

דא ווערט דערציילט די געשיכטע פֿון אליהו טשעריקאווערס איצטיקן בוך. זי איז ענג געבונדן מיט דער געשיכטע פֿון מיוזח-יידישן היסטאָרישן אַרכיוו וואָס טשעריקאווער האָט געהאַפֿן גרינדן און מיט וועלכן ער האָט אַנגעפֿירט. אין מיי 1919 איז אין קיעוו געגרינדעט געוואָרן די "רעדאַקציע-אַנטי-קאַלעגיע אויף זאַמלען און אויספֿאַרשן די מאַטעריאַלן וועגן די פּאָגראַמען אין אוקראַינע" (ווייטער אַנגערופֿן: רעדאַקטיר-קאַלעגיע). אין דער גרינדונג האָבן אַנטייל גע- נומען: דער ייִדישער נאַציאָנאַלער סעקרעטאַריאַט (פֿון וועלכן טשעריקאווער איז געווען פֿאַרוואַלטער), דער צענטראַלער קאַמיטעט פֿון קיעוו צו העלפֿן די פּאָג- ראַם-געליטענע און דער פֿאַלקספֿאַרלאַג. די איניציאַטיוו צו שאַפֿן די רעדאַק- טיר-קאַלעגיע איז געקומען פֿון פֿאַלקספֿאַרלאַג, וואָס איז געגרינדעט געוואָרן אין 1918 אין קיעוו. שפּעטער, ווען די אַנדערע צוויי אַרגאַניזאַציעס זינען פֿאַר- מאַכט געוואָרן, איז די אַרבעט געפֿירט געוואָרן אונטערן שילד פֿון פֿאַלקס- פֿאַרלאַג. אין מיי 1919 האָט די רעדאַקטיר-קאַלעגיע אַרויסגעגעבן זאַ אַויפֿ- רוף:

יידן!

אַ שרעקלעכע (פּאָגראַם-תּוכחה) האָט זיך אויסגעגאַסן אויף ייִדישע שטעט און שטעטלעך, און די וועלט ווייסט ניט, מיר אַליין ווייסן ניט, אָדער ווייסן זייער ווייניג. ס'טאָר ניט פֿאַרשוויגן ווערן! ס'דאַרף אַלצרינג דערציילט ווערן און פֿאַרשריבן ווערן. ס'איז אַ חובֿ אויף יעדן יידן, וואָס איז געקומען און קומט פֿון די אומגליקלעכע ייִדישע שטעט, איבערצוגעבן אַלצדינג, וואָס ער האָט גע- זען, די ידיעות זאָלן ניט פֿאַרלוירן גיין. מ'בעט זיך מעלדן אין דער קאַמיסיע וואָס זאַמלט און פֿאַרשט אויס די אַלע ידיעות וועגן פּאָגראַמען.

מיכאַלאָוסקי-גאַס 11, וואוינונג 1, טעלעפֿאָן 12-88.
טעגלעך פֿון 12 ביז 3, אויסער שבת.

טשעריקאווער האָט געפֿירט אַ "טאַגבוך" פֿון רעדאַקציע אויף אויסצופֿאַרשן די פּאָגראַם-מאַטעריאַלן" (יולי 18 — סעפט' 15, 1919). אין דעם טאַגבוך האָט טשעריקאווער פֿאַרציכנט כּמעט יעדן טאַג ניט נאָר די אַרבעט פֿון זאַמלען מאַ- טעריאַלן וועגן די פּאָגראַמען, נאָר אויך כּלערליי אַנדערע ידיעות וועגן פּאָגראַם- מען א"אנד אַספּעקטן פֿון ייִדיש לעבן אין דער צייט. אַט איז בלויז איין ביי- שפּיל: "6טן אויגוסט. אין זיין אַרטיקל דערמאַנט [צ"י] אַווערבאַך, אַז ס'איז פֿאַרגעקומען אַ באַראַטונג פֿון די פּויע"צ מיטן דייטשן סאַלדאַטן-ראַט אין קיעוו

¹ אַן עקזעמפּלאַר געפֿינט זיך אין אַרכיוו פֿון יזח"א. דער טעקסט איז אויך בשעתו געווען געדרוקט אין דער פרעסע. (אַ רעפּראָדוקציע פֿונעם אַריגינאַל — אויף דער ווייטערדיקער זעט.)

אידישן!

אַ שרעקליכע פּאָגראַם-תּוכחה האָט זיך אויסגעגאַסן אויף ייִדישע שטעט און שטעטלעך, און די וועלט ווייסט ניט, מיר אַליין ווייסן ניט, אָדער ווייסן זייער ווייניג. ס'טאָר ניט פֿאַרשוויגן ווערן! ס'דאַרף אַלצדינג דערציעלט ווערן און פֿאַרשריבן ווערן. ס'איז אַ חובֿ אויף יעדן יידען, האָט איז געקומען און קומט פֿון די אומגליקליכע ייִדישע שטעט, איבערצוגעבן אַלצדינג, וואָס ער האָט געזעהען. די ידיעות זאָלן ניט פֿאַרלאָרן געהן.

מ'בעט זיך מעלדן אין דער קאַמיסיע וואָס זאַמלט און פֿאַרשט אויס די אַלע ידיעות וועגן פּאָגראַמען.

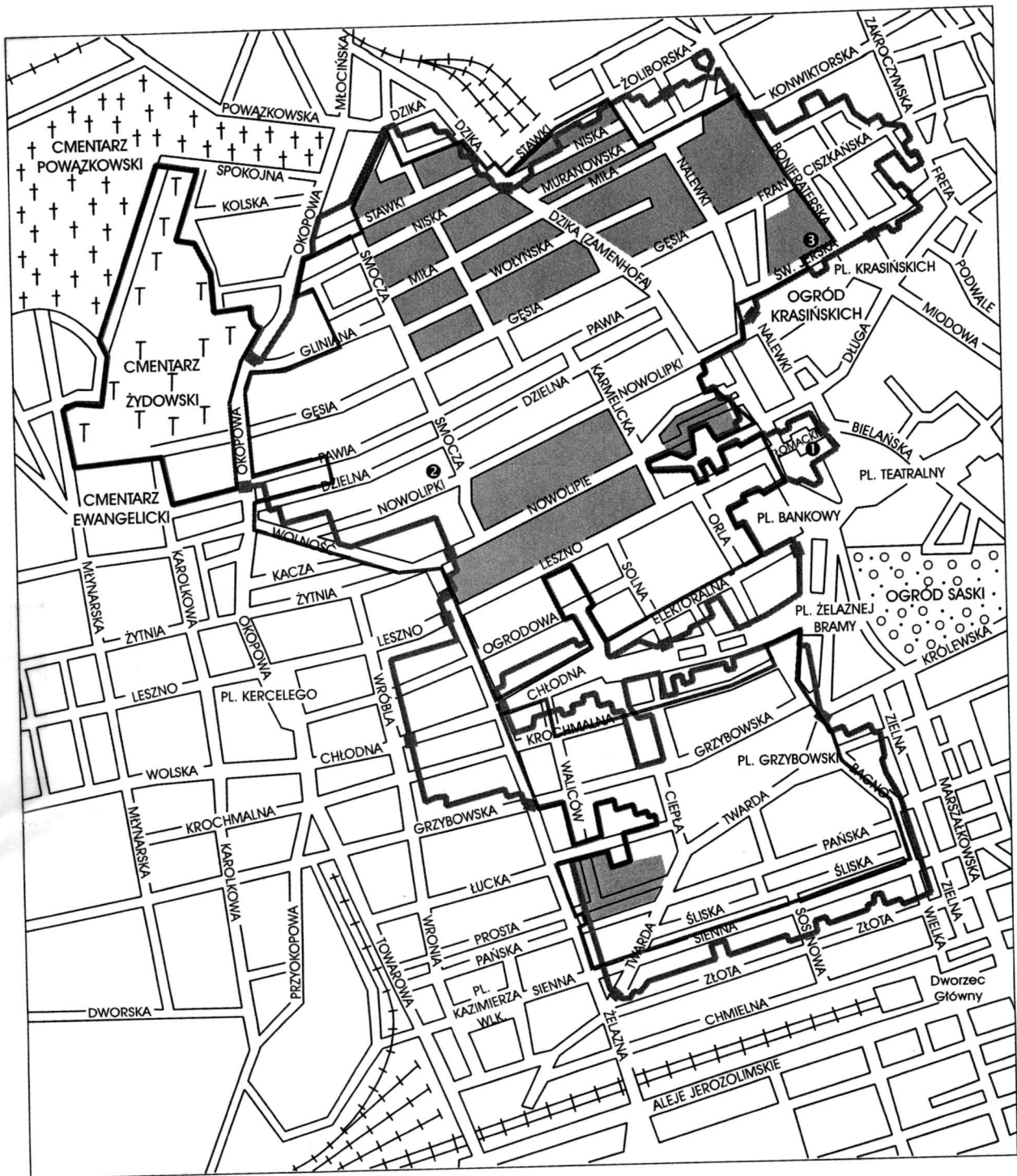
אַדרעס:

מיכאַלאָוסקי-גאַס 11, וואוינונג 1, טעלעפֿאָן 12-88.
טעגלעך פֿון 12 ביז 3, אויסער שבת.

3

9

The borders of the Warsaw Ghetto 1940-1943



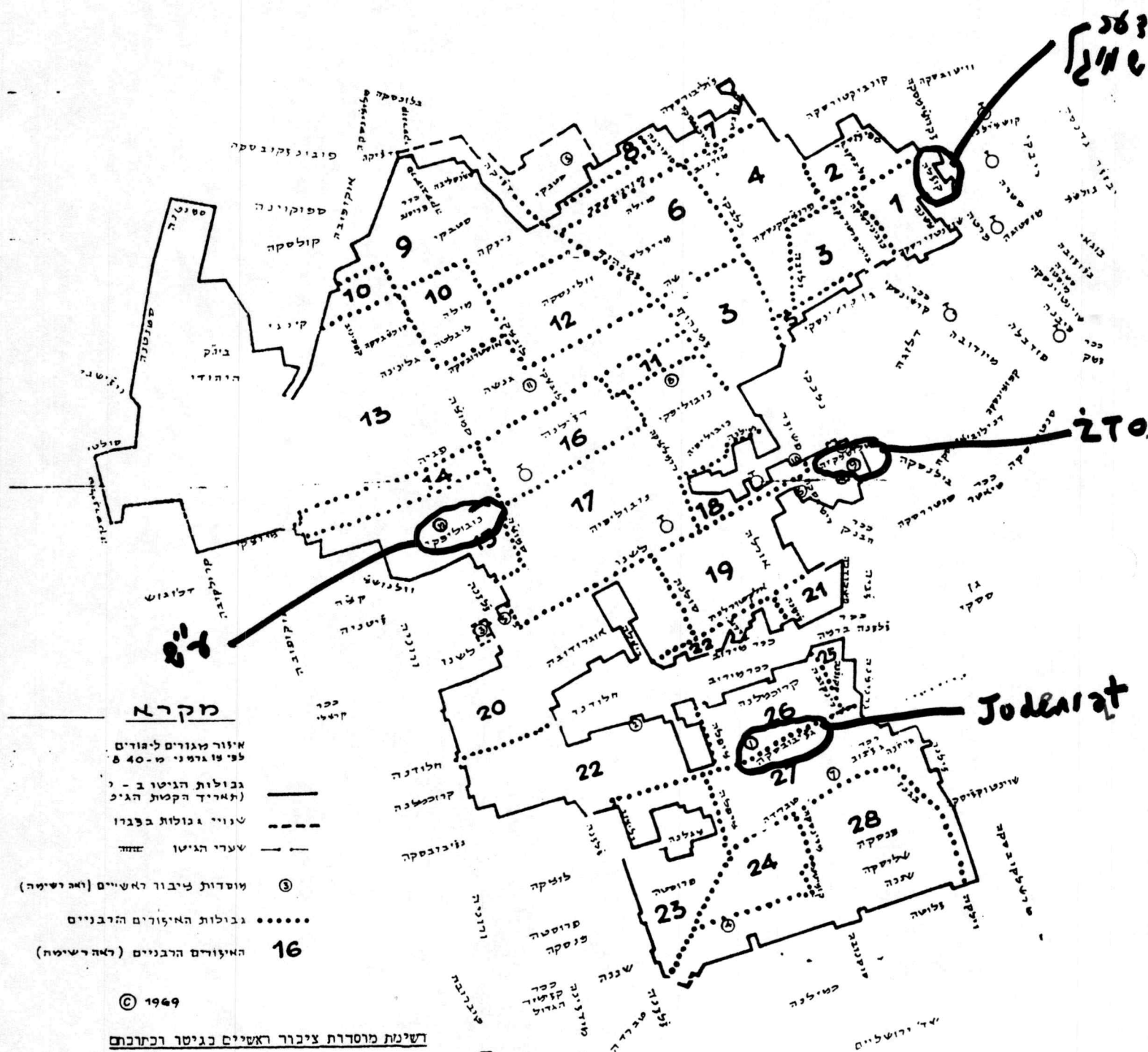
- 1940
- 1942
- 1943

- ① Meeting place of Oyneg Shabbes members
- ② Spot where the first two caches of the Archive were found
- ③ Spot where the third cache was hidden

5

מאפע פון ווארשעווער געטא (1941-1940) איינגעטיילט לויט רבנישע געגנטן

געצייכנט פון יוסף זשעמיאן, 1969



מקרא

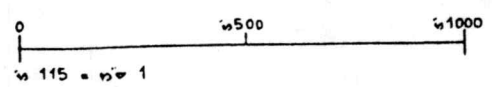
- אינור מגורים-לימודים
- לפי פארגעניט-40-8
- גבולות הגיטו ב-1 (תאריך הקמת הגיטו)
- שווייט גבולות בפברואר
- שער הגיטו

- ③ מוסדות ציבור ראשיים (ראשישמה)
- גבולות האיזורים הרבניים
- 16 האיזורים הרבניים (ראשישמה)

© 1969

רשימת מוסדות ציבור ראשיים כגיטו רכתובתם

26/28	ג'ויבנסקה	1. יודנראט
32	קרוכלנא	2. מפקדת משרת הסדר (הכשרה היהודית)
84	לשני	3. אגף העבודה - "Arbeitsamt"
60	סנכה	4. בית החולים ע"ש כרסוניס וכאומנים
1	לשני	5. בית החולים "צ'יססה": ז'לונא 86,
6/8	טסקי	6. סלומסקיה 4,
7/9	סלומסקיה	7. בית הכנסת הגדול
6	שנרה	8. בית הכנסת ע"ש ברוז'יק
7	דוילנא	9. בית הכנסת "סוריה"
5	סלומסקיה	10. מוסד לעזרה סוציאלית E.T.O.S., J.M.A.
2	לשני	11. מוסד עזרה לילדים - "צנסוס"
43	בנכה	12. מוסד לסיפוק בעכני כריאות - "סווי"
68	בוכליסקי	13. הארכיון המחתרתי בניסו - "עונב סנת"



ARI/134

RULES FOR A COMPETITION OF GATHERING AND DESCRIPTION
OF FACTS AND EVENTS ON SELECTED THEMES OF JEWISH LIFE
DURING THE WAR

A PROPOSAL

After a series of meetings, the organizing-committee of the competition, composed of D. Choldenko, M. Linder and Dr. E. Ringelblum (Jury and Executive), has formulated, in its last meeting on 22nd of January, 1942, the following fundamentals and rules for the competition:

1. A public competition will be announced on the following themes:
 - a. A monograph on Jewish life in a city.
 - b. Jewish-Polish Relations
 - c. Converted Jews in the Ghetto
 - d. The School system
 - e. The situation of the child.
 - f. Bribery in the Ghetto
 - g. Smuggling
 - h. A branch of Economy
 - i. House committees
 - j. Entertainment and dissolute behaviour in the Ghetto
 - k. The Isle of Tears (refugee "points")
 - l. September 1939
 - m. Police
 - n. Moments of solemnity and elevation in the life of ...
 - o. Social activities and leaders in the Ghetto.
2. New themes, which may be brought up by ... can be worked out after a written understanding ... executive.
3. The themes should be worked out
4. The theme ... only after ...
5. Each ... it ...

1	1st award	1,000 zlotys
1	2nd award	750 "
3	3rd "	500 "
4	4th "	300 "
2	5th "	200 "
3	6th "	100 "

A total of 14 awards.

6 The Jury has the right to divide one award among several contestants.

9. Irrespective of whether a work is qualified for an award or not, it remains the property of the Jury which has the full right to use it in any form (publication etc.).
10. The Jury consists of the following: D. Guzik, I. Gitterman, Sh. Winter, M. Linder, D. Cholodenko, M. Kon, Dr. E. Ringelblum.

AR/I-PH/23-3-4

TERMS AND AN OUTLINE FOR A YOUTH COMPETITION

Youths aged 15—20 can enter the competition. Competitors who commit themselves to participating must maintain regular contact with the secretary in order to receive instructions and directions as to the manner in which to write the competition assignment. The essay should be submitted to the secretary within 4 weeks from the day the youth committed himself to begin writing on a specific topic. The topic should cover approximately 25—30 typed pages. It may be written in any language.

The competition embraces youth from all circles of Jewish society:

1. Working youth
2. Middle-class youth
3. Youth belonging to the Jewish Intelligentsia
4. Students

The said groups should reflect the character of the citizens of Warsaw in their occupations.

5. Youths from the provinces

The form of the assignment may be as follows:

1. Autobiography — whole or selected fragments
2. Diary
3. Edited correspondence of youngsters among themselves.

In certain cases the competition-assignment may be presented in the form of:

1. Belletristic composition (of a youth)
2. A report of a "youth organization" leader

The essay should deal with factual material only, starting with the outbreak of the war between Germany and Poland (1.9.1939). The material should present a real image of the events which the writer himself experienced, or of which he was an eye-witness (therefore, the essay may also be written in first person).

I. The "Oneg Shabbath" Archives — Its Establishment and Activities

The youths of Warsaw will emphasize the events relating to the first days and weeks of the first stage of war-operations; the outward appearance of Jewish and Christian Warsaw in those days; the influence of the events on the mind and soul of the youth — both Jewish and Christian; the reaction of the youth to the events; the great migration from Warsaw on September 6—7, 1939; the later migration to the other side of the Bug river; experience of the youth in border-towns, concentration-camps, etc.; the experience of youths under the German rule; the decree of the yellow patch and its effect; the attitude of the Christian population to Jews (the way the youth saw it); the round-ups for forced labor — in the streets and in houses; by whom; how; the beating and robbing; etc.

The youths of provinces should present in his or her essay all the facts concerning his experience during the war-years in his hometown; relations between provincial Jews and the Jews of Warsaw; mutual relations between Jews and Poles; the way to Warsaw; the reception in Warsaw; first arrangements; private housing or in a refugee "point"; food supply; wages of the head of the family; relations between the members of the family; attempts to work independently.

