacant lots. There were theatrical performances, lectures and literary contests. There were music schools, choral societies and courses in

literature and science. A clandestine medical school and a faculty of sciences and mathematics were maintained in the ghetto for two years. Jewish underground bulletins appeared in Yiddish, Hebrew, and Polish.

Every prewar social and political movement had had its own platform, its own newspaper, mimeographed or typewritten in secret. These publications now supplemented the only legal Jewish newspaper, Gazeta Zydowska, which in 1941 printed the following poem by a little boy:

Second: MOTELE

From tomorrow on, I shall be sad  
 From tomorrow on.  
 Today I shall be gay.  
 What is the use of sadness--tell me that?  
 Because these evil winds begin to blow?  
 Why should I grieve for tomorrow--today?  
 Tomorrow may be so good, so sunny,  
 Tomorrow the sun may shine for us again,  
 We will no longer need to be sad.  
 From tomorrow on I shall be sad,  
 From tomorrow on,  
 Not today; no! today I will be glad.  
 And every day, no matter how bitter it be  
 I shall say:  
 From tomorrow on I shall be sad,  
 Not today.

Fifth: On October 16, 1940, the Nazis promulgated the decree establishing a Jewish quarter in Warsaw, situated in what had hitherto been used as a quarantine area for epidemics.

Third: In one of the congregations the prayer leader came and dressed himself in a kittel and prepared to lead his poor and impoverished people in the Neilah service when a boy from his congregation broke in with the news about the Jewish quarter. At once the Jew dispensed with Neilah, took off his kittel, and went back to his seat. There was no point in praying when the "Gates of Mercy" were locked.

Fourth: It is impossible to describe the hellish scenes which took place in Warsaw's streets during the next two weeks. Everywhere there was wild panic, unashamed hysterical terror. People ran frantically through the streets, a deathly fear unmistakable in their grim, weary eyes. They searched desperately for any kind of conveyance to transport their belongings. The multitude filled the streets, a nation on the march. Long, long rows of little carts and all sorts of makeshift vehicles heaped with household possessions, wailing children, the old, the sick, the half-dead, moved from all directions toward the ghetto, pulled or led by the stronger and healthier who plodded along, tearful, despairing, bewildered.

In the ghetto, the unfortunate hunted for living quarters--an apartment, a room, a corner of a room, anything. They searched the cellars, the hallways, the rubble of bombed-out buildings, for a place to lay their heads or shelter their children. They lay on the streets or roamed through the gutters, soaked by the rain, shivering from the cold, hungry, worn-out, helpless.

Sixth: Characters out of Mendele. The inescapable beggars and paupers have gathered in the Jewish quarter of Warsaw from all parts of the country. And they are types the likes of which you have never seen before. By the thousand they beg for food and sustenance in the streets of the Jewish quarter. They surround you and tug at your sleeve wherever you turn. This is not ordinary panhandling; it is artistry. At one intersection you encounter a group of children of poverty ranging in age from four to ten, the emissaries of mothers

and fathers who supervise them from the sidelines. They sing, and their voices are pleasant and their songs permeated with Jewish sorrow and grief. A short distance away there is a cantor with a complete choir of singers. The synagogues are closed, and they cannot sing before their Creator, so they pour forth their supplications under the open sky. A concert of this sort attracts hundreds of people. They sing prayers and hymns for all the holidays in the year, and since everyone has more than enough free time, the audience grows larger, and the choir does a good business.

Sometimes a single artist who relies on his own talents goes into business for himself. An excellent basso sings arias of all kinds all day long, and sometimes he is even favoured with a penny for his efforts. Aside from artistic panhandling, there is physical panhandling everywhere you turn. Lamed, crippled, and blind people; people missing an arm or a leg; all manners of misshapen people who inspire physical repulsion; epileptics and those afflicted with skin diseases; naked people and people dressed in filthy rags; and all of them shouting: "Give! Give!"