The student competitor should present in his work all the information regarding eventual continuation of his studies, be it in his own school-group (namely, with his teachers from before the war), or in a foreign group.

The students' association should concentrate all the efforts of both students and teachers in regard to school fees, the rate and form of payment; the apartments in which lessons take place; eventual failures and the way to cope with them.

The essays should be illustrated as far as possible with documents such as cutouts from newspapers, photographs, pamphlets, announcements and posters of organizations, house-committees, of Jewish and non-Jewish authorities, etc. On the front page the youth should present certain personal data concerning his age, social origin, education, present economic situation.

ARI/105

THE LIFE OF JEWISH SCHOLARS

*

A poll among scholars on:

- 1) Their occupation, family circumstances, living conditions/before the war and now.
- 2) Present sources of income.

- 3) Subject and content of their research.
- 4) What were they working on as a holdover before the war, 4a) what now, 4b) what has been lost and under what circumstances, the content of that lost work.
- 5) Their present occupation, and its relation to their research.
- 6) Do they have the necessary premises and other conditions to continue their work?
- 7) The experiences of those who "went" and came back.
- 8) Research plans for the future.
- 9) Has the material been collected already/indicate the content of the work, what still has to be done/has it been committed to paper or retained in memory.
- 10) What do scholars think of the present times, of the Jewish experiences and future.
- 11) What commendable moments have they seen in Jewish ghetto-life.
- 12) Infamous moments.
- 13) Warsaw Jewry and the Jews of the province.
- 14) Their present form of self-expression, meetings and monthly budget of Jewish scholars.
- 15) The attitude of charitable institutions towards Jewish scholars.
- 16) Their suffering during the war/ accommodation, victims among relatives.
- 17) Change of credo in general and literary credo specifically, under the impact of the war.

The survey is to embrace also deceased scholars and must explain what happened to the scientific work left behind by the deceased author.

Some of the questions in the poll must be answered on the basis of conversations with friends and relatives of the deceased. Photographs of all pre-war and present writers should be attached.

The names of scholars questioned must be filled in.

The poll must first be approved by the editorial board.

1. Prose
Poetry
Drama
2. Memoirs and reportages.

The writer of the article must familiarize himself with the diverse works of the authors, and on this basis reflect the character of current Jewish scholarship in comparison with pre-war times. Considering the fear of one's work being lost, an appendix should be added to each article giving

1. The "Oneg Shabbath" Archives — Its Establishment and Activities

an exact summary of the content of the work. The worthiest works should be copied.

Scholars from the Province, new stars in the field of scholarship

Jewish-Polish writers — the identical questionnaires with the following addition: their views on Jewish life, scholarship etc. — have they drawn closer to Jews during the war — has it affected their work — scientific bodies — what is happening to the Polish scientific world. — What are their opinions of, or writings on, Jews.

10.

AN OUTLINE FOR A MONOGRAPH

(On the *Situation* of the Jewish Quarter in Warsaw in the Year 1941, in *Numbers*.)

1. The total number of the population.
2. Population according to sex and age.
3. Population according to religion.
4. Mobility of the population:
 - a) Deportations and arrivals,
 - b) Births,
 - c) Deaths.

* *Befelhsstelle* — The headquarters of extermination.

** *Ostbahn* — the Eastern Railway; *Heeresbauamt* — army construction office; *Steyr-Daimler-Puch* — motor and car factories.

III. Monographs and Studies on Specific Topics

5. The food supply situation of the Jewish Quarter population.
 - a) Allotment for provision cards.
 - b) Allotment for Jews in comparison with allotment for Aryans.
 - c) Market prices of first-need commodities.
 - d) The costs of supporting a 4-member family.
 - e) Cost of allotted commodities.
6. Pauperization.
 - a) Number of unemployed.
 - b) Number of people arrested in the Aryan Quarter.
 - c) Number of food cards distributed free.
 - d) Numbers of applications for lunch.
 - e) Number of applications in social welfare institutions.
7. The sanitary and health situation.
 - a) Number of the sick in hospitals, total.
 - b) Number of the sick in hospitals for contagious diseases.
 - c) Total number of typhoid cases.
 - d) Number of sick with typhoid in the hospitals.
 - e) The pressure of the sick in hospitals.
 - f) Shelters, rallying points, quarantines, boarding-houses.
 - g) Sickness in the rallying points.
 - h) The development of tuberculosis in the Jewish Quarter.
8. Mortality.
 - a) Total mortality.
 - b) Mortality in rallying points for refugees.
 - c) Causes of death in the rallying points.
 - d) Deaths in the street.
9. The Jewish Child.
 - a) Number of Children in Institutions for Child-Care.
 - b) The Situation in the Main Shelter-House.
 - c) The Situation in the Hospitals for Children.
 - d) The Pressure of Children in Hospitals and Shelters.
 - e) Mortality among Children in the Jewish Quarter.
10. Social Welfare.
 - a) Expenses of charitable aid (by the Judenrat, J.H.K., Z.T.O.S.).
 - b) Soup Kitchens.
 - c) Individual Aid.
 - d) Aid in Clothing.
 - e) Medical and Sanitary Aid.
 - f) Aid to the Deportees.
 - g) Child-Care.

11. Social Self-Aid.
 - a) Net of House Committees.
 - b) The Activity of the House Committees (collection of money, assessment-rates, collecting clothing).
 - c) Foster-Patronages.
12. The Economic Situation of the Jewish Quarter.
 - a) Vocational and Social Structure.
 - b) The Economic Potential (skilled workers, machines).
 - c) Number of Enterprises by Branches and Occupations.
 - d) The Number of People Vocationally Active in Branches and Occupations.
 - e) The Number of Workers' Applications to the Social Insurance.
 - f) Employment in Places in Charge of German Authorities.
 - g) Employment in Factories within the Ghetto.
 - h) Payment, Pensions and Salaries.
 - i) Turnover of the Bank Clearing Office (The Cooperative Bank).
 - k) Action in the Reloading Area.
13. Organizations of Economic Self-Aid.
 - a) Non-Interest Loan-Bank.
 - b) ORT.
 - c) ToPoRol.
 - d) Produce Cooperatives.

Plan of an Informative Interview with Skilled Workers in a Particular Occupation

1. The Structure of the Occupation.
 - a) Factories; b) Independent workshops; c) Cottage industry; d) Cooperatives-(Mechanized/Manual).
2. The Rate of Employment in Particular Categories of Enterprises (approximately).
3. Names of Larger Enterprises, German/Jewish (addresses).
4. The Character of Production (what is produced, in what quantities, any substitute commodities and which?).
5. The Chain of Sales and Production (finances, agents and producers).
6. The Character of Agreements on work-conditions or on product.
7. The Sources of Raw Material (name, sorts, substitute product) and the Conditions of Purchase.
8. Propellant Energy (the question of fuel).
9. Financing the Production (credit, advance money, etc.).

III. Monographs and Studies on Specific Topics

10. The Nature of the Customers.
11. Where Product taken over.
12. Profits of the Producers, Wages (cash, in kind, percentage to the Intermediaries).
13. Criteria of Economic Situation (to compare with past periods).
 - a) Duration of Employment (considering the category of the enterprise, number of days in a week, month).
 - b) The Rate of Unemployment among Skilled/Unskilled Workers.
 - c) The Number and Character of New Enterprises (Approximately).
 - d) The Opinion of Aryan Employees as to the Possibility of Expanding the Production in a Given Branch in the Jewish Quarter.
14. Difficulties in Developing a Particular Industry.
 - a) Lack of Orders(cause).
 - b) Lack of Precision Machines, skilled workers, raw material, fuel.
15. Conceptions of Prospective Interest Regarding Constructive Aid in a Given Occupation.

5.

AR I/135

THE STREET — [OUTLINE]

1. *Outward appearance.*
First impressions. Comparison to the pre-war Jewish street. Exoticism and Europeanism.
2. *Buildings* (seen from the street side).
Gates. Windows. Stores. Shop-windows.
3. *Walls.*
Exits. Guards. Gates and passages. Small bridges. Breaches. Smuggling.
4. *Street Traffic.*
Pedestrians. Difficulties of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. (walls, footbridges, cut-off streets, round-about ways).
Vehicular Traffic: cars, tramways, konheller vehicles, hearses, body barrows, ambulances, droshkies, rickshas. People standing in the street.
5. *Man in the street.*
Clerks, traders, unemployed, beggars, functionaries. Women, children. Aryans.
6. *Street trade.*
Shops, coffeehouses, restaurants, small snack-gardens. Bazaars, stands, counters. Movable goods. Second-hand clothes trade. Food trade. Bread, cigarettes, candies and books. Mediation. The oriental character of the street trade.
7. *The aesthetic aspect of the street.*
Sounds and colours. Sounds: noise, shouting, yellings of the beggars, hawking-calls of the traders. Music, singing and reciting in the street: The hum of conversations and quarrels — of sellers and buyers.
Colours: variegation, versatility, lack of uniformity of clothes. Arm-bands, hats, uniforms. Advertisements and leaflets. Stench. Contrasts between poverty and wealth in the outward appearance. Theatres, cabarets, gardens. Exoticism.
8. *Social life in the street.*
"Aristocratic" streets and their splendid isolation. Churches and clubs of converted Jews. Lord and tramp. Ruler and slave. Productive worker and the rest of non-productive population. Proletarian and semi-proletarian streets. "All equal". Downward Equalization. Social differences marked by clothing, language, religion, "labor arm-band", labor card, good complexion and being less skinny. The search for favoritism and work. Street entertainment: Beggars' street-perform-

ance, stroll and rest, small gardens, loudspeakers, gossip under walls, coffeehouses.

9. *Street Morality.*
Stealing and cheating. Healthy and pathological reactions. Lynching, indifference and sympathy. Alms. Sanctions. Shameless behaviour. Satisfaction of physiological needs. Waste. Drunkenness. Prostitution. Corruption. Contrasts. Contrasts in standard of living.
10. *Street emotions.*
Optimism and pessimism. Joy and sadness. Hopes and resignation. Illusion and apathy. Fear and terror: killing, beating, imprisonment, capture for labor camps. Panic and gossip. Sympathy and charity. Revenge and hatred. Cowardice and courage. Highest and lowest emotions: humaneness, self sacrifice, martyrdom, heroism, religiousness, rationalism, Jewish anti-Semitism, egotism, bestiality — general dullness.
11. *Street Squalor.*
Beggarliness, stench. Hunger. Lack of fresh air and greenery. Lice, filth, sickness and death in the street.
12. *Certain streets and quarters.*
The Little and the Large Ghetto. Quarters and districts. Central and peripheral streets. Main arteries. The busiest and the dead streets. Streets cut athwart and halved, cut up and cut out. Street-prisons.

1.

AR I/126

ABOUT RELIGIOUS LIFE
(Questionnaire)

1. Praying — Synagogues, Houses of Learning, Small Houses of Prayer, Praying in Privacy, Catching persons out of Praying Groups for compulsory labour, religious votes.

412

2. Scrolls of the Torah — Torn and Desecrated.
3. Rabbis — Practising Hassidic Life, Tables, Request-Notes, Three Meals of the Sabbath, the service at the Conclusion of the Sabbath.
4. Rabbis — Torah-Ruling, Marriage Ceremonies, Divorces, Ritual fictitious Sales for Sabbath, same for Passover, Resolving Religious Queries.
5. Legal Status of the Rabbinate — Weddings, Birth Certificates, Registrations.
6. Beards — Shaven, Burnt, Punishment for growing beards.
7. Clothing — Changing of long garments and Jewish hats for European clothing, Silk Outfits, Hassidic Fur Hats, and women's wigs.
8. Torah — Talmud Study Societies, Mishnayot (a word is missing — Bible?), Psalm-Reciting.
10. Ritual Baths — Keeping family purity, shut-down Ritual Baths, Travelling to near-by cities, to the Vistula/river/, Opening of Ritual Baths.
11. Slaughtering — Poultry slaughtering /.../, in homes, in attics, in cellars, outside the Ghetto /.../ selling to Poles and /.../
12. Ethrogim (Citrons) — In the year 1940, in the year 1941.
13. Matzoth (Unleavened Bread) — in the year 1940 and 1941.
14. Cemeteries — Purification, Shrouds, /./, burial on the Sabbath and Holidays, Burial of men and women, side by side, leaving the dead unburied.
15. Holidays — New Year, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, Feast of Lights, Purim, Passover, The Ninth of Ab, Pentecost, in the years 1940 and 1941.
16. Schooling — Elementary Religious Schools (Heder), High Schools of Learning (Yeshivot), Students who attend houses of learning and daily meal guests ((i.e. supporting indigenous students).
17. Observance of Sabbath — Desecration of the Sabbath by religious Jews, Reasons, Public desecration of the Sabbath, Sabbath Rules and their implementation.
18. Life of the Provincial Rabbis in Warsaw — "Rabbis' Honorary Association". What happened in the Aid-Committee for Rabbis.
19. Kosher Public Kitchens.
20. Religious Groups — with Jewish Social Self-Aid, Community, 13 Leszno Str., "Centos".
21. Martyrology and Martyrs.

Handwritten note: [] תשובות ..

Singing for Survival

Songs of the Lodz Ghetto,
1940-45

GILA FLAM

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS
Urbana and Chicago

1992

The Song: A "Hit"

During the first year of the ghetto's existence the song "Rumkowski Chaim," performed by the street entertainer Yankele Hershkowitz, became very popular. Most of the survivors remember the song, even if they do not recall the singer's real name and do not remember seeing him in the ghetto.

Yankele Hershkowitz and his "hit song" are described by the chroniclers in their entry of 5 December 1941:

The author and performer of this song is the popular ghetto street "troubadour" (Yankele) Hershkowitz, formerly a tailor by trade. Last year he composed the extremely popular topical song entitled "Rumkowski Chaim" . . . and once even received a gift of five Marks from the Chairman himself, who had chanced to hear the song. Another time, the ghetto "troubadour" received a package of *matzoth* from the Chairman in person when he was performing his song in front of a store which the Chairman happened to be visiting before the holidays. At present the song writer has formed a partnership with a man from Vienna, a certain Karl Rosentsweig, a former traveling salesman. Rosentsweig accompanies Hershkowitz on the guitar or zither. And this duo, which, like everything else in the ghetto, is a bit peculiar, being composed of a tailor from Balut and a traveling salesman from Vienna, is enjoying great success with the populace. This is of course good for their business and the duo sometimes ends up with six Marks to share after a full day's work, a tidy wage indeed. The partnership has recently launched a new song.³ . . . The ghetto's songwriter also composed another very popular "hit song" entitled "lebn zol prezes Chaim" (Long live Chairman Chaim). (Dobroszycki 1984:92)

Yankele Hershkowitz composed and sang his songs in Yiddish, the Jewish vernacular. The verses covered a broad range of political and social topics in which the singer lamented the past and commented on the present. He continued the tradition of the *broder-singers* (singers from Brody) of the *Haskalah* period, the wandering minstrels who entertained on the street corners of Eastern Europe with topical and satirical songs. However, unlike his predecessors who traveled from one town to the next, the ghetto singer was confined to the ghetto.

Yankele Hershkowitz could also be classified as a typical Eastern European Yiddish folk singer, one of those performers of the last two centuries who later became popular singers in the growing urban centers of Poland and elsewhere. According to Cahan, one of the early folklorists of Jewish folksong, such a singer came from a low-to middle-class family and used his talent to earn additional income. Due to his background, his repertoire addressed the issues of "all people," and he drew on familiar topics and musical sources: "his outlook of the world is the same as that of his fellow men, he draws his ideas from the common life of his surroundings, using the folk's mouth and his own soul. He is one of the masses with a natural poetic nature, but not a famous [literate] poet" (Cahan 1952: 11).

The Jewish folksinger of the interwar period was exposed to both Yiddish and Polish folk music and popular music, as well as to American popular music, both Jewish and non-Jewish, which made its way to Europe. In addition, the singer could be exposed to classical music or its popular rendition and to Jewish sacred music. The main difference that separated the Jewish singer from his neighbors before 1939 was his use of two internal languages: Yiddish and Hebrew.

Thus the description of Yankele Hershkowitz given by Rachmil Bryks in his novel *Di papirene kroyn* (The paper crown) fits into the framework of the typical Jewish folksinger:

Yankele was a genuine folksinger. . . . Just before World War II he arrived in Lodz from ~~the~~. He was a tailor of cheap designs, a simple, nice man. All his education came from the *kheyder* where he studied 'vry [the basic Hebrew alphabet and biblical stories]. . . . At a young age he had to go to work to help his poor family. He did not even know Polish, he wrote Yiddish with mistakes. . . . He traveled with other tailors to nearby towns to trade his merchandise and thus he learned folksongs and folktales. . . . He had a pleasant voice. He enjoyed singing and sang very emotionally. For each event of the *shtetl* he composed a poem and adapted it to a well-known melody. Soon afterwards, all the people of the *shtetl* sang his rhymes. . . . When the ghetto was sealed and Yankele did not have anything on which to survive, he knew that Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski was responsible for that, and this was what most of the ghetto inhabitants thought. . . . Thus he composed the song about Rumkowski . . . and adapted the lyrics to an old folk melody. . . . (1969:34-35)

Apt
(Opato)

In the ghetto, where no radios were allowed, newspapers forbidden, and political gatherings outlawed, the only form of expression still permitted (albeit supervised) was singing. Thus, it is not surprising that the "king of the ghetto"—Chaim Rumkowski—became the theme of "Rumkowski Chaim," a song that was to be the ghetto's greatest "hit."

Yankele Hershkowitz was accompanied, some survivors observe, by a musical instrument. However, there is some debate over the instrument used. The conflicting reports prove one thing at any rate: his accompaniment was most likely an ad-hoc affair determined by the availability of instruments and accompanists.

Hershkowitz uses a verse-refrain structure for this song as well as for most of his songs. These are most likely contrafact, that is, songs created by setting new words to a pre-existing melody, a method traditional among folk poets who are also folksingers. According to Beregovski, the "new" satirical songs "largely use the devices of contrast and parody, as did the older satirical songs . . ." (1982:34). My research has not yielded an original source for the melody of "Rumkowski Chaim," and it is more than likely that Hershkowitz drew his melody from the body of Yiddish folk tunes.

The version I present here is one I recorded in Israel during the summer of 1985.⁴ It was sung by Yaakov Rotenberg, a survivor of the Lodz ghetto who was fourteen when the ghetto was sealed. The text is transcribed into Latin characters according to the pronunciation of the informant in his special Lodz dialect. An English translation is provided along with the Yiddish. (The words in the lyrics which are marked with an asterisk are discussed in note 4.)