First: What we dreaded most has come to us... On the eve of the Sabbath of Parshat Vayera, the fourteenth of ~~Par~~-Nisan 5701, we went to bed in the Jewish quarter; and the next morning we awake in a closed Jewish ghetto, a ghetto in every detail. In the morning hours of the Sabbath a three-man guard was set up in all the open places where walls were not erected because of the trolley connections. They would not allow Jews wearing the "badge of shame" to cross over into the Aryan quarter. Thus we have been granted "full civil rights" to the extent of having a Jewish police force in the state of Poland, an idea which the Jewish autonomists in every generation hoped for with all their hearts and soul. We have entered into a new life, and it is impossible to imagine the panic that has arisen in the Jewish quarter. Suddenly we see ourselves penned in on all sides...

Second: The Aryan policemen, big, powerful, with red noses and faces that testified to their drunkenness and coarseness, who would do anything you wanted for a copper penny, have disappeared. In their stead, thousands of Jewish youths have appeared in the streets of the ghetto wearing policemen's caps, their right sleeves wrapped in an amber cloth on which there is an inscription testifying to the fact that the wearer belongs to the public safety service. The residents of the ghetto are beginning to think they are in Tel Aviv. Strong, bonafide policemen from among our brothers, to whom you can speak in Yiddish! The Jewish policemen carry rubber clubs. Those who have been beaten say there is no difference between them and the ones carried by their Polish and German colleagues; only they have a special, Jewish flavor. At all events, four thousand Jewish youths who were eliminated from their former jobs were given these new "posts of honour" and thereby an opportunity for living on bribes and food smuggling.

Fourth: Hanukkah in the ghetto. Never before in Jewish Warsaw were there as many Hanukkah celebrations as in this year of the wall. Polish Jews are stubborn: the enemy makes laws but they don't obey them. That is the secret of our survival. We behaved in this manner even in the days when we were not imprisoned within the ghetto walls, when the cursed Nazis filled our streets and watched our every move. Since the ghetto was created, we have had some respite from overt and covert spies, and so Hanukkah parties were held in nearly every courtyard, even in rooms which face the street; the blinds were drawn, and that was sufficient.

Third: Six months after the formal institution of the ghetto, the Nazis relaxed the restrictions to permit education of Jewish children through the fourth grade of elementary school. There were almost no textbooks. Each school had a group of adult patrons who helped to assemble teaching materials, provide a daily bowl of soup for the pupils, and collect money to pay teachers. The effort required was tremendous. During the winter, finding enough fuel

each day to keep the classroom warm was a major undertaking. The fight for spiritual nourishment was carried on with the same intensity as the fight for material nourishment.

Sixth: April, 1941. Like the Egyptian Passover, the Passover of Germany will be celebrated for generations. As the holiday drew near, the Self-Aid made the customary Passover appeal for money for the poor. But this project was born in an unlucky hour, and its results will be nil. At present--one week before the ~~before~~ the holiday--the project's treasury is empty.

What, then, will we eat during the eight days of the coming holiday? I am afraid we will turn our holiday into a weekday. For prayer there are no synagogues or houses of study. Their doors are closed and darkness reigns in the dwelling places of Israel. For eating and drinking there is neither matzoh nor wine.

Fifth: The Nazi timetable was planned so that major actions coincided with Jewish holidays. The Eve of Tisha B'Av, commemorating the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, was chosen as the beginning of the first liquidation of Jews ~~from~~ the Warsaw Ghetto. A group of high Gestapo officials marched into the offices of the Judenrat with revolvers and riding crops in their hands. They assembled the Judenrat and announced that labor was needed on the Eastern front. The Gestapo had decided to send the ghetto's non-productive inhabitants to fill this need. The Judenrat must cooperate in the "re-settlement" of these non-productive people, whom they estimated at sixty thousand. Daily quotas of five thousand were ordered to be delivered to the Gestapo. The Judenrat and Jewish police were responsible for the delivery of the full quota.

Third: The first victim of the deportation decree was the president, Adam Czerniakov, who committed suicide by poison in the Judenrat building. Czerniakov had refused to sign the expulsion order. He followed the Talmudic law: If someone comes to kill me, using might and power, and turns a deaf ear to all my pleas, he can do to me whatever his heart desires, since he has the power, and strength always prevails. But to give my consent, to sign my own death warrant--this no power on earth can force me to do.

Second: The will to live was so strong that it created the illusions necessary to sustain it. People tried to convince themselves that all that was intended was a deportation of sixty thousand and then set about to avoid being among the sixty thousand. In panic everyone hunted for a working card to prove that he was employed somewhere, was productive, and did not come within the deportable classification. Without some such document even a skilled worker was lost. A working card became a talisman against death.

First: The Umschlagplatz, the transfer point, at which the final "selection" would take place. The Nazis would determine who would be deported and who would remain.

Umschlagplatz--the name and the place were to burn themselves deep into the soul of every Jew in the Warsaw ghetto.

Sixth: We kept moving along steadily. In the distance I could already see the uniform of the SS. Near me another pushed her child away; it was safer to face them alone. She primed, fixed her make-up, put on a sweet smile. I could hear the shouted commands. "Right!...Left!" After each shout of "Right!" a crescendo of weeping and screaming arose, mingled with the sound of swinging whips and ropes; the wretch was shoved into the mass of the condemned. After a sufficient number had been assembled on the right, they were marched toward the Umschlagplatz a few blocks away, while another group was being collected.

A woman walked up leading a child. They tried to tear the child from her. She was being sent to the left, to work, to life, but she refused to give up the child. After a short struggle she was given an impatient shove to the right. She could keep the child—and die with it.

Fourth: The ghetto has turned into an inferno. Men have become beasts. Everyone is but a step away from deportation; people are being hunted down in the streets like animals in the forest. It is the Jewish police who are cruelest toward the condemned. Sometimes a blockade is made of a particular house, sometimes a whole block of houses. In every building earmarked for destruction they begin to make the rounds of the apartments and to demand documents. Whoever has neither documents that entitle him to remain in the ghetto nor money for bribes is told to make a bundle weighing 15 kilos—and on to the transport which stands near the gate. Whenever a house is blockaded, a panic arises that is beyond the imagination. Residents who have neither documents nor money hide in nooks and crannies, in the cellars and in the attics. When there is a means of passage between one courtyard and another, the fugitives begin jumping over the roofs and fences at the risk of their lives: in time of panic, when the danger is imminent, people are not fussy about methods. But all these methods only delay the inevitable; and in the end police take men, women, and children. The destitute and impoverished are the first to be deported. In an instant the truck becomes crowded. They are all alike; poverty makes them equal.

Fifth: The Germans demanded more victims, knowing that the best bait for the starving Jews was food. Accordingly, they declared that anybody who would register willingly would receive from the Judenrat seven pounds of bread and two pounds of marmalade. Bread was the dream of the emaciated masses and marmalade the very manna of the desert. The rush of volunteers broke all precedents. The throng was so great that they had to beat the people back...

First: A short poem in simple prose by Joseph Kirman who perished in a Nazi labor camp near Lublin, in 1943:

My child, on a cold and frosty day, with an evil wind blowing and shaking man and earth, your father dragged himself along, tired, in search of himself. He wandered through the streets, past buildings and people.

Instead of himself, he found wires—barbed wires that cut through the street and cut it to pieces. On both sides of the wire people walked up and down. Poverty and hunger drove them towards the fence through which one could see what went on on the other side. Jews, the badge of shame on their arms, walked on one side and Christian boys and girls on the other. When from the other side a loaf of bread was thrown over the fence, boys on this side tried to catch it. Police in jack-boots, armed with rubber truncheons, beat up a child. The child cried; and German soldiers, looking on, shook with laughter. When a Jewish girl sang a song, begging, pleading—"I am hungry and cold," policemen drove her away and the soldiers smiled, when they saw the loaf of bread, rolling on the ground.

People walked up and down, and your father stood there and looked over the fence. Suddenly a flight of doves came down, driven from somewhere out of the blue. Silently they settled on the wires and began quietly to coo. I felt the pain of their sadness and sorrow, I listened to their weeping hearts and understood the anguish of the freezing doves.

But the doves have wings, and if they want to, they can fly, on to wires or up to roof-tops, off and away!

Your father stood there, dreaming. And a policeman came and knocked him on the head. Ashamed, he began to move on, but he wanted to look once more at the doves. And then, my child, your father saw something terrible: the doves were still there, on the barbed wires, but they were eating the crumbs out of the hands of the soldiers!