Song 1

Rumkovski khayim (Rumkowski Chaim)

Verse

Yi - da - lakh zay - nen ge - bentsht mit kha - yim, _ Kha -

yim le - oy - lam mu - ves, Kha - yim fin beys ha - kha - yim, —
 — Rum-kov-ski kha-yim mit zayn groyn - sn nes. — Er makht dekh
 ni - sim oy, Yey-dn tug a - zoy, Ge-valt tsi shra - a - yen oy, oy,
 oy. Ye-der ay - ner frey - gt — A tsvay - te shay -
 le. oy. — Zugt er kha - yim s'iz git a - zoy.
 Refrain
 Vayl ind - zer kha - yim, Er get indz kla - yen, Er get indz
 gro - pn, Er get indz man, Far-tsay - tns hobn di mid - ber yi - dn
 ge - ge - sn man; Hay - nt est shoy'n ye - de vayb ir
 man. — Rum-kov-ski kha - yim hot git ge - trakht, Ge - ar - bet
 shve - [e]r bay tug bay nakht, — Ge-makht a ge - to in a
 dye - to, — In er shrayt ge - vald ar iz ge - rakht!

Verse 1:

Yidalakh zaynen gebentsht mit khayim,
 Khayim leoylam muves, [? אלקו נרצח]
 Khayim fin beys ha'khayim,
 Rumkovski khayim mit zayn groyns nes.
 Er makht dekh nisim oy,
 Yeydn tug azoy,
 Gevalt tsi shrayen oy, oy, oy,
 Yeyder ayner freygt:
 A tsvayte shayle, oy,
 Zugt er khayim s'iz git azoy!

Refren:

Vayl [er iz] indzer khayim,
 Er get indz klayen,
 Er get indz groyn,
 Er get indz man.*
 Fartsaytns hobn di midber yidn gegesn man;
 Haynt est shoy'n yede vayb ir man.
 Rumkovski khayim hot git getrakht,
 Gearbet shver bay tug bay nakht,
 Gemakht a geto in a dyeto
 In er shrayt gevald a[z] [e]r iz gerakht!

Verse 2:

Khayim vaytsman hot gezugt:
 Az er vil di yidn in palestine hobn.
 Hot zay gehaysn akern zeyen,
 Er hot zay dortn tif bagrubn,
 Ober indzer khayim'l,
 Rumkovski khayim,
 Er get indz yeydn tug shrayim:
 Aynem a shtik broyt,
 In tsvey'n a shtik ferd,
 Me leygt bay eyem oyekh tif'n drerd.

Refren: Vayl iz indzer . . .

Verse 1:

Jews are seen to be blessed with life,
 Life until death,
 Life from the house of life, (cemetery)
 Rumkowski Chaim and his great miracle.
 He makes miracles, oy,
 So every day,
 For heaven's sake, oy, oy, oy,
 Everyone asks:
 A second question, oy?
 Chaim says: It's good this way!

Refrain:

Because [he is] our Chaim*
 He gives us bran,
 He gives us barley,
 He gives us manna.*
 Once upon a time Jews of the desert ate manna,
 Now each woman eats her husband.
 Rumkowski Chaim thought it through,

Worked hard day and night,
 Made a ghetto with a diet (store),*
 And claims gevald that he is right!

Verse 2:

Chaim Weizmann said:
 He wants to have the Jews in Palestine.
 He told them to plow, sow,
 He did them in there deep,
 But, our Chaim,
 Rumkowski Chaim,
 X Everyday he gives us leftovers:
 One a piece of bread,
 The other a piece of horse,
 And we are also done in deep.

Refrain: . . .

23

Verse 3:
 Der driter khayim fin beys ha'khayim,
 Hot mit malkhe [ha]muv'es a git gesheft gemakht:
 Er zol im tsishteln maysim vus mer,
 Er zol im tsishteln bay tug bay nakht.
 Hot zekh der malekh ha'muv'es genimen
 Tsi der arbet shnel.
 Er makht fin yedn giber* oy a tel:
 Er makht des flink,
 Er makht des git.
 Er makht di gantse geto* shvakh in mid.

Refrain: Vayl iz indzer . . .

Verse 4:
 In a zimer tug,
 Geveyzn iz a tug a hayser,
 Geyt rumkovski in der gas,
 Er zet dokh oys vi a keyser.
 A hele antsug, oy,
 In tinkele briln,
 Politsay arim bevakht.
 Iekh zug aykh guer
 Indzer keyser hot groue huer,
 Leybn zol er gantse hindert yuer!

Refrain: Vayl iz indzer . . .

Verse 5:
 Rumkovski khayim der eltster yude,
 Iz ungeshtelt bay di gestapo.
 Meye yidalakh zaynen zayne bruder,
 In er farzorgt indz di papo.
 Er makht dekh nisim oy,
 Yeydn tug azoy
 Gevald tsi shrayen oy, oy, oy!
 Yeyder ayner freygt:
 A tsvayte shayle oy?
 Zugt er khayim: s'iz git azoy!

Verse 3:
 The third Chaim of the house of life,
 Made a good deal with the angel of death:
 He should provide him more and more corpses,
 He should provide them day and night.
 So, the angel of death
 Got to work right away.
 He makes a mess out of every hero:
 He does it quickly,
 He does it well.
 He makes the whole ghetto weak and tired.

Refrain: . . .

Verse 4:
 On a summer day,
 It was a very hot day,
 Rumkowski walked in the street,
 And looked like a Royal Highness.
 He wore a light-colored suit, oy,
 And dark glasses,
 Surrounded by the police.
 I tell you
 Our Royal Highness has gray hair,
 May he live to be a hundred!

Refrain: . . .

Verse 5:
 Rumkowski Chaim, the Eldest of the Jews,
 Is employed by the Gestapo.
 We Jews are his brothers,

And he supplies our food.
 He makes miracles, oy,
 So every day,
 For heaven's sake, oy, oy, oy!
 Everyone asks:
 A second question, oy?
 Chaim says: It's good this way!

I have recorded an additional verse on Rumkowski, from Yaakov Flam, sung to the same melody. This verse was recalled and published by Frenkiel (1986b: 43-44), a survivor of the Lodz ghetto who considers it an independent song and not as a verse of this "hit song," even though it is sung to the same melody:

Verse 6:
 Ikh hob aykh yidelekh epes tsi zugn:
 A kadokhes vel ikh aykh zugn.
 Di yidelekh zugn shoyn fil nevues,
 "Az di geto efenen vet men shevues!"
 A tsveytn tug er redt,
 Yidelekh makhn shoyn a gevet
 Un lernen zekh shoyn vayter trefn,
 Rumkovski fin di yidelekh lakht:
 "A krenk vus ir trakht!"
 Di geto blaybt oykh vayter git farmakht.

[kadokhes אנצפ]

Verse 6:
 I've got for you, Jews, something to tell you:
 It's a big nothing I've got to tell you.
 The Jews mouth many prophecies already,
 "The Ghetto will open
 on Shavuot!"
 A second day he makes a speech,
 Jews are already betting
 And trying to guess,
 But Rumkowski laughs at the Jews:
 "Who cares what you think!"
 And still the ghetto stays tightly closed.

The song, especially the refrain, is known to every survivor of the Lodz ghetto. In addition, Yaakov Rotenberg even calls it *ha-shir ha-gadol* in Hebrew, meaning the "hit" song of the ghetto. Rachmil Bryks quotes the refrain in his novel *Der kayser in geto* (The emperor in the ghetto) and describes children and adults singing it, accompanying themselves with hand clapping and foot stamping

(1961:29). Bryks also quotes a variant of the refrain (1961:196) which was composed by the ghetto children for a play they performed on a street corner:

Rumkowski Chaim
Er get indz mayim,
Er get indz fefer,
Er get indz sam . . .
R'hot gemakht a gete mit a dyete.
R'hot gemakht a gete mit a mete—
Und er shrayt
Az er iz gerekht!

Rumkowski Chaim
He gives us water,
He gives us pepper,
He gives us poison.
He made a ghetto
With a diet.
He made a ghetto
~~By the meter~~ with sentries
And he claims
That he is right!

Chava Rosenfarb in her trilogy *Der boym fun lebn* (The tree of life) also quotes an abridged version of the song (1972, 2:550).

The opening three verses speak in turn about the three "Chaims": Chaim Rumkowski, Chaim Weitzmann, the Zionist leader, and Chaim *der grober* (the fat), the undertaker of the ghetto. The latter's nickname is a multilevel pun relating to his physical appearance (*grob* in Yiddish means fat one) and to his profession (*gräber* is German for gravedigger). The real name of Chaim *der grober* was Chaim Perzerkowski; he survived the war and died soon after its end, in 1945 in Lodz.⁵

The final two verses give sarcastic praise to Rumkowski. These might be considered as dues paid to the "Royal Highness" so he would not get angry and arrest the singer. These verses could have been improvised when the singer saw Rumkowski in the streets, and were probably not composed at the same time as the first three verses. My sources could not give any dates for the composition in general or for any particular verses.

The sixth verse comments on Rumkowski's speechmaking, for while he favored big words in order to foster hope, his words actually contained nothing of substance.

Throughout the song, contrasts are made between "him," the leader, and "us," the ghetto dwellers. The name Chaim literally means "life," but the song which was composed in the ghetto has other important features. In its many-layered allusions to the heritage of Jewish cultural life, biblical themes, Hassidic folklore, and Zionism, "Rumkowski Chaim" is a powerfully ironic commentary on the abuses of power, the senseless infliction of suffering on one's fellow man, and the negation of life—death.

The following is my line-by-line interpretation of the text based on this background and the interviews I have conducted.

The word *khayim* (Yidd.: Chaim) serves as a leitmotif for the first verse as well as for the entire song. The song declares: "Jews are seen to be blessed with life, life until death." This statement has morbidly recast the biblical verse "For dust we thou art, and unto dust shall thou return" (Gen. 3:19), as "from the cemetery we are created and to the cemetery we return." (Cemetery = *beys ha-khayim*, that is, euphemistically, house of life.) An analogy is made between Chaim Rumkowski, the Jewish leader, and Moses, the Jewish historical leader. Chaim promised the ghetto dwellers miracles, promised them food (life) that would descend as a result of miracles, when in actuality the result of these promises is that they starved. However, when the ghetto dwellers complain, Rumkowski answers, "It's good this way." The question reflects their misery, but also Rumkowski's belief that he was doing the right thing.

The refrain makes clear the analogy to Moses: Moses gave his people the "manna" by miracles. Rumkowski, on the other hand, "gives us bran / he gives us barley / he gives us wine." The wine was made from barley, the informant explains, just as in the variant (quoted above) Rumkowski is like Moses and "gives us manna." But unlike the children of Israel in the desert, the ghetto-dwellers starve. Nothing is left but to complain. The wife complains to her husband, as described in the song: "Jews in the desert ate manna / Now each woman eats her husband." This plays on the Yiddish idiom *esn zikh*—to eat away at something, in this case the woman's complaints "eat up" her husband. The poet also plays on the rhyme-association—*manna*, the biblical sustenance, and *man*, Yiddish for husband. The poet gives an explanation as to how the ghetto reached its desperate condition, in the line "Rumkowski Chaim thought it through, / worked hard day and night, / made a ghetto with a diet." As Rute Pups (1962:56–58) explains, the word *dyeto* meant a special food store which carried better food products. Officially the

store was for "sick people," but in fact it was for privileged people from whom Rumkowski wanted support. So, while Rumkowski and his friends are eating well, everyone else eats poorly.

The refrain reminded Hershkovitz's audience as to who was responsible for the deteriorating situation in the ghetto, describing the lack of resources and identifying the main cause of the suffering.

The repetition of the word *khayim* in the refrain brings to mind the blessing of the new month in which the reader and the congregation ask God for eleven different kinds of *khayim*: life. On the Sabbath preceding *Rosh Hodesh*, Jews call upon God: "grant us long life, a life of peace and well-being, a life of blessing and sustenance, a life of physical health, a life of piety and dread of sin, a life free from shame and disgrace, a life of wealth and honor, a life marked by our love for Torah and our fear of Heaven, a life in which the wishes of our heart shall be fulfilled for happiness" (translation in Birnbaum 1969: 430). This contrast of a blessing which becomes a curse, life which is like death but not death itself, is the central motif of this song.

The second verse introduces Chaim Weizmann, the leader of the Zionist movement. Again the contrast is made: Chaim Weizmann entrapped the Jewish people in the Holy Land by telling them to work the soil, and in the ghetto, the dwellers work and yet receive *shirayim* (Heb.: leftovers). The reference to *shirayim* also requires some explanation: This Hebrew word for leftovers specifically refers to that part of the meal a Hassidic Rebbe would leave for his followers. In the song text this tributary food, originally an act of respect, is "a piece of bread, . . . a piece of horse" (the latter is not kosher). Yaakov Rotenberg recalls how Orthodox Jews spat at the singer when he mentioned the horsemeat. For many Jews, however, it was at that time the food that saved their lives. *Shirayim* rhymes with *khayim* (life), and *ferd* (horse, i.e., horsemeat = food = life) rhymes with *dzerd* (the earth), making life like death.

The third verse presents the third Chaim, the gravedigger, who brings corpses to the "house of life," the cemetery. This Chaim, as described in the song, is very productive: "(He) made a good deal with the angel of death: / He should provide him more and more corpses; / He should provide them day and night." The "deal" was struck between the Angel of Death (the only angel known in the ghetto) and the undertaker. The Angel of Death is a good worker: he "got to work right away. / He makes a mess out of every hero. / He does it quickly, He does it well. / He makes the ghetto weak and tired." This efficient cooperation between the two creates a weak

ghetto, or in some versions, a weak world—which for the inhabitants means probably the same thing. This partnership, made in heaven, causes dreadful results on earth.

Here the song could come to an end (as in Itka Slodowsky's version); however Yaakov Rotenberg remembered two additional verses devoted exclusively to the "Royal Highness," the "First Chaim," Chaim Rumkowski.

The fourth verse begins with a description of a seasonal moment in the ghetto: it is a summer day, a hot summer day, Chaim Rumkowski wears a light-colored suit, his eyes are shielded by dark glasses. Why? Does he not wish to see what is going on in the ghetto? In his kingdom? In contrast to the cold and darkness suffered by the ghetto dwellers, a motif found in many songs of the period, the sun always shines for Rumkowski. He walks in the streets surrounded by personal guards; he is not alone "and look[s] like a Royal Highness." And the verse concludes: "I tell you / Our Royal Highness has gray hair; / May he live to be a hundred!" The poet tells his audience that although Rumkowski is not young—after all he was appointed to be the "Eldest of the Jews"—he wished him to live to be a hundred. This blessing is actually a curse, since Jews bless each other with *hundert und tsvontsik yor*—"may you live to be a hundred and twenty," the number of years that Moses lived (Deut. 34:7). Here, then, it becomes clear that Rumkowski is not Moses; as a "tribute" to his leadership even a hundred years are more than enough.

Yaakov Rotenberg and Rute Pups (1962: 56-58) both report that when the singer used to sing the last line of that verse, "may he live to be a hundred," the audience would respond with an additional sarcastic sentence: *Az aynnemen zol er a shvarts yor*, meaning "May he live through a black year," i.e., may the devil take him. And thus they expressed their anger and "love" to their Royal Highness.

The fifth verse continues the line of thought presented in the fourth verse: yes, Rumkowski is the "Eldest of the Jews"; that is the title given to him by the Germans. He has to obey the *Gestapo*, but "We Jews are his brothers / and he supplies our food" (*papo* is the Polish word for cereal, meaning basic food). In addition one should not forget that "He makes miracles, so every day / for heaven's sake, oy, oy, oy."

The sixth verse is a commentary on Rumkowski's speeches, which created fear and at the same time hope. They were the source for rumors, and were delivered in a Lithuanian dialect; Rumkowski thought this to be the dialect of the Jewish intelligentsia of which he wanted to become a part. Rumors such as "the ghetto will open on

Shavuot" were spread often, but this and other rumors were pure fantasy. Shavuot is the holiday that commemorates Moses' bringing the Torah (God's law) from Mount Sinai to the Children of Israel. However, in the ghetto there was no Torah, no Moses, no holiday, and no freedom; it remained tightly closed, its dwellers hopeless and weakened.

Dobroszycki writes, "Rumkowski rarely doubted that he was in the right" (1984:1). Indeed, Yankele Hershkowitz ends his song with the last words of its refrain manifesting the same idea.

The melody of "Rumkowski Chaim," which contributed to its popularity, may have been adapted from another source. The melody has many characteristics of Jewish folksong with reminders of cantorial recitation, and this may have been its origin. It is cast in a minor mode. It makes use of a distinctive rhythmic manner of text setting—iambic primas—a melodic-rhythmic figure with a universal repetition. This figure, according to Braun (1984:285 n. 44), is characteristic of Jewish folksong.

The song form is: verse, A A' B B'; refrain, A A' B B'. This form is common in both Jewish folk music (cf. Beregovski 1982:293) and European and Jewish popular music (cf. Idelsohn 1967:400). The verse and the refrain share similar rhythmic and melodic material. It is sung in a triple meter with an upbeat which causes asymmetric accents on weak beats. Like other Jewish folksongs, according to Beregovski (1982:293), the melody is symmetrical; the underlying structure of this song is in four measures.

The "sweet" melody with its ironic cantorial ornamentations carries a profound commentary on daily suffering in the ghetto. The match between the text and the melody caused the song to live in the memory of the survivors.

79 Avrom Akselrod

22. ביים געטא-טויערל

ביים געטא-טויערל ברענט א פֿענרל
אין די שרעק אין גרויס,
עס גייען יודעלעך פון די בריגאדעלעך,
פֿין יעדן ניסט זיך שווייס.

צו זאָל איך בלעבן שטיין,
צו זאָל איך וועטער גיין,
איך ווייס נישט, ווען אין ווי.
דער קאָמענדאַנטעלע אין גרינעם סאַנטעלע
ער נעמט דאָך אלעס צו...

נעלט אַ בנטעלע,
האלן אַ שניטעלע,
ער נעמט דאָך אלעס צו,
מילך אַ קענדעלע,
שפעק אַ פֿענדעלע,
ער לאָזט דאָך נישט צו רי.

חֶבֶר מיטן שטרעף, וו
איך בין אינגאנצן טרייף
דורכגיין דעם קאָנטראָל.
פאַר דעם ביסל שרעק
קריגסט אַ קילאָ שפעק
אין סאָרגן נאָך אַסאָל.

שטעלט זיך אויס צו פֿיר
אין דו לעבן מיר,
ישטופ זיך נישט פון זעט,
דו גיי צום רעכטן גוי,
"שיטאָס יאו טוואַרקאָי"
געטאָכט אַ לעבל ברויט.

אברהם אקסעלרוד

אומגעקומען אין קאַטוועזש געטא

Sung to the tune
of *Afn pripetshtik*
brent a fayerl.

At the Ghetto Gate^o

At the ghetto gate
A fire flames.
Search is the worst yet.
Jews parade back
From the work brigades
Dripping buckets of sweat.

Should I go on ahead
Or stand still instead?
I'm not sure what to do.
The little commander
Decked out in green
Takes everything from you.

A stick of firewood,
Money in a wad,
God, he takes it all!
Milk from the can,
Lard from the pan,
Jews, it's awful.

Friend at the gate, listen,
I'm not all that clean.
Help me make it through,
Get me past the guard,
You'll get a kilo of lard
And more tomorrow too.

"Line up in fours!
You—stand over here
by me. Don't run away!"
Find the right guy—
"This one's OK"—
A loaf of bread for you today.

YA'ALES [YA'ALEH VEYAVO]

Avrom Akselrod, 1942

Zog mir, zog mir du geto-yidl,
Ver shpilt in geto dos ershte fidl?
Ver fun di ya'ales mer oder veynik
Vil do regirn punkt vi a kenig?

Tumbala, tumbala, shpil geto-yidl,
Shpil mir fun yidishe ya'ales a lidl--
Fun ale shefn un inspektorn
Vos zenen in geto mentshn gevorn...

Ver fun di ya'ales ken a karte gebn
Un a shayn tsu blaybn lebn?
Un vifl darf men derfar batsoln,
Kedey a brigade a gute tsu hobn?

Tumbala, tumbala, shpil geto-yidl...

Far vos esn ya'ales vayse gebeks,
Vareme beygelekh, bulkes un keks?
Un farbrengen gemitlekh bay muzik un bay kortn
Un fayern "yontoyvim" bay emese tortn?

Tumbala, tumbala, shpil geto-yidl...

Tsi hobn ven ya'ales gearbet afn aerodrom
Mit a hak, mit a lopete oder mit a lom?
Efsher voltn zey farshtanen undzere ya'ales
Far vos di oreme mase shtelt azelkhe shayles?

Tunmbala, tumbala, shpil geto-yidl...

Ver darf di kontsertn, ven der troyer iz groys
Un s'pishtshet der hunger in dem orten hoyz?
Farzorgt zey beser mit "yushnik" a teler
Un hert oyf tsu praven do ya'alishe beler...

דער מחבר אונבאקאנט

15. האָט זיך מיר די שייך צעריסן

האָט זיך מיר די שייך צעריסן,
וויי צו משניע יאָרן!
די קראַגנס האָט מען אונדז אָפּגעריסן,
ווער איך דאָך פֿאַרפֿראָרן.
טאַנק, טאַנק, טאַנק
אַביסעלע מיט מיר!
אוי, איר גרויסע פֿרעסטעלעך,
איר קומט דאָך פֿון סיביר.

געלע שנינען, דאָזע שנינען,
אלערליי קאָלירן:
ווען וועל איך מיין וויבל זלאַטע
צו זיך אהיים שוין פירן?
טאַנק, טאַנק, טאַנק
אַ ביסעלע מיט מיר!
האַסטו אַ געלן שייך,
האַב איך חתונה מיט דיר.

ברויט אָפּן סענטימעטער,
האַלץ אָפּן דעקאַ,
האַט אונדז פֿאַרזאָרגט דער יידנראַט,
דער יידנראַט פֿון געטאָ,
טאַנק, טאַנק, טאַנק
אַביסעלע מיט מיר!
האַסטו אַ געלן שייך,
האַב איך חתונה מיט דיר.

Ya'ales°

Tell me, oh tell me, you ghetto Jew,
Who plays first fiddle here, just who?
And which of the big shots in the ghetto gang
Hands out orders just like a king?

Tumbala, tumbala, play on, ghetto Jew.
Play me a song of the Jewish Who's Who.
Of all the inspectors and bosses
The ghetto has raised up from the masses.

Which of the big shots has a card to give
And a permit to keep you alive?
And just how much must you pay
For the privilege of an easy work brigade?

Tumbala, tumbala . . .

Why does the top brass have white rolls to eat,
Warm bagels, fresh buns and rolls that are sweet?
How can they glory in music and poker stakes
And live it up with honest-to-goodness cakes?

Tumbala, tumbala . . .

Have the big shots ever slaved at the airport
With an axe, a shovel or a crowbar?
Maybe then they might give an ear to our moans
How us poor folk have all these questions.

Tumbala, tumbala . . .

Who needs concerts when so great are our sorrows
And hunger whines in the poor man's house?
Far better we all have soup in our bowls
And you stop with your ritzy carnivals.

Kovno ghetto, circa 1942

WOE IS ME

My shoes they are shot,
And my collar, alas,
Has been ripped from my coat.
I'm freezing my ass.
Dance, dance, come dance a bit with me.
Oh you miserable cold winds,
You're from Siberia, I see.

Yellow passes, pink passes,
Every color under heaven.
When can I bring Zlate my wife
back home once more? How soon?
Dance, dance, come dance with me a bit.
You got a yellow pass,
I'll marry you in a minute.

Centimeters of bread,
Decimeters of wood,
Furnished by the Judenrat,
The Getto Judenrat.
Dance, dance, come dance with me a bit.
You got a yellow pass,
I'll marry you in a minute.

Anonymous (Vilna Ghetto)



2.

HERSZ WASSER

YIDDISH CULTURE ORGANIZATION "YIKOR",

Warsaw Ghetto, 1940—1942.

One of the important attainments in the period of the Ghetto was, undoubtedly, the appearance and the functioning of the Yiddish Culture Organization.

YIKOR was first created for quite practical purposes, namely, in order to introduce knowledge of Yiddish to the masses of employes in the Jewish social institutions. Though it is true that managing the Jewish Social Welfare (— Self-help) was partly entrusted to experienced and proven communal workers who used to cooperate with Jewish folk-institutions for many years prior to the war, it was, nevertheless, also true that in wartime, the tone and the atmosphere were created by the thousands of employes who had been recruited without specification and without knowledge of the problems of the Jew, his culture and the Yiddish language. Correspondence in Polish, use of Polish as official language, Polish signs and notices in Jewish folk-institutions — all this had been identified in most cases with ignorance, disdain and ill will toward the common man and his needs, and with lack of understanding — in the literary sense of this word — of the Jewish masses. There was no question of devoted — let alone honest — service to the common people. In consequence, there was the danger of distorting the socially-inspired direction in the operation of Jewish institutions.

This situation brought a number of communal workers to initiate a struggle against the estrangement from Jewishness in the life of the Jew in the Warsaw Ghetto.

As early as December 1940, i.e. one month after the closing of the Ghetto, there began a series of consultations among a number of communal workers with a view to creating a committee for propagating Yiddish in the official life of the Jew. Planned programs of activities included work among youth, children (by way of Children-Corners!), House-Committees, Jewish public institutions (Jewish Social Welfare, TOZ, CENTOS, the Jewish Community, a.o.) with aid from writers, teachers, musicians, painters and the like, active in Jewish Culture.

From the very start, during the first few months of the Committee's activity, it became clear that the purely mechanical approach will never suffice to alter the atmosphere of Jewish public institutions; that the instrument of language must be filled with cultural content, for only thus would it be possible to create and maintain a climate of Yiddish language in all sectors

of Jewish life. Without finding meaning in Yiddish cultural work no one will join the movement for Yiddish language; and it will remain a side-show apart from Jewish life. Language, by itself, is a tie, but for erecting an edifice of culture, elements for constructing a building are necessary. Recognition of this led to transforming the "Committee for the Spreading of Yiddish in Public Life" into the "Yiddish Culture Organization" — YIKOR. Its prominent progressive-cultural character lent to YIKOR stability and strength which enabled it to fulfil the responsible task of transforming Jewish life, isolated by necessity and force, into a complete and fulfilled life of Yiddish.

The management of YIKOR consisted of Messrs. Mager, Menahem Linder (creator and inspirer of YIKOR), Szachna Zagan, Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum, Dr. Lipkowski, Benjamin Wirowski, Miss Sonia Nowogrodzka, Dir. I. Giterman, Szaja Jejwinowicz, and Israel Lichtensztajn.

The many-sided and intensive activity of YIKOR found manifold expression in the Ghetto of Warsaw. Here, in a short review, are the most important fields of its work:

1) Public Performances. Somewhere between 127 and 180 celebrations in honor of Mendele Mocher Sforim, with participation of approximately 25 thousand persons: this included 4 central conventions, with the remainder organized by people other than Committee members or by Youth Committees. Also, almost 50 celebrations in honor of J. L. Peretz, connected with the 26th anniversary of Sholem Aleichem: celebrations for Ber Borochov (not from the political but rather from the cultural point of view); performances of Abraham Reisen, and various single events, such as special concert-matinees for the Purim-festival for refugee children.

Special instructions were issued for mass-performances, and appeals for arranging evening-events in the house yards. Materials were issued also for the entire underground press papers, with numerous treatments of Mendele and of Peretz.

2) Youth. Unfolding a wide cultural activity among youth had initially met with considerable difficulty because of a shortage of suitable youthful lecturers on Jewish subjects and in Yiddish. This was overcome through creating an organization of graduates of CISZO, who provided the necessary body of such youthful lecturers. As early as mid-41, special workshop-seminars for youthful cultural workers were arranged with sociological, historical and literary contents. In courses and seminars, each participant was assigned three Youth-House-Committees in which to repeat lectures attended by him. Apart from these, weekly meetings were arranged on

Thursdays, with graduates, where problems of Yiddish cultural life were discussed.

It merits mention here, that the delegated Youth Committee which established contacts with the existing youth-institutions affiliated with YIGO. (and through these, with the Youth Committees in the house-yards) has not only fulfilled a pioneering task but did it above and beyond every expectation. Thanks to the youth-committees, the Warsaw Ghetto received with heart-felt sympathy every cultural performance, both central and local, in spite of objective obstacles; and that the attitude to Yiddish culture and language has become warm and active.

3) Children. The attack upon assimilationist efforts concerning children, went off along external and internal lines. Following the creation of YIKOR and its initial success, a demand developed for Yiddish work in the Corners, Boardinghouses and Children's Kitchens.

In April, 1941, a "Section for Yiddish Culture" was created with CENTOS. At the CENTOS courses for Corner-Teachers, lectures on Jewish educational problems and on methodological instruction had already been given in Yiddish, aimed at advising how to introduce Jewish content into the work of Children's Corners. Lessons in Yiddish were organized for the Corner-Teachers and for pedagogical personnel. Puppet performances in Yiddish, "Yitsik-Shmitzik", with Chana Braz were held, as well as literary mornings and conventions.

4) Culture For All. The popular university is one of the significant achievements of YIKOR: it attained fame through its many-faceted and bold treatment of the most current Jewish problems. Lectures on Saturday mornings would draw an audience of hundreds of young and adult intelligentsia and workers to the large hall on Tlomackie 5. Among the lecturers were Dr. I. Schiper, Dr. Ringelblum, Menahem Linder M.A., Rachel Auerbach, Dr. Giterman, Maze from Wilno, Benjamin Wirowski, and others. The intent of these lectures was not just to deepen the interest in science, Jewish history or sociology, but also to strengthen the sense of national dignity and the will to offer resistance. Another activity (having far-reaching consequences) was courses in Yiddish for everyone. Thousands of clerks, workers among youth and outside people, passed the central and local courses for the beginners and the advanced. Early in 1942, text-books in Yiddish for elementary schools were printed with the support of YIKOR, thus filling a considerable gap in this field. Signs "We Speak Yiddish" were hung in all institutions, giving expression to the active, positive attitude toward our language.

The need to step out into the open with a systematic and sustained action, led to the creation of a public agency for cultural work. In Spring 1941, a cell for disseminating information was created in the Jewish Social Welfare, and naturally, in its public sector led by Dr. Ringelblum.

The Social Culture Sector was organized in 6 sections: one for each division of the Jewish Social Welfare organization. These had to establish sections, or committees for culture in the House-Committees. Apart from these, the following committees were organized in the Social Culture Sector:

- a) A committee for organizational problems;
- b) " " " public performances;
- c) " " " lectures;
- d) " " " youth problems;
- e) " " " children's problems;
- f) " " " finances.

YIKOR introduced discussion-evenings in the Winter 1942, on matters of critical import for Jewish existence. In these meetings, all actively involved in social and public life, regardless of group or shade, took part. In the discussions, consideration, elucidation or revision were undertaken of every ideological program, opinion, or *Weltanschauung* concerned with the tragic encounter with Jewish realities, and with the extermination-action, and each stand was re-considered, revised or strengthened.

*

April 18th, 1942, — (the date of that horrible massacre at night among whose 58 victims was also Menahem Linder M.A.) was also the last day of the existence of YIKOR. In the atmosphere of terror and of men turned wild with hate, the Jewish Underground took over the mission of sustaining Jewish psychological and physical resistance.

Joseph Kermish, ed. To Live with Honor and Die with Honor (Yad Vashem, 1986).

Eulogy Read at a Commemorative Evening in Honour of Yitshak Meir Weissenberg, 13 September 1941

ווי א באהאלטענער וואסער-קוואל פון אונטער דער ערד

מיר לעבן אין א תפיסה. מיר זענען געוואָרן אראָפּגעשמויסן צו דער מדרגה פון היימלאָזע און פארוואָרלאָזטע חיות. קוקנדיק אויף די געשוואָלענע און האַלב-נאָקעמע יידן, וואָס ליגן אויף די גאַסן, האָבן מיר דאָס געפיל, אז מיר געפינען זיך אויף אַן אונטערמענטשלעכע שטופּע. די ייִדישע, האַלב מוימע סקעלעמישע פּנימער, באַזונדערס פון די קליינע אָפּשטאַרבנדיקע קינדער, וואָרפן אויף אונדז אַן אימה און דערמאָנען אונדז ביִלדער פון אינדיע און אנדערע איזאַלאַציע-לאַגערן פאר מצורעים, וואָס מיר פלעגן זען אויפן עקראַן. די ווירקלעכקייט שטייגט איבער די פאַנטאַזיע, און בלויז נאָר איין זאך וואָלט אונדז געקענט איבעראישן, אין דאָס איין: אַ מאַס-מאַרד אָנשטאַם דער סיסטעמאטישער אויסראַטונג און פאַרניכטונג. און ווי ס'זאָל גיטש זיין שווער צו ברענגען די ווערסער פארן מויל, מוז מען דאָך זאָגן, אז פאר די, וואָס גייען אויס פון הונגער, וואָלט א שגעלער געוואלט-מויס געווען אַן אויסלייזונג פון שווערע און לאַנגע גסיסה-יסורים.

ס'האָט זיך ראדיקאַל געענדערט די פּראָפּאָרצן צווישן לעבן און מוים. אמאָל פלעגט דאָס לעבן פארנעמען דעם אויבן-אַן, דאָס הויפט-אַרט, און דער מוים פלעגט זיין א געבן-דערשיינונג צום לעבן, זיין פינאַל. היינט הערשט מאיעסטיש דער מוים, און דאָס לעבן פליעט קוים ווי אונטער א גראַבער שיכט פון אש. אויך דאָס לעבן, וואָס פליעט נאָך, איז אַזוי שוואַך, אַזוי געבעדיק און אַרעם, אַן יעדן פרייען אָטעם, שוונג און גייסטיקן אינהאַלט. די נשמה פון יחיד ווי פון כלל איז ווי אָפּגעשטאַרבן, פארטעמפט און אטראַפירט. בלויז דער גוף האָט נאָך זיינע באַדערפּענישן, און ער פירט בלויז אַן אַרגאַניש-פיזיאלאָגיש לעבן.

אַזוי זעט אויס די לאַגע אונדזערע אין ייִדישן וווינ-פערטל אין ווארשע און אנדערשוו. און דאָך האָבן מיר נישט פאַרגעסן, אז מיר זענען מענטשן און נישט קיין פּרימיטיווע נידעריקע באַשעפּענישן, דאָך געדענקען מיר, אז ס'דע-הכל מיט 2 יאָר צוריק זענען מיר נאָך געווען פרייע מענטשן. מיר האָבן געבילדעט אַ לעבע-דיקע אַרגאַנישע געזעלשאַפּט, וואָס האָט מראַץ אלע אירע שלעכטע און שאַטנדי-קע זייטן דאָך געהאַט א מענטשלעכע צורה. מיר האָבן זיך געבילדעט, געשטרעבט צו שאַפן אויף אַלע געביטן פון לעבן און צו באַרייכערן דאָס לעבן. מיר האָבן געבענקט נאָך קונסט אלס דעם העכסטן אויסדרוק פון מענטשלעכן דאָזיגן, און מיר האָבן די קונסט אויף אלע געביטן לויט אונדזערע מעגלעכקייטן געפלעגט. מיר האָבן אויך געהאַט א חוש און נייגונג צו וויסנשאַפּט. מיט איין וואָרט: מיר זענען געווען מענטשן און אַלדאָס מענטשלעכע האָט אונדז געלאַקט און צוגעצויגן.

און היינט? ... ווי דערנידעריקט, באשפּיגן און אומגליקלעך מיר זענען!
 דאָך ווילן מיר ווייטער לעבן און בלייבן פרייע שאפנדיקע מענטשן. דאָס וועט זיין אונדזער לעבנס-עקזאַמען. אויב אונדזער לעבן וועט אונטער דער דיקער שיכט פון אש נישט אויסגעלאָשן ווערן — וועט דאָס זיין א פּרויב פון מענטש-לעבן איבערן אוממענטשלעכן, וועט דאָס זיין א באווייז, אז אונדזער לעבנס-גערון איז שטאַרקער פון דעם פאַרניכטונגס-ווילן, אז מיר זענען אימשטאַנד גובר צו זיין אלע ביזע כוחות, וואָס ווילן אונדז איינשלינגען.

We live in a prison. We have been degraded to the level of homeless and uncared-for animals. When we look at the swollen, half-naked bodies of Jews lying in the streets, we feel as if we find ourselves at some subhuman level. The half-dead, skeletal faces of Jews, especially those of dying little children, frighten us and recall pictures of India, or of the isolation-colonies for lepers which we used to see in films. Reality surpasses any fantasy; and possibly one thing only could still surprise us. This would be mass-murder in the place of systematic extermination. Hard as it is to utter words such as these, one has to say that for all those who perish of starvation, a swift and violent death would certainly be a release from the protracted terrible suffering of their dying agony.

The proportions of life and death have radically changed. Times were, when life occupied the primary place, when it was the main and central concern, while death was a side phenomenon, secondary to life, its termination. Nowadays, death rules in all its majesty; while life hardly glows under a thick layer of ashes. Even this faint glow of life is feeble, miserable and weak, poor, devoid of any free breath, deprived of any spark of spiritual content. The very soul, both in the individual and in the community, seems to have starved and perished, to have dulled and atrophied. There remain only the needs of the body; and it leads merely an organic-physiological existence.