My child, your father grew very sad, and he still is: not about the doves on freezing wires and not because they have wings and he has not, but because now he hates the doves too, and he warns you: Keep away from them, as long as ~~the~~ innocence allows itself to be fed by murderous hands...

Second:

Anyone leaving the walls of the ghetto was liable to execution and anyone found without the white-blue armband on the right arm courted immediate death. And even if out of the ghetto, how was one to take the first step on the pavement of freedom?

They see the armband on your arms and immediately a bullet is fired through your skull. Discard the band? If your Polish neighbours notice the white symbolic armband being removed, you are sure to land with the police. Should you manage to succeed in hiding in the darkest alley behind the iron gate and there change your "decoration", someone is bound to see you entering with, or leaving without the band. You could disguise yourself a thousand times but you would always remain the same. One was simply a Jew either with or without an armband. One betrayed one's Jewishness with every tormented gesture, with every anxious step, with the hunch of the shoulders, on which lay the yoke of servitude, with the look of a hunted animal, in short, with the entire physical appearance on which the ghetto had etched its indelible stamp.

Those neighbours, at every step they lurked, peered shamelessly into the eyes, stared with suspicion and challenge till the poor creature got bewildered and self-conscious; the face became flushed, the eyes dropped and thus the Jew betrayed himself. Hence, before the unfortunate fugitive reached the first railroad station he had already behind him a whole series of battles lost, a series of speechless combats with a lurking enemy in every passerby.

Fourth

In March of 1942 the Anti-Fascist Bloc had been organized in the Warsaw Ghetto for the purpose of training resistance fighters. To it belonged Left Poale Zion, Hashomer Hatsair and Hechalutz. Any serious attempt at organized defense however was then crushed when the Nazis overran the ghetto in the first liquidation. Seven months later a new Jewish Fighting Organization was set up on the initiative of Hechalutz and the Jewish Socialist Bund. All the political parties of the Ghetto were represented in the new organization. At its head was placed the twenty-four year old Mordechai Anielewicz.

Sixth: The first resistance came in January 1943 when the second wave of liquidation, known as Action II, began. The Jewish Fighting Organization called for self-defense:

Third: Jews! The enemy approaches the second act of your extermination. Do not go submissively to your death! Defend yourselves! Take an axe, a piece of iron, a knife, barricade your houses. In battle you have a chance of salvation. Fight!

Sixth: The January action lasted only four days. The Germans had planned in that time to finish off every Jew in Warsaw. But they had met opposition, and they stopped. The January action was the final warning. Until then, some

Jews had imagined that the Germans would not harm the productive elements among the Jews because they needed them. The action belied that belief.

Fifth: Slowly we walked through the desolate streets. A dismal silence hung over the open doors and windows. Here had once pulsed a vibrant life- a miserable, oppressive, despairing life, but life nevertheless. Where were the overflowing tenants of these empty houses and abandoned courtyards? Swallowed by the Umschlagplatz. Fed to the insatiable German death-machine.

Seven months ago, when the Gestapo had demanded the deportation of the "nonproductive", we had been a crowded ghetto community of more than half a million people. Now we were nothing, not even a ghetto. The handful of 40,000 survivors, locked behind factory stockades or huddled into a few tenements, waiting for the Germans to finish their work, could not even be called a ghetto.

I looked up at the gaping windows of the familiar buildings. They seemed so strange and foreign and unreal. Yet all this had happened in a few short months; the most dreadful prophecies were now bitter, heartbreaking, unbelievable reality.

The first news of the early deportations, which we had sent to the outside world with such difficulty, had been met with indifference, with disbelief. The world was cynical and suspicious of "atrocities stories." The empty stillness mocked us. We were completely, utterly, unbelievably alone.

Third: The Ghetto moved underground. Bunkers were built with a system of interconnecting tunnels. Some of the bunkers were stocked with food calculated to last for many months. But the poorer people had merely camouflaged dugouts as their shelters or crypts somewhere in cellars or canals. They lived in filth, bloated with hunger and suffering from the dampness. There, under those conditions, children were born and bred, some of them living in complete darkness for months on end.

First: A regular arms exchange was maintained and a special profession of arms smuggling developed. The prices were high, but there was no lack of money now. The Jewish Fighting Organization levied taxes, and even the Judenrat paid its dues.