Such is our situation in the Jewish Wailing-Quarters in Warsaw as well as in other places. However, we do not forget that we are human beings and not primitive, lowly creatures. And, in spite of it all, we remember that only two years ago we used to be free men. We constituted a live and organic community which had and preserved a human image in spite of the negative and dark sides. We used to seek education; we used to strive and to create in every province of life; we used to enrich life. We used to yearn for art as the highest expression of human existence and we used to cultivate art in all its forms as much as our powers and potential permitted. And we used to have both a feeling and an inclination for science.

To sum up - we were human and whatever was human attracted and excited us. How is it nowadays? - How suppressed, how disgraced and miserable are we now!

Yet, we wish to live on, to continue as free and creative men. This will be our test. If, under the thick layer of ashes our life is not extinguished, this will prove a triumph of the human over the inhuman and that our will to live is mightier than the will to destruction; that we are capable of overcoming all evil forces which attempt to engulf us.

אָט די א. ג. קולטור-אָוונג, פון וועלכע מיר האָבן היינט דעם ערשטן, דארפן זיין איינער פון די באווייזן פון אונדזער שטארקן לעבנס-אינסטינקט. זיי דארפן אונדז דערמאָנען אָן אונדזער פארנאָנענהייט און וועקן צו א בעסערער צוקונפט. זיי דארפן אונדז דערמאָנען, אז מיר זענען געשטאַנען אויף א העכערן ניוואַ ווי די ציגיינער, אָדער וועלכער ס'איז נישט ווילדער שבט אין אמעריקע. זיי דארפן אונדז אויפוועקן צו נייער גייסטיקער ארבעט און שאפן, זיי דארפן אונדז נישט לאָזן איינשלאָפן מיט אן אייביקן שלאָף. איר גלייב, אז די יידישע יוגנט, וועלכע איז אַזוי טראַגיש געטראָפן געוואָרן דורך דער מלחמה, ווייל זי האָט נאָך נישט באַוויזן צו געניסן פון די פרוכטן פון לעבן און איז פולשטענדיק באַרויבט געוואָרן פון גענוס פון שול, וויסנשאַפט, ליטעראַטור, מעצמער און אַנדערע מענטשלעכע גייסטיקע און מאַראַלישע דערנרייכונגען, שוין נישט רעדנדיק וועגן די פיזישע לידן ביו הינגער-טויט, אָט די יידישע יוגנט וועט מיט פרייד אויפנעמען אונדזער איניציאַטיוו און וועט אין די אָונטן געפינען נייע כוחות צו שטאַרקן זיך און צו דערהאַלפן איר מענטשלעכן אויסזען.

מיר האָבן דעם ערשטן אָונט געווידמעט דעם פאַרשטאַרבנעם שרייבער ווייסנבערג; מעגלעך, אַז דאָס איז געווען צופעליק, דאָך איז עס אין אַ געוויסער מאָס סימבאָליש. ווייסנבערג געהערט צו די קינסטלער-שעפער, וואָס ווערן גע-בוירן ווי פון זיך זעלבסט, וואָס וואַקסן אַרויס ווי אַ בלום אויף אַ פּוסט אומבאַ-אַרבעט פעלד. אין דעם זין דערמאָנט ער אונדז אָן דעם רוסישן שרייבער נאַרק, וועלכער איז אויך אויסגעוואַקסן אין אַ סביבה, ווו ס'איז נישט געווען קיין פאַר-שמענדעניש פאַר קולטור און ליטעראַטור. אַזעלכע קינסטלער זענען אַ באַווייזן פאַר דער לעבנס-קראַפט פון מענטש, פאַר זיין אייביקן שמרעבן צו ליבט און פראַגנעס, פאַר דער אינערלעכער שאַפונג-קראַפט, וואָס שפראַצט אַרויס אומ-דערוואַרט, ווי אַ באַהאַלטענער וואַסער-קוואַל פון אונטער דער ערד. זאָל ווייסנ-בערג אָנדענק זיין אַ סימבאָל פון אונדזער לעבנס-כוח, וועלכער וועט להכעיס אַלע פאַרצוימונגען און שטיינער ווייטער פליסן באַהאַלטענערהייט, ביז ער וועט אַרויס אויף דער פרייער וועלט און וועט זיך צעניסן מיט יובל פון פרייד איבער אונדזער לעבנס-פעלד.

יידישע יוגנט! מעגלעך, אַז צווישן אייך אין זאָל געפינען זיך באַהאַלטענע פאַמענציעלע ווייסנבערגס. פאַלט נישט ביי זיך, שטאַרקט אייך און זאַמלט כוחות אויף דורכצוהאַלטן, ביז ס'וועט אויפשיינען די זון פאַר אַלע, אָן אויסנאַם, קינדער פון דער ערד. דאָן וועלן זיך אויך ביי אונדז באַווייזן נייע ווייסנבערגס און אַנדערע שעפער. דאָן וועלן מיר ערן און פייערן נישט בלויז דעם אָנדענק פון די פאַר-שטאַרבנע שרייבער, נאָר מיר וועלן פייערן און באַערן אויך די לעבנדיקע, שאַפן-דיקע יוגנט יידישע קינסטלער אויף אַלע געביטן פון קולטור און ציוויליזאַציע.

וואַרשע, געטאָ. 18-טער נאוועמבער 1941.

(רינגעלבלום-אַרכיוו, ערשטער טייל).

The cultural assemblies, the first of which we attend this evening, are meant to be one of the proofs of our vigorous instinct for life. They are supposed to remind us of our past and to stimulate us for a better future. They should recall to us that we used to occupy a place higher than the Gypsies or any of the wild tribes of Africa. And they must arouse in us a renewed intellectual effort and creativity. They must not let us slide into the eternal sleep. I believe in Jewish youth. I believe that they, on whom the war has had such a tragic impact (for they did not yet enjoy the fruits of life, having been deprived of any benefit of school, of science, of literature, of theatre or other human achievements in spiritual or material fields) - to say nothing of physical miseries, of starvation and death - I believe that this youth will enthusiastically accept our initiative and will find in these assemblies a new strength to invigorate themselves and preserve their human image.

1881-13 Aug 38

We have ^{dedicated} consecrated this first evening to the late writer, Weissenberg. This may have been just an accident but it is, nevertheless, somewhat symbolic. Weissenberg is one of those creative artists who come to us as though born by themselves, who grow like a flower in an untilled field. In this respect, he reminds us of the Russian author Gorky, who also grew out of an environment devoid of understanding for culture or literature. Artists such as these are evidence of the life-forces of man, of his eternal drive towards light and progress, of his inner creative thrust. These forces sprout unexpectedly, spring up like a hidden source from under the earth.

May the memory of Weissenberg be a symbol of our vital forces which shall, in defiance of any restrictions and stone walls, flow forth unseen until they burst out of hiding in a free world and spread in joy and jubilation all over the field of our life.

Hear, O Jewish Youth! Maybe among you, here in this hall, there is, there are potential Weissenbergs. Do not lose courage! Keep strong and gather power, pick up strength to withstand until the sun shines for all children of the earth without distinction. Then, at that hour, Weissenbergs will appear anew among us, along with other creators. At that hour, we shall honour and celebrate not only the memory of deceased writers, but also the fame and excellence of the living, creating young Jewish artists in every field of culture and of civilization.

טאגבוך פון ווילנער געטא

פון
הערמאן קרוק

אויסטייטשונגען און הערות
פון
מרדכי וו. בערנשטיין



יידישער וויסנשאפטלעכער אינסטיטוט — יוואָ
ניו-יאָרק, 1961

THE LAST DAYS OF THE JERUSALEM OF LITHUANIA

Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto
and the Camps, 1939-1944

.....

HERMAN KRUK

EDITED AND INTRODUCED

BY BENJAMIN HARSHAV

TRANSLATED BY BARBARA HARSHAV

YIVO INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH RESEARCH

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

NEW HAVEN AND LONDON

הינט האב איך דערהאלטן א פניערלעכע אינלאדונג פון אן איניציאטיוו-גרופע פון יידישע קינסטלער אין געטא, ווו מען מעלדט, אז זונטיק דעם 18טן יאנואר קומט פאר אין גימנאזיע-זאל, רודניצקע 6, דער ערשטער אונט פון דעם היגן קינסטלערישן קרייז. מען דערציילט דארט, אז דער אונט וועט אויסגעפירט ווערן מיט א דראמאטישער און וואקאליש-מוזיקאלישער פראגראם.

שוין אפגערעדט וועגן דעם אונט, דאס מאל אבער האב איך זיך דערפילט ווי באליידיקט, פערזענלעך באליידיקט. אין יעדער געטא קאן מען זיך ווילן און פארברענגען, פלעגן קונסט איז אוודאי און אוודאי א מיצוה. דא, אין דער טרויעריקער סיטואציע פון ווילנער געטא, אונטערן שאטן פון פאנאר, ווו פון 76 טויזנט יידן אין ווילנע איז פארבליבן ביז 15 טויזנט — דא איז ביי אונדז א ציטיקן מאמענט, א חרפה.

א באליידיקונג פאר אלע אונדזערע געפילן.

ווי מיר ווייסן אבער איז דער פאקטישער איניציאטאר פונעם אונט די יידישע פאליציי. אויפן קאנצערט וועלן אפילו זיין חשובע געסט, דיטשן. ליובע לעוויצקא, די גלענצענדע יידישע זינגערין זוכט אפילו צו האבן אין "זאפאס" דיטשע לידער...

טאמער, חלילה, וועט א דיטש עס פארלאנגען...

אויף א בית-עלמין מאכט מען נישט טעאטער.

די יידישע ארגאניזירטע [ארבעט] ערשאפט¹⁰⁰ האט טאקע באשלאסן ענטפערן אויף די באקומענע אינלאדונגען מיט באיקאט. קיין איינער וועט נישט גיין אויף דעם "קראען-קאנצערט". איבער די גאסן פון געטא זאלן טאקע פארשפרייט ווערן בלעטלעך:

אין שניכות מיטן הינטיקן קאנצערט:

אויף א בית-עלמין

מאכט מען נישט טעאטער.

אט-א אין אזא אטמאספער וועט די טרויערדיקע געטא ברענגען צו קבורה איר קרבן — דניאל יאכעלסאן. די פאליציי און די קינסטלער צוזאמען מיט די דיטשן וועלן זיך ווילן און דער ווילנער געטא וועט טרויערן...

FIRST CONCERT IN THE GHETTO

Today I received a formal invitation from a founding group of Jewish artists in the ghetto announcing that the first evening of the local artistic circle will be held on

Sunday, January 18, in the auditorium of the Real Gymnasium at Rudnicka 6. A dramatic and vocal musical program will be presented.

I felt offended, personally offended, about this whole thing, let alone the festive evening. In every ghetto you can amuse yourself; cultivating art is certainly a good deed. But here, in the doleful situation of the Vilna Ghetto, in the shadow of Ponar, where, of the 76,000 Vilna Jews, only 15,000 remain—here, at this moment, this is a disgrace.

An offense to all our feelings.

But as we know, the real initiators of the evening are the Jewish police. Furthermore, important guests, Germans, will come to the concert. Lyuba Lewicka, the brilliant Jewish singer, is even trying to have some German songs "on hand."

In case, God forbid, a German will ask for them! . . .

You don't make a theater in a graveyard.

The organized Jewish labor mov[ement]¹⁰⁹ had decided to respond to the invitation with a boycott. Not one of them will go to the "crows' concert." But the streets of the ghetto are to be strewn with leaflets:

about today's concert:

YOU DON'T MAKE THEATER

IN A GRAVEYARD

In this atmosphere, the ghetto will bury its victim—Daniel Jochelson. The police and the artists, along with the Germans, will amuse themselves, and the Vilna Ghetto will mourn. . . .

19טער יאנואר [1942]

וועגן ערשטן קאנצערט אין געטא
דער קאנצערט, וועגן וועלכן מיר האבן שוין געשריבן, איז פֿאַרביי אין

אלגעמיין איז עס געווען געלונגען. אינעם קאנצערט האבן צווישן אנדערע
אנטיל גענומען די זינגערין לעוויצקא, רעכטיג, [שבת] בליאכער.¹⁶⁶
אויפֿן זאל זענען געווען פֿאַרזאַמלט אַ 70 פֿראַנצײַזישע פֿאַליציאַנטן מיט
ווייבער און קינדער, די רעשט — ציונים פֿון פֿל-המינים, מיטגלידער פֿון
ייִדנראַט אַאַנד.

ביים אַרײַנגאַנג איז געהאַנגען אַן אויפֿשריפֿט:
„זאַל איין הונדערטער אין געטאָ נישט זײַן“. ביים אַרײַנגאַנג איז טאַקע
אויפֿגעקליבן געוואָרן אַן ערד 4.000 רובל.

די קוויטלעך וואָס זענען פֿונאַנדערגעקלעפט געוואָרן אין די גאַסן (זע
די נאַטיץ מיט צוויי טעג צוריק), האָט געמאַכט אין גאַס אַ קאַלאַסאַלן
רושם. די פֿאַליציי האָט אַרויסגעשיקט אין גאַס אַ ספּעציעלע בריגאַדע זיי
אַרונטערצווייטן. די בלעטלעך זענען פֿון דעסט וועגן אין פֿאַרלוירן פֿון
גאַנצן טאַג פֿאַרשפּרייט געוואָרן אין אַלע עפֿנטלעכע לאַקאַלן פֿון געטאַ;
אין די קיכן, אין דער אַמבולאַטאָריע, אויף דער פֿאַסט, אין לאַקאַל פֿון
ייִדנראַט אַאַזוו.

20טער יאנואר [1942]

פֿאַרבאַנד פֿון ליטעראַטן און קינסטלער

הַנְּטִיקֵן זונטיק איז דאָ אינעם געטאַ געשאַפֿן געוואָרן אַ פֿאַרבאַנד פֿון
ייִדישע שרײַבער, ליטעראַטן און קינסטלער. אין פֿאַרבאַנד זענען ביז איצט
שוין פֿאַררעגיסטרירט 20 שרײַבער, 22 בינע-קינסטלער, 16 מוזיקער און
זינגער און 6 מאַלער, חוץ דעם איז אויך פֿאַראַן אַ ליסטע פֿון 15 משפּחות,
פֿאַרביבן גאָך פֿאַרשלעפטע שרײַבער און קינסטלער.

די אויפֿגאַבע פֿון פֿאַרבאַנד: זעלבסטהילף און באַוועגן צו קינסטלערישער
שאַפֿונג אויפֿן פֿאַן פֿון געטאַ, באַאַרבעטן אַ כראַניק פֿון די פֿאַרשלעפטע
ייִדישע שרײַבער, קינסטלער און אינטעלעקטואַלן, זאַמלען פֿאַרלוירענע שאַפֿונ-

גען פֿון די פֿאַרשלעפטע און צוגרייטן מאַטעריאַל פֿאַר אַ ליטעראַריש-קינסט-

לערישער זאַמלונג פֿון דער געטאַ.
איז שפּיץ פֿון דעם פֿאַרבאַנד ווערן אַרויסגערוקט קלמנ[אָוויטש], הערמאַן
[קרוק], [יעקב] גערשטיין,¹⁶⁷ [שבת] בליאַך [בליאַכער], [אַבֿרהם] סוצ[קע]-
ווער], [הערש] גוט[געשטאַלט] און [יעקב] שער.¹⁶⁸

JANUARY 19 [1942]

ABOUT THE FIRST CONCERT IN THE GHETTO

The concert we have already written about is over. In general, it was a success. The singers Lewicka, Rechtig, and [Shabse] Blacher¹¹⁹ took part in the concert.

Seventy percent of those gathered in the auditorium were Jewish policemen, their wives, and their children; the rest were all brands of Zionists, Judenrat members, and others.

A poster hung at the entrance:
"There must be no hungry person in the ghetto." At the entrance, about 4,000 rubles were collected.

The notices posted in the streets (see the entry of two days ago) made a colossal impression. The police sent a special brigade into the streets to tear them down. Nevertheless, throughout the day, leaflets were distributed in all the public places of the ghetto: the kitchens, the clinics, the post office, the Judenrat building, etc.

JANUARY 20 [1942]

ASSOCIATION OF WRITERS AND ARTISTS

This Sunday in the ghetto, an association of Jewish writers, authors, and artists was created. So far, 20 writers, 22 stage artists, 16 musicians and singers, and 6 painters have joined the association, and there is also a list of 15 families of writers and artists who were taken away.

The purpose of the association: to provide mutual aid and an inducement to artistic creation in the context of the ghetto; to put together a chronicle of Jewish writers, artists, and intellectuals who were taken off; to collect works abandoned by those who were taken off; and to prepare material for a literary and artistic almanac from the ghetto.

The following were elected to the leadership of the association: Kalman[owicz], Herman [Kruk], [Yankev] Gerstein,¹²⁰ [Shabse] Blach[er], [Abraham] Sutz[kever], [Hersh] Gut[gestalt] and [Yankev] Sher.¹²¹

120. A pioneer of the Yiddish secular schools and director of school choirs. In 1908, he participated in the first illegal Yiddish teachers' conference in Vilna, under Russian tsarist rule. He died in the ghetto. More information about him is provided in later entries. For his biography, see *Teachers' Memorial Book* 1954:109-111; *Lexicon* 2:325-326.

121. A prominent painter, who was later sent to Camp Vaivara in Estonia. He died in 1944. For his biography, see *Teachers' Memorial Book* 1954:430-431.

This song was first presented at the second public theatre performance in the Vilno ghetto in February, 1942. Words are by Leyb Rosental (See note about author in *Ikh Benk Aheym*). Composer Misha Veksler (1907-1943), the conductor of the Jewish theatre orchestra in the Vilno ghetto, met his death during the liquidation of the ghetto in September, 1943.

Leyb Rosental

נו קויפט זשע פאפיראָסן,
נו קוקט זשע סאַכאַרין,
געוואָרן איז היינט סחורה ביליק ווערט.
א לעבן פאַר אַ גראַשן,
אַ פּרוּטה - אַ פּאַרדינסט -
פּון געטאַ-הענדלער האָט איר דאָך געהערט.

כ׳הייס ישראלִיק
איך בין דאָס קינד פון געטאַ,
כ׳הייס ישראלִיק
אַ הפּקרדיקער יונג.
כאַטש פּאַרכליבן גאַלע נעטאַ
דערלאַנג איך אַלץ נאָך
אַ סוויטשע און אַ זונג!

אַ מאַנטל אָן אַ קראַגן,
חחחחח פון אַ זאַק,
קאַלאַשן האָב איך, - ס׳פעלן נאָר די שיך,
און ווער עס וועט נאָר וואָגן
צו לאַכן, איר אַ סך -
דעם וועל איך נאָך ווייזן ווער בין איך!
כ׳הייס ישראלִיק...

ניט מיינט מיך האָט געבוירן
די הפּקרדיקע גאַס -
כ׳ טאַטע-מאַמע אויך געווען אַ קינד,
כ׳האַב ביידן אָנגעוואָרן,
ניט מיינט עס איר אַ שפּאַס,
כיבין געבליבן, ווי אין פעלד דער ווינט.

כ׳הייס ישראלִיק,
נאָר ווען קיינער זעט ניט
וויש איך שטיל זיך
פון איר אַראַפּ אַ טרער.
נאָר פון מיך טרויער -
כעסער אַז מען רעדט ניט,
צו וואָס דערמאַנען
און מאַכן ס׳האַרץ זיך שווער.

Yisrolik

So, you wanna buy some smokes?
Saccharin too I got.
These days the stuff's going dirt cheap.
A life for just a groschen,

All day I don't make squat—
You heard of the ghetto-peddler? That's me.

I'm called Yisrolik,
The kid from the ghetto.
That's right, Yisrolik,
A happy-go-lucky guy.
I end up with a big fat zero.
Still I can whistle
And hawk a song any time.

A coat without a collar,
Shirt from a gunnysack,
Galoshes, yeah, but no sign of shoes—
Anyone laughs or snickers,
Anyone cracks a joke,
I'll show them what's what and who's who.

I'm called Yisrolik. . . .

It ain't like I was born, say,
In a ditch or a gutter.
Once I had a regular mom 'n dad.
But they both been dragged away.
Well, no use blubbing.
Still, I'm like wind in the fields, a nomad.

Yisrolik, that's me.
And when no one can see,
I wipe away
A tear or two.
But this sorrow—
Better let it be.
Why make a case of it
And drag the heart so low?

Premiered in the Vilna ghetto, February 1942

Moderato

Nu koyft zhe pa - pi - ro - sn, Nu koyft zhe sa - kha -
rin, Ge - vo - rn iz haynt skhoy-re bi - lik vert. — A
le - bn far a gro - shn, A pru - te - a far - dinst - Fun
ge - to - hend - ler hot ir dokh ge - hert. —
Kh'heys yis - ro - lik Ikh bin dos kind fun ge - to,
Kh'heys yis - ro - lik A hef - ker-di - ker yung. Khotsh far -
bli-bn go - le - ne-to Der - lang ikh alts nokh A svish-tshe un a zung!

Song 31

Makh tsi di eygelekh (Close Your Little Eyes)

Text: Isaiah Shpigl (1906–1990)

Music: David Beyglman (1887–1944)

Makh tsi di eygelekh,
Ot kimen feygelekh
In krayzn do arim
Tsikopns fin dayn vig.
Dos pekl in der hant,
Dos hoyz in ash in brand;
Mir lozn zikh, mayn kind,
Zikh glik.

Di velt hot got farmakht,
In imetim iz nakht—
Zi vart af indz
Mit shoyder in mit shrek.
Mir shteyen beyde do,
In shverer, shverer sho
In veysn nit vihin
S'firt der veg.

Men hot indz naket, bloyz
Faryogt fin indzer hoyz.
In fintsternish,
Getribn indz in feld,
In shturem, hogl, vint
Hot indz bagleyt, mayn kind,
Bagleyt indz inem opgrint
Fin der velt.

Close your little eyes,
Soon little birds will fly
In circles everywhere,
Around your cradle.
Your bundle in your hand,
Your house in ash and sand,
We leave you, my child,
In search for luck.

God closed the world,
Everywhere is night—

She waits for us
With horror and with dread.
We both are standing here,
At this difficult time,
Not knowing where
Our road is leading.
Stripped naked,
We were thrown from our home.
In the dark of night,
Driven out into the open field,
The wind and hail and storm
Accompanied us, my child,
Accompanied us into
The depths of the earth.

This lullaby was written by Isaiah Shpigl, a writer-poet-essayist-teacher who survived the Lodz ghetto and Auschwitz.⁸ It was performed in the ghetto theater by the professional singer Ella Diamant. The song has been published in several collections;⁹ however only two survivors I interviewed, Lucille Eichengreen and Miriam Harel, were able to recall any part of it.

The lullaby is one of the most popular song genres of Yiddish folk and theater music. The performance of lullabies had been a tradition in the Yiddish theater from its inception under Goldfadm in the mid-nineteenth century. In a typical Jewish lullaby, the mother soothes the child to sleep with promises of pleasant times to come. The father is usually absent, off making money for the child's education; his return, however, is said to be imminent. Shpigl's composition turns this concept upside down: Father will never come home. The child lies down to sleep in an open field at the mercy of the elements, his parents' house having been burned to the ground.

Nature does not smile on this Jewish child; rather, the world is full of horror. God has brought night into the little boy's world. The third verse strengthens the horror: "In the dark of night, / Driven out into the open fields, / The wind and hail and storm / Accompanied us, my child, / Accompanied us into depths of the earth."

According to Lucille Eichengreen, Rumkowski was in attendance during one of the performances of this song. He felt that the song manifested a pessimistic point of view of his "kingdom" and instructed the poet, "Bay mir vest mer nisht zingen" (you will never sing for me again). The song was forbidden and Shpigl was threatened with deportation. After some negotiation, he was allowed to remain in the ghetto but was transferred to a different workshop.

The music is a rare form of musical hybrid, a tango-lullaby. Evidently, tango melodies were so popular during this period that even tender lyrics could be set to them without seeming in the least incongruous.

independent, and socialist Poland in a voluntary federation of a socialist republic of Europe. . . .



EVALUATING THE GHETTO:

INTERVIEWS IN WARSAW, 1941

Hillel Zeitlin

Q: Do you see any positive factors in the ghetto?

Unfortunately I see only negative ones: hunger, epidemics, mass mortality. The area of culture is precisely where something positive could be created. Within the ghetto walls a Jewish culture of our own, a Jewish life, could emerge, but Jews are a contrary people. They speak Polish with such ardor. Polish has become the holy language of the ghetto, the holy tongue of the ghetto Jews.

This is something simply paradoxical. They packed us into the ghetto so they could forcibly isolate us from other peoples, cultures, and languages. Yet we insist on speaking a foreign language and spit on our own language, our own cultural and spiritual values. We see something similar with the Sabbath. For years Jews in Poland fought against Sunday observance laws, but now that Jews in the ghetto can observe the Sabbath and do business on Sundays, they insist on doing business just on the Sabbath.

A misfortune has occurred. Assimilation has made its way from Snob Hill to the ghetto and influences the whole Jewish quarter.

Q: How do you explain the odd liberalism and tolerance with regard to converts in the ghetto?

Jews are a compassionate people. As long as the apostates were in the camp of our persecutors, we hated them. But now that they are together with us in the camp of the persecuted,⁵⁴ we pity them. "Toleration" even goes so far that the converts among us now find

54. The Germans regarded Jewish converts to Christianity and their children as racial Jews, in accordance with the Nuremberg Laws. These apostates lived in the ghetto and attended two Catholic churches located within ghetto boundaries. Because of expertness or high reputation in their fields, some held prestigious posts in the ghetto bureaucracy.

מיר פארעפנטלעכן דאָ דריי ענטפערן: פון הלל צייטלין, ש. סטופניצקי
אין א. איינהאַרן ארץ אן אנקעטע האָס איז אין וואַרשעווער געטאָ דורכן עתב
שבת" ארטגעשריבן געוואָרן צווישן יידישע שרייבער און וויסנשאפטלער.

(זע „בלעטער פאר געשיכטע" באנד 1 ז' 104).

(אַרטאָגראַפיע נישט געענדערט)

הלל צייטלין

— צי האָב איך געזען וועלכע ס'איז פּאָזיטיווע מאַמענטן אינם געטאָ?

— ליידער האָב איך געזען בלויז נעגאטיווע: הונגער, עפידעמיע מאסן-
שטערבלעכקייט. אויפן געביט פון גייסטיקער קולטור וואָלט מען דווקא יאָ
געקאָנט שאַפן עפעס פּאָזיטיוועס. עס וואָלט צווישן די מויערן פון געטאָ גע-
קאָנט ארויסוואַקסן אן אייגענע יידישע קולטור, א יידיש לעבן. זיינען אָבער
יידן א פּאָלק פון צולהכעיסניקעס, מען רעדט פּויליש מיט אַזאַ התלהבות...
פּויליש איז געוואָרן די הייליקע שפּראַך פון געטאָ. דאָס לשון הקודש פון די
געטאָ-יידן.

עפעס איז פשוט להכעיס: ווייל מען האָט אונז אַרײַנגעפּאַקט אין געטאָ,
ווייל מען וויל אונז מיט געוואַלט אינזאָלירן פון די פרעמדע פעלקער, קולטור,
שפּראַכן, וועלן מיר דווקא רעדן די פרעמדע שפּראַך און שפּײַען אויף אונזער
אייגענע שפּראַך, אייגענע קולטורעלע און גייסטיקע ווערטן. עפעס ענלעכעס
זען מיר מיטן שבת. מען האָט יאָרנלאַנג געקעמפט אין פּוילן קעגן צוואַנגס-
זונטיקרו, אָבער האָבן די יידן אין געטאָ באקומען די מעגלעכקייט אָפּצוהײַטן
שבת און האַנדלען פּרײַ זונטאָג, האַנדלען זיי דווקא אום שבת.

עס איז געשען אן אומגליק, די אסימילאציע האָט איבערגעוואַנדערט
פון דער מאַראַשלאַקאָוסקא אינם געטאָ און זי באַאיינפלוסט די יידישע נאם.

— מיט וואָס מייטשט איר אויס דעם מאָדנעם ליבעראליזם און טאָ-
לעראַנץ בנוגע די משומדים אין געטאָ?

— יידן זיינען בעלי רחמים, כל-זמן די משומדים האָבן זיך געפונען
אין דער מחנה פון אונדזערע פּאַרפּאָלגער, האָבן מיר זיי פיינט געהאַט. יעצט
אָבער, ווען זיי געפונען זיך צוזאַמען מיט אונז אין דער מחנה פון די פּאַר-

themselves in a privileged position. There are good public kitchens run by the ŽTOS especially for converts and the meals there are much better than those in the regular kitchens. Such is the concern for the converts. It has already come to the point that people rush to convert so as to get a better meal.

While speaking of converts, we ought to mention the deplorable role of the Kehilla, which shows favoritism to the converts, provides them the best jobs, and puts them in the forefront in our communal life in the ghetto.

Q: What is the source of this love our community leaders have for converts?

It springs from the fact that there are in the Kehilla concealed, disguised assimilationists who have contempt for Yiddish, Jewish culture, and the Jewish populace.

Q: How can you explain the decline and weakening of religious life in the ghetto? History teaches us, after all, that always when the trials of the Jews increased, religious faith increased and the people clung more firmly to their faith, to Torah.

Yes, it is unfortunately a sorrowful fact that religious life in the ghetto has declined considerably. The Sabbath is vanishing. Of the 220 families in the building where I live barely two or three observe the Sabbath. If our enemies would persecute our religion, forbid Sabbath observance, forbid Jews to pray, resistance would be strengthened and religiosity would grow. When there are no hindrances, people grow indifferent to religion.

At the start our enemies had indeed tried to persecute religion, attacking synagogues and prayerhouses. But right away they realized that these were wrong tactics because thereby they would only strengthen religiosity and consequently the spiritual resistance of the Jewish people as well. Therefore they straightaway changed their tactics.

Characteristic is the rebellion against God, against Heaven, which is noticeable among many religious Jews who no longer wish to declare that God's judgment is right.

Religious leaders in Poland regrettably did nothing before the war to strengthen religiosity among the populace. They fought for kashrut. But what was this kashrut propagand? Did it explain just why kashrut should be observed? No, they did not explain. The Sabbath observers made scandalous scenes in the streets, fighting

פאלנטע, האָט מען אויף זיי רחמנות. און די „טאַלעראַנץ“ דערגרייכט שוין אזוי ווייט, אַז די משומדים געפונען זיך ביי אונז אין אַ ספעציעל פּריווילע-גירטער לאַגע. עס זיינען פאראן גוטע ספעציעלע פּאַלקס-קיכן פאר משומדים אויסגעהאַלטן פון „זשיטאַס“ און די מיטאַגן דאָרטן זיינען פיל בעסער ווי אין די געוויינלעכע פּאַלקס-קיכן, אזוי זאָרגט מען פאר די משומדים... דאָס האָט שוין דערפירט דערצו, אז מען לויפט זיך שמרן, בכדי צו באקומען אַ בעסערן מיטאַג.

און אז מען רעדט שוין וועגן משומדים, מוז מען זיך אָפּשטעלן אויף דער טרויעריקער ראַל פון דער קהלה, וועלכע פּאַוואָרירט משומדים, באַזאָרגט זיי מיט די בעסטע שטעלעס און רוקט זיי ארויס אויפן אויבנאָן פון געזעל-שאַפטלעכן לעבן אין געטאָ.

— פון וואָנען נעמט זיך די דאָזיקע ליבע פון אונזערע קהלה-לייט צו משומדים? דאָס נעמט זיך דערפון — וואָס אין דער קהלה זיצן פּאַרבאהאַלטענע מאַסקירטע אַסימילאַטאָרן, וואָס פילן פּאַראַכטונג צו יידיש, יידישע קולטור און צו די יידישע פּאַלקס-מאַסן.

— מיט וואָס דערקלערט זיך די ירידה און אָפּשוואַכונג פונם רע-ליגיעזן לעבן אין געטאָ. און די געשיכטע לערנט דאָך אונז, אַז שטענדיק ווען עס שטאַרקט זיך די צרות אויף יידן, פּאַרשטאַרקט זיך דער רעליגיעזער גלויבן, נעמען זיך די מאַסן פעסטער קלעמען אין דער אַמונה, תורה?

— יא, עס איז ליידער אַ טרויעריקער פּאַקט, אז דאָס רעליגיעזע לעבן אין געטאָ איז זער געפּאַלן. עס פּאַרשווינדט דער שבת. אין אַ הויז, למשל, וווּ איך וווי, צווישן 220 פּאַמיליעס, געפינען זיך קוים צוויי, דריי פּאַמיליעס שומרי שבת.

וואָלט די שונאים גערודפט די רעליגיע, נישט געלאָזט אָפּהיטן שבת, נישט געלאָזט דאווענען, וואָלט זיך געשטאַרקט דער ווידערשטאַנד, וואָלט גע-וואָקסן די רעליגיעזיסטעט. שטערט מען אָבער נישט, ווערט מען גלייכגילטיק צו דער רעליגיע.

די ערשטע צייט האָבן טאַקע די שונאים געפרוווט פּאַרפּאַלגן די רע-ליגיע, באַפּאַלן שולן און בת-ימדרשים... זיי האָבן זיך אָבער באלד געכאַפט, אז עס איז אַ פּאַלשע טאַקטיק, ווייל דערמיט וועלן זיי בלוזן פּאַרשטאַרקן די רעליגיעזיסטעט און ממילאָ דעם נייטיקן ווידערשטאַנד פון די יידישע מאַסן און דעריבער האָבן זיי גלייך געענדערט די טאַקטיק.

כאַראַקטעריסטיש איז דער בונט קעגן רבונג של עולם, קעגן הימל, וואָס לאָזט זיך מערקן ביי פיל רעליגיעזע יידן, וועלכע ווילן נישט מער מצדיק זיין את הדין.

ליידער האָבן די רעליגיעזע פירער אין פּוילן גאָר נישט געטון פאר דער מלחמה, בכדי צו שטאַרקן די רעליגיעזיסטעט צווישן די מאַסן. מען האָט געפירט

א קאמף פאר כשרות, אבער ווי האט זי אויסגעזען די כשרות פראפאגאנדע, האט מען זיך אויפגעקלערט, פאר וואס דווקא כשר? ניין, מען האט עס נישט אויפגע-
קלערט. די שומרי שבת האבן געמאכט וויסטע אוואנטורעס אין די גאסן, זיך
געשלאגן מיט די חסדלעך. איז דאס געווען „פראפאגאנדע“?

זיי האבן דאך גאר נישט אויפגעקלערט, נישט באווסטזיניק געמאכט,
וואס דאס איז אזוינס דער שבת, דער זין פון שבת, זיין באדייטונג, הייליקייט.

און זיי טוען ווייטער גאר נישט פאר רעליגיעזער אויפקלערונג, אונזערע
אפיציעלע רעליגיעזע פארשטייער, זיי באגניגענען זיך מיט... שנאָרן ביים
„דזשאַנט“. ליידער מוז מען מודה זיין, אז די יידן האבן זיך ארויסגעוויזן פיל
שוואכער, פיל ווייניקער ווידערשטאנדס־פּעיקער, ווי מען האט געמיינט. די יידן
האבן זיך ארויסגעוויזן פאר נישט פעיק דורכצוטראָגן דעם קלענסטן נסיון. ווי
מיר האבן עס געזען למשל, נאך פארן קריג אינם קאמף קעגן שחיטה־פארבאָט
און פאר כשרות. מען האט געגעסן טריפה פלייש אפילו ווען דער אונטערשיד
איז פרייז האט קוים אויסגעמאכט גראַשנס. דאס זעלבע האבן מיר געזען אינם
קאמף פארן שבת־רו.

די קארופציע, דעמאָראַליזאציע, גניבה אין געטאָ איז שרעקלעך. די
סיבה די אויסערגעוויינלעכע צרות, אלע שלעכטע מדות און געמיינע אינסטינקטן
האבן זיך יעצט אנטפלעקט אין זייער גאנצער נאָקעטייט. אבער ווער ווייסט,
צי מען וואָלט איינגעשלאָסן אין אזא געטאָ ווי אין ווארשע 400 טויזנט גוים,
וואָלט דאס בילד נישט אויסגעזען פיל ערגער. מען וואָלט זיך וואַרשיינלעך
פשוט גענזיטיק אויסגעשאַקט...

די פראָווינצער יידן האבן זיך ארויסגעוויזן פאר בעסערע. ביי זיי איז
נאך נישט אויסגעוואַרצלט געוואָרן דאָס אלטע יידישע רהמנות־געפיל.
פראָווינצער יידן זיינען זיך מוסר נפש, שפאָרן אָפּ דעם ביסן פון מויל
און שיקן פעקלעך צו קרובים, באַקאנטע און אפילו צו פרעמדע אין ווארשע.

עס איז אויך טרויעריק, וואָס עס זיינען נישטאָ קיין משיח־טרוימען
אין געטאָ. נישטאָ קיין גאולה־טרוימען, כ'מין גאולה אין העכערן, גייסטיקן
זין. מען דענקט מיט ריינע מאטעריאליסטישע קאטעגאָריעס. גאולה הייסט —
צוריקער צו א לייכט לעבן, קריניץ, סיר הבשר. ס'איז אפשר יאָ פאראן אן
הרנשה פון חבלי משיח, אבער מען וויל נישט ארויסציען די געהעריקע
קאָנסעקוענצן און דעריבער זעט מען נישט די פארבערייטונגען אויפצוגעמען,
מכשיר זיין זיך צו דער העכערער גייסטיקער משיחישער גאולה.