Fourth: Feifer's leather factory was at the border of the ghetto. I was on my way there at the appointed hour, with my package of dynamite in tow. It was dusk; there was little movement in the street. Unfortunately, the German sentry was on guard on the opposite side of the factory. I ducked into a nearby doorway and watched the guard. I'd have to wait, I decided. Then I saw the guard turn aside to light a cigarette. I bolted to the factory gate, and rang the bell.

We were inside, my package of dynamite and I. The watchman bid me follow him. "Get ready," he said and turned off the light. The room was plunged into darkness. I heard something being moved. Then, as I strained toward the corner, I began to recognize the outlines of a small grated window.

"Hurry up and hand out your package," The watchman ordered.

I peered out the window into the darkness. Very softly I called out the password: "Yurek! Yurek!"

"At last!" came the whispered reply.

A shadow appeared at the window. I recognized Janek Bilak, a courageous member of the Fighting Organization. I picked up the dynamite - but, worse luck - the package was too big to pass between the grates.

"Faster! Faster!" the voice outside urged me.

"Wait a minute. I must repack," I answered softly. I had no choice. The watchman was beside me. Nervously our fingers fluttered over the boxes. It was taking too long. Outside they kept pressing me.

We were finished at last. I shoved the dynamite past the grating. As soon as the last package was out, the watchman locked the window and switched on the light. Flushed and perspiring he stood there, without a word.

"No reason to be afraid," I said. "You see, it went off fine."

"I won't risk it again," the watchman gasped. "I was frightened to death." I handed him 300 zlotys and a bottle of whisky as I said good-bye. The man's hand was still trembling.

"Tell me the truth," he asked suddenly; "What was in those packages?"

"Nothing special. Just some boxes of paint."

"That's all?" the man peered into my eyes.

"That's all."

Fifth: At the beginning of February, 1943, the Germans adopted new tactics to enlist the cooperation of the Jews. The owners of shops were induced to register "volunteer workers" for "resettlement," together with their machinery. The alluring offers fell on deaf ears. Jewish workers refused to register.

Second: The Nazis appealed to the Judenrat. After consultation with the Jewish War Council, the head of the Judenrat gave the following reply to the Gestapo: "I lack power in the ghetto. There is now another authority." The Jewish Fighting Organization had, in fact, taken over. All the traitors, stool pigeons and Gestapo lackeys were either driven beyond the ghetto walls or liquidated.

The atmosphere was cleansed of treachery. Even the Gestapo shunned the ghetto.

The Germans were furious. They sent a new commander, General Jurgen Stroop, to make short shrift of "bandetville," as they termed the ghetto. The Germans prepared for a three day siege.

Third: The eve of the uprising. Families carry packs and move into the bunkers. The men wander around the courtyard in a depressed state. The windows are black, covered over. But there are sounds of life in houses and cellars: People murmur...

Twelve midnight - the Fighting Organization emerges from underground. There is no longer any curfew. Armed, wearing German helmets and uniforms, a few go out on patrol in the ghetto. They go from door to door, awakening, warning. They call the people to resistance. On the ghetto walls the manifesto of the uprising has already been put up. The last proclamation for the last battle ends with the cry: to fight...to die...for the honour of our people'.

Sixth: First reports of the German approach came from our advance observation posts at two o'clock in the morning of April 19, 1943. We learned that German gendarmes, with the help of the Polish police, were encircling the outer ghetto walls. An emergency alarm was ordered, and within fifteen minutes all fighter units were at their battle stations.



At seven o'clock, motorized detachments, including tanks and armoured vehicles, entered the ghetto. The two thousand SS men were ready to attack. In closed formations, goose-stepping miserably, they marched into the seemingly dead streets of the ghetto. Their triumph appeared complete. It looked as if this superbly equipped modern army must have frightened the handful of bravado-drunk men; as if those few immature boys had at last realized that there was no point in attempting the impossible; that they understood the Germans had more rifles than there were rounds for all their pistols.