— ווי זען אויס די צוקונפט־פּערספעקטיוון פון יידישן פּאָלק, באַזונד־
דערס פון די יידישע מאַסן אין פּוילן?

— אָן א רעליגיעזער התעוררות, אָן א משיחישער אידעע וועלן יידן
נישט געהאַלפן ווערן. ווייל וואָס? די פּאָליטישע פּערספעקטיוון זען אויס זייער

with the carters. Was this “propaganda”? They explained nothing, they did not enlighten people as to what the Sabbath was, its meaning, its significance, its sacredness.

They continue to do nothing for religious enlightenment, these religious officials of ours. They content themselves with begging from the Joint Distribution Committee.⁵⁵ One must admit that unfortunately the Jews have shown themselves to be much weaker, much less able to resist than we had supposed. The Jews have shown themselves to be unable to withstand the least hardship, as we saw before the war, for instance, in the struggle against prohibiting ritual slaughter and on behalf of kashrut. People ate non-kosher meat even when the difference in price was only a few pennies. We observed this too in the struggle to keep the Sabbath as a day of rest.

Corruption, demoralization, and thievery in the ghetto are terrible. Their cause—the extraordinary misfortunes. Evil traits and base instincts are now revealed in all their nakedness. But if 400,000 Gentiles were locked up in such a ghetto, who knows if the picture would not look much worse. They would probably just slaughter one another.

Jews in the provinces turn out to be better. The old Jewish feeling of compassion has not yet been eradicated from them. Jews in the provinces are self-sacrificing, renouncing a bit of food to send packages to relatives, acquaintances, and even to strangers in Warsaw.

It is also sad that there are no visions of the Messiah in the ghetto, no visions of redemption, I mean redemption in the spiritual sense. People think in purely materialistic terms, the redemption means return to an easy life, fancy resorts, fleshpots. Perhaps there is a perception of the travail before the Messiah's coming, but people do not want to draw the necessary conclusions and therefore do not respond and prepare themselves for messianic redemption.

Q: *What is the outlook for the Jewish people, especially the Jewish masses in Poland?*

Without a religious awakening, without a messianic idea, the Jews

55. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee—JDC, the leading American Jewish philanthropic organization serving needy Jews throughout the world.

נישט פריילעך. די פאליאקן וועלן זאגן, אז די יידן האבן געמאכט די בעסטע געשעפטן מיט די דייטשן, האבן באקומען פון זיי אויטאנאמיע און די יידן-העצע וועט ווייטער פראספערירן. נאיוו און לעכערלעך זיינען אויך די יידישע אפטימיסטישע האפענונגען פארבינדן מיט ענגלאנד. פאר מיר איז עס קלאר ווי צוויי מאָל צוויי איז פיר, אז ענגלאנד וועט ווידער אמאָל אונז אָפנארן, פאראטן, פונקט ווי זי טוט עס לגבי אלע אנדערע קליינע און שוואכע פעלקער, און אונז נישט נעבן ארץ-ישראל. דעריבער זאָג איך, אז אונזער רעטונג ליגט נאָר אין אינערלעכער, רעליגיעזער התעוררות, וואָס איז בכוח צו ווייזן ווונדער. ירושלים דמעלה, דאָס גייסטיקע ירושלים, וועט אונז קיינער נישט קאָנען צורויבן און מיטן כוח פון גייסט וועלן מיר סוף כל סוף זיגן אויך פאָליטיש.

...שווערע מפלות אויף דער פאליטישער ארענע, אויפן ארץ-ישראל-פראָנט [זיינען] בעיקר א רעזולטאט דערפון, וואָס די ענגלענדער האָבן זיך איבערצייגט אין אונזער גייסטיקער שוואכקייט, די ענגלענדער האָבן געמיינט, אז מיר זיינען טאקע אַן עם קשה עורה, אז מיר זיינען באמת גרייט אלץ מקריב זיין פאר ארץ-ישראל, און ווען זיי האָבן געזען אונזער שוואכקייט, האָבן זיי פארלוירן די אַכטונג צו אונז, אויפגעהערט זיך צו רעכענען מיט אונז.

א רעטונג פאר יידן וואָלט געווען — א טעריטאָריע. לידער האָבן מיר מיט א מנחם-ענדעלישער לייכטזיניקייט אָפגעוואָרפן די טעריטאָריאַליסטישע פלענער און מעגלעכקייטן. מען האָט די טעריטאָריאַליסטן, און מיר התוכם, פארשריגן אלס פארעטער. ערשט יעצט הויבט מען אָן פארשטיין דעם שרעק-לעכן פעלער, וואָס מען איז באַנאָנגען. און זאָל מען שוין היינט געפינען א טעריטאָריע, ווו וועט מען נעמען די ריזן-קאפיטאַלן פאר א מאַסן-קאָלאָניאַליזאַציע?

— אין וועלכער ריכטונג דארף גיין די אויפקלערונגס-ארבעט צווישן די יונגט, בכדי זי צוגרייטן צו די אויפגאַבן, וואָס ערוואַרטן איר נאָכן קריג?
— קודם-כל — פראָדוקטיוויזאַציע: לערנען פאכן, טאקע בעסערע און דערלערנען זיי גרינדלעך. מען דארף אויך לערנען אונזער יונגט ערד-ארבעט. מען מוז זיין גרייט צו עמיגראַציע.

מען דארף אויך לערנען די יונגט, זי זאָל אָנהויבן קוקן אויף דער וועלט מיט מער יידישע אויגן, אויסוואַרצלען ביי איר די קאָמישע שוואַכקייט צו פאָ-לאָניאַציע און קאָריקאטורעלער אסימילאַציע און דאָן וועלן זיי געפינען דעם וועג צו זיך און צו דער וועלט.

will not be saved. Why? The political outlook is not promising. The Poles will say that the Jews made the best deal with the Germans, received autonomy from them, and Jew-baiting will continue to thrive. The optimistic hopes Jews direct toward England are also naive and ridiculous. It is clear to me as two and two make four that England will once again fool us, betray us, as she does other small and weak peoples, by not giving us Palestine. I say, therefore, that our salvation lies only in an inner religious awakening capable of working miracles. No one can rob us of Heavenly Jerusalem, the spiritual Jerusalem, and with the force of the spirit we will finally conquer also politically. . . .

A Holocaust Reader ed. Lucy S.
Dawidowicz. NY: Behrman House,
1976

Sunday, [December] 27, [1942]

This morning I was in the children's nursery. Women who work leave their children from 7 to 6. There are 150 children between the ages of three months and two years, [one group] from two to three years, [one group] from three to six, and another group that studies reading and writing. Speeches, dramatic presentations, the children march in line. But the Jewish flavor is missing. In ghetto circumstances the order is remarkable. What vitality in this people on the brink of destruction!

Who mourns the destruction of East European Jewry? The destruction is a hard fact. Undoubtedly also those who predicted it did not envisage it in this form. Three or four years ago the central Zionist organ was writing of a Jewish center in the Diaspora parallel to the center in Palestine. But the catastrophe was nevertheless a definite thing, its contours so visible. Indeed, the innovative horror for our human consciousness is the personal destruction of human lives: old people, children, blossoming youth, weak and old men, but also those in full vigor. There is no doubt, it tears the heart. But millions of people are losing their lives in all parts of the world in the war. Not only combatants, but also infants and old people. The war has put its face on our destruction. But the destruction was certain even had there been no war. It proceeded on its way in an expansive manner. No one attempted to stem it. On the contrary, whoever attempted to convince himself and the world that he was erecting a defense, actually collapsed. The full proof came in the East [in the U.S.S.R.]. Everything was swallowed up in one great endeavor to disappear. The apparent life of culture was pure nonsense, arid. When the East came here, no one as much as raised his voice. All was happiness. All found a place, a sense of belonging. Undoubtedly here and there someone thought: something is missing. Another reflected: Judaism is disappearing. But all this was glossed over by the fact of mere existence. There is no discrimination. One amounts to something, particularly something in the apparatus. One can have his say. Had the thing continued in existence, nothing would have been left of the enemies of Israel anyway, except, of course, the youth that yearns thither [Palestine]. Could they actually have got there, they would have been saved for our people, and the people through them. But the rest? The individuals would have remained intact, but would have been lost to our people. Jewry in the East is disappearing. The final result is the same as now.

A reference to the Soviet policy of forcibly assimilating the Jews and to the conformist Communist culture in Yiddish.

A reference to the Soviet occupation of Lithuania from June 1940 to 1941.

What is better? Better for whom? The individuals who are saved are saved individuals. There are two billion people in the world, two billion people + x. For our people—the Jewish people—had constructive elements in East European Jewry. Those that yearned thither, if they actually succeeded in coming there, they strengthened our people. Otherwise, our people will mourn them. Great will be the sorrow and mourning, the joy of redemption will be wrapped in black. But the same sorrow is also for the parts that disappeared through apostasy. And if you wish, the sorrow is even greater. Here the evil beast came: "Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces." But how Jacob would have wept if the first plan, God forbid, had been carried out! In that case the Jewish people would have been justified in feeling that sick, impure blood courses in our veins. No external enemy tears off our limbs. Our limbs rot and fall off by themselves. And a page of history will read: The grandchildren were not inferior to the grandfathers. Only fire and sword overcame them. A curse upon the murderer! Eternal glory to the innocent victim! But here, where comfort lures people into the camp of the mighty, it is of no interest to history. It will not condemn, but silence means condemnation. You are no longer. Like all of them—Ammon, Moab, Edom, the hundred kingdoms of Aram . . . an object for excavations and students of epigraphy. History will revere your memory, people of the ghetto. Your least utterance will be studied, your struggle for man's dignity will inspire poems, your scum and moral degradation will summon and awaken morality. Your murderers will stand in the pillory forever and ever. The human universe will regard them with fear and fear for itself and will strive to keep from sin. People will ask: "Why was it done so to this people?" The answer will be: "That is the due of the wicked who destroyed East European Jewry." Thus the holocaust will steal its way into world history. Extinction by means of a loving caress creates no sensation and means nothing to anyone.

Palestine.

Gen. 37:33. The plan to kill Joseph.

In Yiddish, kfourm [fourban].

ווער קלאַגט אויפן חורבן פון מירח־יידנטום? דער חורבן איז א הארטער פאקט. מן הסתם האָבן אויך די וואָס האָבן אים פאַראַויסגעזאָגט ניט געזען

אײַם אין דער געשטאַלט. האָט מען דאָך פאַר 3—4 יאָר(ן) אין צײַנוסטישן צענטראַלבלאַט געשריבן וועגן מרכז הגולה פאַראַלעל מיטן מרכז האַרץ. אָבער דער חורבן איז דאָך געווען א געוויסע זאַך. זײַנע קאַנטורן זײַן אַנזעעוודיק. אוודאי, דאָס חידושידיק שרעקלעכע פאַר אונדזער מענטשלעכע געמיט איז די פּערזענלעכע פאַרטייליקונג פון מענטשלעכע לעבנס: אַלטע לײַט, קינדער, בליענדיקע יוגנט, שוואַך און אַלט, אָבער אויך אין פּולן כּוח. עס איז גאָר קײַן ספּק ניט: עס איז א רײַס אין האַרצן. אָבער אַט קומען אום מיליאָנען אין אַלע עקן וועלט פון דער מלחמה, און ניט נאָר קאַמבאַטאַנטן נאָר אויך עופּלעך און זקנים. די מלחמה האָט דעם חורבן אַרויפגעוועצט איר מאַסקע. דער חורבן אָבער איז דאָך געווען זיכער, אפילו ווען די מלחמה וואָלט ניט אויסגעבראַכן. ער איז דאָך געגאַנגען זײַן וועג מיט א ברייטיקייט. קענער האָט ניט געפרוּווט זיך אַנזשטעלן, אדרבא, ווער עס האָט געמיינט אַנזשורעדן זיך און די וועלט, אז ער בויט אויס אַנטקעגן, האָט גאָר אליין געבראַכן. — דער פּולער באַוויזן איז געווען אין מירח. עס איז אַלץ איינ־געשלונגען געוואָרן אין איין גרויסן אימפעט צו פאַרשווינדן, דאָס כלומרשטע קולטור־לעבן איז געווען פּורער אומזין און טריקעניש. אז דער מירח איז דערגאַנגען אהער, איז ניט געווען קײַן פּוצה פּה ומצפּצף. אַלץ איז געווען פּול מיט גליק. מען האָט געהאַט אַן אַרט. מען האָט זיך געפּילט אינעווייניק. — אוודאי האָט דער אָדער יענער אין זיך געטראַכט: עס פּעלט עפעס, אַן אַנדערער: עס גײַט אָפּ ייִדישקײַט. אָבער אַלץ איז געוואָרן אַפּגעווישט דורך דעם פּאקט פון פּשוטער עקזיסטענץ, מען וואָלט ניט באַגרענעצט, מען איז אויך עפעס אין דעם אפּאַראַט, מען קאָן זאָגן א דעה. — און וואָלט די זאך זיך געהאַלטן, וואָלט דאָך סײַ ווי פון שוואַי ישראל קען שריד ופּליט ניט געבליבן, חוץ, פאַרשטייט זיך, די יוגנט וואָס וויל אהין, וואָלט זי געקענט בפּועל ממש קומען אהין, וואָלט זיי געראַטעוועט געוואָרן פאַרן פּאַלק, און דאָס פּאַלק דורך זיי. אָבער דאָס איבעריקע? די יחידים וואָלטן געבליבן גאַנץ, פאַרן פּאַלק אָבער פאַרלאָרן. דאָס יידנטום אין מירח פאַרשווינדט. דער ענדר־עזולטאַט דער זעליקער וואָס איצט.

וואָס איז בעסער? בעסער פאַר וועמען? די געראַטעוועטע יחידים זענען געראַטעוועטע יחידים. 2000 מיליאָנען מענטשן אויף דער ערד, 2000 מיליאָנען נען + x. פאַרן פּאַלק — דאָס ייִדישע פּאַלק האָט אין דעם מירח־יידנטום געהאַט אויפבויענדיקע עלעמענטן — די וואָס האָבן זיך געצויגן אהין, האָבן

זיי באַוויזן פּאַקטיש צו קומען אהין, האָבן זיי דאָרט געשטאַרקט דאָס פּאַלק, ניט — וועט דאָס פּאַלק זיי באַוויינען. דער צער און דער טרויער וועלן זײַן גרויס, די פרייד פון דער גאולה וועט זײַן אין שוואַרצן געהילט. אָבער דער זעליקער טרויער איז דאָך אויך פאַרן אונטערגאַנג פון יענע טיילן דורך שמד. און אויב מען וויל — נאָך גרעסער דער צער. דאָ איז געקומען די חיה רעה; טרף טרף יוסף. ווי וואָלט אָבער יעקב באַדאַרפט קלאַגן ווען עס וואָלט אויסגעפירט געוואָרן חלילה דער ערשטער פּלאַן? דאָ וואָלט דאָך דאָס פּאַלק געמעגט שפּירן, אין מנינע אַברים פּליסט קראַנק, טריף בלוט; ניט קײַן אויסנווייניקסטער שונא קומט און רײַסט פון מיר שטיקער. די שטיקער פּוילן און פּאַלן אָפּ אליין. און אין דער געשיכטע וועט זיך לײַענען א בלאַט: די אייניקלעך זענען געווען ניט געפּאַלן לגבי די זיידעס. נאָר פּיער און שווערד האָט זיי באַצווונגען. א קללה דעם מערדער — אייביקער כּבוד דעם אומשולדיקן קרבן! דאָ אָבער, ווען ווילטאַג נאַרט אריבער מענטשן אין דעם לאַגער פון דעם שטאַרקן — האָט ער פאַר דער געשיכטע קען אינטערעס ניט. זי וועט פאַרמישפּטן, אָבער דאָס שווינגן איז שוין פאַרמישפּט. איר זײַט שוין ניטאַ. אַט ווי די אַלע — עמון, מואב, אדום, הונדערט קיניגרייכן פון ארם — (מען קען ניט איבערלייענען) — אַן עסק פאַר גרעבערס און עפיגראַפיק־פאַרשערס. אַינער אַנדענק — געטאַמענטשן — וועט געשיכטע הויך האַלטן, אַינער מינדסטן אויסדרוק וועט מען שטודירן, אַינער קאַמף פאַר מענטש וועט פּאַעמעס ארויסבאַגניסטערן, אַינער אומפּלייט און מאַראַלישע געפּאַלנקייט צו מאַראַל מאַנען און וועקן. אַינער רוצחים וועלן לעולמי עד אויפן פּראַנגער שטען. די מענטשלעכע וועלט וועט מיט שרעק אויף זיי קוקן און פאַר זיך אליין שרעקן און וועט פאַר זיך סטאַרען אַפּצוהיטן. למה עשה ככה לעם הזה? וועט מען פּרעגן. און דער ענטפּער וועט זײַן: דאָס קומט דעם רשע, וואָס האָט דאָס מירח־יידנטום חרוב געמאַכט. אזוי ארום שלײַכט זיך דער חורבן אריין אין דער וועלט־געשיכטע. דער אונטערגאַנג דורך דעם ליבן גלעט מאכט קײַן רושם ניט, און איז פאַר קײַנעם גאַרניט.

סוף-כלי-סוף וועט

דאס יידישע פאלק אליין פארגעסן אט דעם צווינג זינעם וואס האט זיך אָפגעבראַכן. מען וועט זיך מוזן באגיין אן אים. מען וועט פון געוונטן שטאם צווינגן און בלעטער און בליטן ארויסברענגען. מען האט נאך כוח, מען לעבט. אָפגעטריקנט, פארפילט — עס טרעפט מיט יעדן בוים. טויזנטער יארן שטייען נאך פאר. קלאַגן אויף די געפאלענע — אודאי, דאס איז נאטירלעך,

בפרט או דאס זינען אייגענע, נאָענטע. אָבער דאס פאלק דארף מען ניט צומישן. די קלאַגעניש אויף נאָענטע — טייל מענטשן טראָגן לאנג דעם טרויער; דער גרעסטער טייל טרייסט זיך. די מענטשלעכע נאטור — אזוי איז די וועלט. וואס די ערד דעקט צו ווערט פארגעסן. אין געטא גופא זעט מען שוין ווי מען פארגעסט. און עס קאן אנדערש ניט זיין. עס איז געוויס קיין עוולה ניט. — דער אמתער מאַטיוו פון דעם טרויער איז דאך די מורא פאר דעם אייגענעם סוף. אויב יענע צענדליגער טויזנטער, טאָ מיט וואס זינען מיר בעסער. עס דארף דאך מיט אונדז אויך טרעפן. ווען עס וואַלט געווען א גאראנטיע אז מיר לעבן איבער? דאס איז דאך ניטאָ, שטענדיק מורא האָבן קען מען ניט. ווערט דער שרעקגעפיל פראַיעצירט אין דעם טרויער אויף די געפאלענע. אויף דעם צער איבער דעם חורבן פון יידנטום, פארשפאָרט זיך מצער צו זיין — דעם פאלק וועט ניט שאטן. עס וועט, האַפנטלעך, ארויסגיין געשטארקט פון דעם נסיון. דאס דארף ס'הארץ פול מאַכן מיט פרידיקער דאנקבארקייט צום האר פון דער געשיכטע.