Fifth: But they did not frighten us, and were not caught off guard. We were only waiting for an opportune moment. Presently it came. The Germans had chosen the intersection at Mila and Zamenhofska for their bivouac area, and our fighters, barricaded at all four corners, at once opened concentric fire on them. Strange missiles began exploding all over; now and then the lone machine gun spewed bullets through the air. Farther off rifles started firing. The uprising had begun!

The Germans attempted a retreat, but were cut off. German dead littered the street. The living looked for cover in neighbouring stores and doorways, but the shelter proved insufficient. The SS thereupon called tanks into action, and under their cover the survivors of two companies began their retreat. But a well-aimed molotov cocktail burned out the first tank; the rest did not attempt to approach our positions. The fate of the Germans caught in the Mila-Zamenhofska trap was sealed: not one left the area alive.

First: Suddenly, we are surrounded in an attic. The Germans are right there, in the same attic, and we cannot reach the stairs. We cannot even see each other in the dark corners. We do not notice two of our fighters crawl up the stairs and throw a grenade. We do not even pause as Michal Klepfisz throws himself right on top of the German machine gun, firing from behind the chimney. All we see is that a path has been cleared. Hours later, when the Germans have been driven out, we find Michal's body, drilled like a sieve.

Fourth: At a second-story window, comrad Dworja is firing away furiously. The Germans spot her: "Look, Hans! A woman shooting!" They draw a bead on her, but miss. Apparently she does not miss often, for they withdraw quickly.

Third: The few hours we spent in the bunker on Kuza street seemed like an eternity. The dark and narrow cellar was so tightly packed with people that the flame of a match would go out at once because of a lack of oxygen.

Occasionally the crying of a small child would disrupt the quiet. At once his mother would cover his mouth; his crying might betray us. Hundreds of people could be lost because of this baby's cry. Yet when the crying stopped, many people would be concerned about the child: had he suffocate? This had happened more than once.

Second: Anielewicz ordered a complete regrouping of forces. At every bunker or group of bunkers densely populated, a detachment was placed in charge of the defense. There was feverish activity by night and day. Every bunker became a fortress.

Sixth: General Jurgen Stroop was not satisfied. In the ghetto proper, the Germans were far behind schedule. It was decided to destroy the entire ghetto. Stroop indicated that fire seemed to be the best method to the "subhumans" up to the surface. But not only fire. Stroop used gasoline, poison gas, and flooding with water jets.

Fifth: Thousands perished in the conflagration; flames drove people from their shelters, and made them easy prey for the Germans. Weary beyond endurance, the Jews fell asleep in driveways, beside doors, standing, sitting, lying, and were caught asleep by German bullets. No one so much as noticed that an old man sleeping in a corner would never awaken; that a mother nursing her baby had been dead for three days. Hundreds committed suicide by leaping from fourth and fifth-story windows.

Second: The Christian Easter occurred in that memorable spring of 1943 at the end of April. Unceasing processions to the walls of the Ghetto continued throughout the Holy Week, and did not even stop on Easter itself. Hardly had the words been said: "You may go, the Mass is over, Alleluja," - and the crowds from the overflowing churches, alive with spring, with fresh flowers in their hands, ran to the walls, to Warsaw's Easter spectacle.

It was an extraordinary spectacle. The inhabitants of houses overlooking the ghetto saw how - beyond those walls - half-crazed people would dash out of cellars and like lizards slink from one floor to another, higher and higher. The fire crawled after them, and they in their helplessness, sought some fire-proof corner, invisible to the gendarme's eye. . . . When the flames approached their feet, the husband would hand the child to his wife, all three would kiss each other for the last time, and then they would jump, first the woman with the baby, and then the man. The firemen watch from the surrounding rooftops in case the flames spread to the Aryan side. Returning to their safe dwellings they would say: "The little ones are falling there like peas, and the old ones too."

Some people would arrive, others would leave. They looked on, conversed, regretted. They regretted the goods, the fortunes, the gold - the legendary gold, but above all the flats and houses, the "most beautiful houses." They said: "~~Could not Hitler solve this problem in some other way.~~"

The General of the Polish Home Army appealed to conscience. But we here, on the spot, saw how tiny, how infinitesimal human conscience is. The detonations were shaking the earth, the street, but not the people.

Fifth: And still the Jews fought on. Fighters were everywhere, partisan-like appearing and disappearing in the most unexpected places. At 56 Leszno Street, Yurek is cornered at his outpost. A group of SS surround him; one throws a grenade. Adroitly Yurek catches it in mid-air, before it can explode and tosses it back at the SS. Four are killed on the spot.

Sixth: Our situation was becoming increasingly desperate. There were shortages not only of food and water, but also of ammunition. Communications with the Aryan side had broken down.

Fourth: We celebrated May first at the headquarters with oratory and song. Never has the Internationale been sung under such tragic circumstances at a

place where a people was dying and is dying still. A special feature of the May Day celebration was a raid by a detachment of Jewish fighters of a Jewish German patrol in broad daylight. The members of this group donned German uniforms and goosestepped in German fashion. The Germans did not suspect the disguise until the "Kameraden" started to fire on them. A number of Germans were killed, others fled.

Sixth: We approached 18 Mila Street and our mood lightened. We made plans to play a joke on our friends while entering. But I was shocked when we approached the bunker; for a moment I thought that we had lost our way. Something had changed. The ruins were exposed, the guard wasn't there and the entrance itself - WHERE WAS IT? We were terrified. The bunker had six entrances we rushed to the second, the third, the fourth entrances. They had vanished without a trace, and their guards were gone too.

Suddenly we discovered shadows in a nearby yard, walking, sitting. At first we thought that they were members of our groups preparing for action. We approached them happily, recognizing our friends; but we were shocked at their horrible appearance. They were smeared with mud and dirt, trembling and feeble as if creatures of another existence. One person had passed out and a second panted heavily. This human wreckage surrounded us and told us with great emotion what had happened. How the axe had fallen on the shelter of the Jewish fighters at Mila 18, and how a few had managed to survive.

First: The previous day, at noon, when the fighters were still lying half-naked on their mats, the guards had suddenly broken in, saying that the Germans were surrounding the bunker. When the Germans called for the people to come out, the civilians went, but none of the fighters left. The Germans announced that those who would come out would be taken away to work and that those who refused would be shot on the spot. The fighters entrenched themselves near the entrances, waiting, weapons in hand, for the Germans to enter. The Germans repeated that no harm would come to those who came out; but no one was foolish enough to believe them. Finally they began pumping gas into the bunker, and calamity faced the 120 fighters.

The Germans chose not to give them a quick death. They introduced a small quantity of gas and then stopped, in order to torture their prisoners by slow and extended strangulation. Aryeh Vilner was the first to call out: "Cibe, let us kill ourselves and not fall into German hands alive." A wave of suicides had begun. Sounds of shots inside. . . Jewish fighters taking their own lives. Suddenly, someone discovered an unguarded exit, but only a few escaped by that means. The last one to take his life was the commander, Mordechai Anielewicz. He was twenty-four years old.

Second: On the 16th of May, the last day of "major operations," the Germans dynamited the Great Jewish Synagogue. This apparently was a symbolic conclusion of the affair in the eyes of General Stroop. He reported: "The former Jewish quarter of Waszaw is no longer in existence. THERE WAS A JEWISH DISTRICT IN WARSAW."

Fourth: The Song of the Murdered Jewish People, an excerpt. Written by Yitzkhak Katzenelson in Vittel, a German concentration camp in France. Katzenelson died at Auschwitz.

And thus it came to pass, and this was the beginning... Heavens  
tell me, why?

Tell me, why this, O why? What have we done to merit such disgrace?

The earth is dumb and deaf, she closed her eyes. But you,  
Heavens on high,

You saw it happen and looked on, from high, and did not turn your face.

You did not cloud your cheap-blue colors, glittering in their  
false light

The sun, a brutal, red-faced hangman, rolled across the skies;

The moon, the old and sinful harlot, walked along her beat at night;

And stars sent down their dirty twinkle, with the eyes of mice.

Away! I do not want to look at you to see you any more.

False and cheating heavens, low heavens up on high, O how you hurt!

Once I believed in you, sharing my joy with you, my smile, my tears --

Who are not different from the ugly earth, that heap of dirt!

I did believe in you and sang your praises in each song of mine.

I loved you as one loves a woman, though she vanished like the mist.