פאר א יארן האָט מען אין געטאָ צווישן געוויסע אינטעליגענטן-קרייזן שטארק געזוכט אן ענטפער אויף דער פראגע, וואָס איז אוינס א ייד? צי ווער איז א ייד? — עס האָט די קשיא אלעמען געוואלדיק געארט. פריער האָט דער גרעסטער רוב פון זיי וועגן דער זאך זיך ניט פארקלערט. מען האָט זיך געשפירט ייד, ווער מער ווער ווייניקער, צי אפשר גאַרניט געשפירט. און אויב עמעצער האָט פון יידישקייט יאָ געליטן, האָט ער געפונען זיך א תרופה ווי עס (איז), און בכלל זיך פארנומען מיט אנדערע, מער ממשותדיקע זאכן, ווי קלערן וועגן אזא "אבסטראקטן" ענין. נאָך זינען אט די

פארשיידענע מענטשן צונויפגעטריבן און צונויפגעשפארט געוואָרן אין די ווינציקער פון דלת אמות פון געטאָ. מענטשן פון פארשיידענע שפראכן, פאר-שיידענע קולטורן, פארשיידענע אינטערעסן און גלויבנס, פארשיידענע, אָפט סותרדיקע האַפנונגען און וועלענישן — זינען צונויפגענומען געוואָרן אין איינעם אונטער איין רובריק: יידן. צונויפגעשפארט ווי צי שטראָפן זיי דערפאר: עס הייסט, זיי זיינען באַנאנגען א פארברעך, און דער פארברעך באשטייט אין זיין א ייד. האָבן טאקע א סך ניט געוויסט וואָס צו זאָגן וועגן דעם "פארברעך". זיי האָבן ניט פארשטאנען, וואָס הייסט עס "זיין א ייד".

און דעם אמת מוז מען זאָגן: פון די אלע טראכטענישן און קלערענישן איז כמעט גאַרניט ארויסגעקומען. עס איז ניט געווען מיגלעך צו געפינען א קלאַרן און באשטימטן ענטפער אויף דער פראגע; ווער איז א ייד ביי היינטיקע צייטן? ווייל נאָר איצט. אין אונדזערע דורות, די לעצטע 150 יאָר, איז דער באגריף ייד געוואָרן אזא פילדזשיקער. פריער איז "ייד" געווען גאַר א קלאַרער און איינטיגטיקער באגריף: א ייד איז געווען דער וואָס האָט אָפגעהיט יידישקייט און האָט געהערט צום כלל-ישראל. איצט ווערן גערעכנט פאר יידן, און רעכענען זיך אליין פאן יידן, גאַר פארשיידענע סאַרטן מענטשן, אויך אועלכע וואָס האלטן גאַרניט קיין יידישקייט און האלטן ניט פון יידישקייט, אָדער האָבן ניט קיין השגה וואָס איז דאס יידישקייט. — נאָר אויך אין דעם פאל האָב איך געקראָגן אן ענטפער אויף דער פראגע "ווער איז א ייד" פון א קינד, פון א געטאַקינד: מפי עוללים ויונקים איז ווידער א מאָל באשטעטיקט געוואָרן. — א רעליגיע-לערער פון דער געטאַשול האָט פאר מיר דערציילט אזא מעשהלע פון זיין פראקטיק. עס קומען קינדער וואָס זינען ווילד פרעמד פון יידן, האָבן קיין מאָל ניט געהערט ניט אין דער היים, ניט אין שול, ניט אין גאס וועגן יידישן עבר, יידישקייט. איצט אין געטאָ זינען א סך פון די קינדער גערן צו הערן די מעשיות פון דער אלטער הייליקער געשיכטע, פון חומש. און אט אזא קינד, וואָס האָט פריער געלערנט אין א פוילישער שול, גערעדט אין שטוב פויליש, מיט גרויסן אינטערעס געלערנט די מעשיות פון חומש. אז מען האָט אין דער פרשה "תולדות" געלערנט די מעשה פון יעקב און עשו. האָט דאָס קינד זיך פלוצעם אָפגערוּפן: לערער, מיר זינען דאָך פון יעקבן. און זיי (ד"ה די וואָס טוען אונדז שלעכטס) זינען דאָך פון עשו. איז גוט אזוי, וויל איך טאקע געהערן צו יעקבן און ניט צו עשו. איך האָב וועגן אַט דער מעשה געטראכט און האָב אַנגי-

Kalmanovitsh recorded this speech in Yiddish a month after it was delivered.

Ps. 8:3.

The sacred triad was first conceived by poet, kabbalist and ethical

Eventually the Jewish people itself will forget this branch that was broken off. It will have to do without it. From the healthy trunk will come forth branches and blossoms and leaves. There is still strength and life. Dried up and decayed—this happens to every tree. There are still thousands of years ahead. Lamentation for the dead, of course, that is natural, particularly if they are your own, close to you. But the Jewish people must not be confused. The mourning for close ones—some people bear their sorrow long; most find comfort. Human nature—such is the world. Whatever the earth covers up is forgotten. In the ghetto itself we see how people forget. It cannot be otherwise. It certainly is not wrong. The real motive in mourning is after all fear of one's own end. Wherein are we better than those tens of thousands? It must happen to us, too. If we only had a guarantee of survival. But that does not exist and one cannot always be fearful, then the feeling of fear is projected into mourning for the fallen, and sorrow over the destruction of Jewry. Spare yourself the sorrow! The Jewish people will not be hurt. It will, it is to be hoped, emerge fortified by the trial. This should fill the heart with joyous gratitude to the sovereign of history.

Friday, [April] 30 [1943]
Passover is over. There were *sedarim* in the kosher kitchen. . . . At the second *seder* I spoke briefly.
"A year ago some intellectual circles in the ghetto searched for an answer to

the question: What is a Jew or who is a Jew? Everybody was tremendously preoccupied with this question. Formerly the majority of these people had never given much thought to this question. They felt that they were Jews. Some more so, others less. Some, perhaps, did not feel so at all. And if someone suffered because of his Jewishness, he somehow found a remedy for it and, in general, occupied himself with other more substantial matters, rather than speculate about such an 'abstract' matter. Now these diverse people were herded together and imprisoned within the narrow confines of the ghetto. People of diverse languages, diverse cultures, diverse interests and beliefs, of diverse and, at times, conflicting hopes and desires were assembled together in one category: Jews. Confined as if being punished for that; that is, they committed a crime and the crime consisted in being a Jew. Many of them actually did not know what to say about the 'crime.' They did not know what it means 'to be a Jew.' To be truthful, practically nothing resulted from all these speculations and reflections. It was impossible to find a clear and definite answer to the question: Who is a Jew nowadays? For only now, in our generations, in the past 150 years, has the concept of Jew assumed so many meanings. Earlier, 'Jew' was a clear concept that had only one meaning. A Jew was one who observed Jewish law and belonged to the Jewish community. Now various kinds of people are considered and consider themselves Jews, even such as do not observe Jewish law or even respect it, or have no idea what Jewishness is. But also in this case I obtained an answer to the question 'who is a Jew' from a child in the ghetto. The truth of the verse, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has Thou found strength,' was again confirmed. A teacher of religion in the ghetto school told me the incident, from his own experience. Children attend who are totally alienated from Jews, who had never heard at home, in school, in the street, anything of the Jewish past, of Judaism. Now in the ghetto many of these children listen eagerly to the stories of ancient sacred history, of the Bible. One such child, who had once attended a Polish school and spoke Polish at home, studied with great interest the stories of the Bible. When, in the weekly portion of *Toledot*, they studied the story of Jacob and Esau, this child suddenly called out: 'Teacher, we are indeed the descendants of Jacob and they (i.e., those who do evil to us) the descendants of Esau. Isn't that so? It's good that way. For I really want to belong to Jacob and not to Esau.' I reflected on this story and discovered that I could deduce from it a method to decide who is a Jew. This is how: Man's imagination is after all free, no bonds can confine it. A ghetto person can then sometimes imagine that he has the freedom to choose: he can divest himself of his fallen and defeated Jewish identity and assume the identity of the ruler over the ghetto. Now I ask: What would he do? If he wanted to change, if he was eager to assume the identity of the ruler, we could suppose that he is not a Jew. But if by free choice he wishes to remain a Jew, then he is a Jew. Reflecting further: the Jewish child instinctively chose to be a Jew. He naturally feels at home among Jews. As for the adult who I imagine chooses freely to be a Jew, is instinctual feeling a sufficient ground or are there also rational motives?

"I think so. To be a Jew means in every instance to be on a high plane. The temporary suffering and blows that descend upon the Jew have a meaning, are not merely oppressions, and do not degrade the Jew. For a Jew is part of the sacred triad: Israel, the Torah, and the Holy One, blessed be He. That means the Jewish people, the moral law, and the Creator of the universe. This sacred triad courses

געפונען, אז איך קאן פון איר אפּלערנען א מעטאָד, ווי אזוי צו באשטימען ווער עס איז א ייד. — און אַט ווי אזוי. דעם מענטשנס פּאַנטאַזיע איז דאָך פּרײַ, קיין שום צאַמען קאַנען זי נײַט אײַנהאַלטן. קאָן זיך דאָך א געטאַמענטש א מאָל אין זײַן פּאַנטאַזיע פּאַרשטעלן, אז מען גיט אים די ברירה אויסצוֹ קלײַבן: ער קאָן זיך אויסטאַן פּון זײַן ייִדישן, יורדישן געשלאָגענעם "איך" און זיך אַנטאַן אין דעם "איך" פּון דעם האַר איבערן געטאַ. שטעל איך די פּראָגע; ווי וואָלט ער געטאַן? וואָלט ער זיך געוואָלט בײַטן, וואָלט ער גערן אָנגענומען די געשטאַלט פּון דעם האַר, דעמאָלט מעגן מיר אָננעמען אז ער איז נײַט קיין ייד. וויל ער אָבער דורך פּרײַען אויסקלײַבן בלײַבן ייד, דעמאָלט איז ער א ייד. — קלערנדיק ווייטער: דאָס ייִדישע קינד האָט אײַנסטינקטיוו אויסגעקלײַבן דאָס זײַן א ייד. ער שפּירט זיך נאַטירלעך אין דער היים צווישן ייִדן. דער דערוואַקסענער, וואָס איך שטעל מיר פּאַר, אז ער וועט מיט דער פּרײַער ברירה אויסקלײַבן צו זײַן א ייד, צי איז דאָס אײַנסטינקטיווע געפּיל א גענוגער גרונד, אָדער עס קאַנען נאָך זײַן שכלדיקע מאַטיוון אויך?

מיין איך אז יא. זײַן ייד הייסט אין יעדער פּאַל זײַן אין א הויכן מעמד. די צײַטווייליקע פּינן און שלעק וואָס פּאַלן אויף ייִדן האָבן א זינען, זײַנען נײַט סתם אזוי נגישות, דערנידעריקן נײַט דעם ייד. וואָרעם ייד איז א טייל פּון דער הייליקער דרײַאייניקײַט — ישראל ואורייתא וקודשא בריך הוא — דאָס הייסט דאָס ייִדישע פּאַלק, דאָס מאָראַלישע געזעץ און דער באשעפּער פּון דער וועלט. די דאָזיקע הייליקע דרײַאייניקײַט גייט אין דער געשיכטע, זי איז א רעאַליטעט וואָס איז אומצאָליקע מאָל אויסגעפרוווט געוואָרן. אונדזערע זיידעס האָבן זיך אָן דער דרײַאייניקײַט געהאַלטן, אין איר כּוח געלעבט. און אויך איצט: דער ייד, וואָס האַלט זיך נײַט פּאַר אַט דער דרײַאייניקײַט, אויף דעם איז א רחמנות; ער בלאַנדזשעט אין עולם התּוהוּ, ער לײַדט און קאָן קײַן פּאַרענטפּער פּאַר די לײַדן נײַט געפּינען, ער קאָן פּון פּאַלק אָפּגעריסן ווערן, דאָס הייסט: ער קאָן זיך ווינטשן אומצובײַטן זײַן איך. דער ייד אָבער וואָס האַלט זיך פּעסט פּאַר דער הייליקער דרײַאייניקײַט, אויף דעם איז קיין רחמנות נײַטאַ. ער איז אין א זיכערן פּאַרבאַנד. אוודאי, די געשיכטע שטורעמט איצט, עס גייט א מלחמה קעגן ייִדן, אָבער די מלחמה איז דאָך נײַט נאָר קעגן דעם איין גליד פּון דער דרײַאייניקײַט, נאָר קעגן דער גאַנצער: אויך קעגן דער אורייתא און קדב"ה, קעגן מאָראַלישן געזעץ

און קעגן באשעפּער. קען נאָך בײַ עמעצן זײַן א ספּק וועלכער צד איז שטאַרקער? אין א מלחמה קאָן זיך טרעפּן אז א פּאַלק ווערט געשלאָגן. אז (ער) פּאַלט אריין אין געפּאַנגענשאפט. זאָלן זיך די געטאַיידן באטראַכטן ווי אזעלכע קריגס־געפּאַנגענע. געדענקען דאַרפּן זיי אָבער, אז דער חייל אין גאַנצן איז נײַט געשלאָגן און קען נײַט געשלאָגן ווערן. דער פּסח מצרים איז א סימבאָל פּון אַן אַמאָליקן נצחון פּון דער העלליקער דרײַאייניקײַט. מײַן ווונטש איז, מיר זאָלן אין איינעם דערלעבן דעם פּסח לעתיד.

philosopher Moses Hayyim Luzzatto (1707-1746) and was later popularized by the Gaon of Vilna and the Maggid of Mezritsh.

through history. It is a reality that has been tested countless times. Our grandfathers clung to the triad, lived by its strength. And now too: the Jew who does not cling to this triad is to be pitied. He wanders in a world of chaos, he suffers and finds no explanation for his suffering; he can be severed from his people, that is, he can wish to change his identity. But the Jew who clings to the sacred triad needs no pity. He is in a secure association. To be sure, history rages now, a war is waged against the Jews, but the war is not only against one member of the triad but against the entire one: against the Torah and God, against the moral law and the Creator. Can anyone still doubt which side is the stronger? In a war it happens that one regiment is defeated, taken into captivity. Let the ghetto Jews consider themselves as such prisoners of war. But let them also remember that the army as a whole is not defeated and cannot be defeated. The Passover of Egypt is a symbol of ancient victory of the sacred triad. My wish is that together we shall live to see the Passover of the future."

זליק קלמנוביץ

יומן בגיטו וילנה וכתבים מן העזבון שנמצאו בהריסות

בדוצאת מורשת בית-עדות ע"ש מרדכי אנילביץ — ספרית-פועלים

“נוער יהודי!

אל תיתנו אָמון במערימים עליכם. מ-80 אלף היהודים שבירושלים-
דליטא נשתיירו אך שתי רבבות. לעינינו קרעו מאתנו את הורינו,
אחינו ואחיותינו. היכן הם מאות הגברים שנחטפו לעבודה?

היכן הן הנשים הערומות והילדים שהוצאו מאתנו בליל-האימים?
היכן היהודים שנשלחו ביום הכיפורים?

היכן אחינו בני הגיטו השני?

מאלה שהוצאו בשערי הגיטו לא חזר איש. כל דרכי הגסטאפו
מובילות לפונאר. ופונאר כמוה כמוות.

המהססים, תהא כל אשליה מפם והלאה. ילדיכם, נשותיכם ובעליכם
אינם. פונאר אינה מחנה ריכוז. כולם הומחו שם ברייה. היטלר זומם
להשמיד את כל יהודי אירופה, ועל יהודי ליטא הוטל להיות הראשונים
בחור. לא נובל כצאן לטבח!

אמנם חלשים אנו וחסרי מגן. אולם התשובה היחידה למרצח היא—
התקוממות בנשק!

אחים! מוטב ליפול כלחממים בני חורין מאשר לחיות בחסד מרצחים.
התקוממו! התקוממו עד נשימת אפכם האחרונה!

1 בינואר 1942²⁵

אבא, עמ' 11; דבור'צקי, עמ' 157; סרצקובר, עמ' 130. נוסח הכרוז נלקח
ממאמר של אבא קובנר, נסיון ראשון להגיד, ילקוט מורשת ט"ז, עמ' 11 (להלן:
קובנר—מורשת). בארכיון בית לחמי הגיטאות נמצא כרוז בכתב יד ביידיש,
שכתרתו "אל נלך כצאן לטבח" והנושא את התאריך של 1 בינואר 1942. הכרוז
משתרע על שלושה חצי עמודים ותוכנו כולל את הנוסח של הכרוז שהוכן על
ידי אבא קובנר, אך כולל נושאים נוספים, כגון: פניה לנשים יהודיות לא לקיים
יחסים עם חיילים גרמניים, פניה לשוטרים יהודיים שסייעו לאחיהם. בשולי
הכרוז ישנה הערה, שהכרוז הוקרא באספה של נוער ציוני בגיטו וילנה. אין
ידועות מי חיבר כרוז זה.

A SUMMONS TO RESISTANCE IN
THE VILNA GHETTO, JANUARY 1942

Let us not be led like sheep to the slaughter!

Jewish youth!

In a time of unparalleled national misfortune we appeal to you!

We do not yet have the words to express the whole tragic struggle which transpires before our eyes. Our language has no words to probe the depths to which our life has fallen nor to vociferate the anguish which strangles us.

It is still too hard to find the proper definition for the state in which we find ourselves, for the extraordinary cruelty with which the annihilation of the local Jewish population has been carried out.

The community of Jerusalem of Lithuania¹ numbered 75,000. On entering the ghetto, 25,000 were already missing, and today only 12,000 remain. All the others have been killed! Death strolls in our streets; in our tents—powerlessness. But the anguish at this huge misfortune is much greater in the light of the ignoble conduct of the Jews at the present time. Never in its long history of martyrdom has the Jewish people shown such abjectness, such a lack of human dignity, national pride, and unity, such communal inertia and submissiveness to the murderers.

The heart aches even more at the conduct of Jewish youth, reared for twenty years in the ideals of upbuilding and halutz defense, which now is apathetic, lost, and does not respond to the tragic struggle.

There are, however, occasions in the life of a people, of a collective, as in the life of an individual, which seize you by the hair of your head, shake you up, and force you to gird up all your strength to keep alive. We are now experiencing such an occasion.

With what can we defend ourselves? We are helpless, we have no possibilities of organizing any defense of our existence. Even if we are deprived of the possibility of an armed defense in this un-

1. Vilna was called "the Jerusalem of Lithuania," an epithet attributed to Napoleon, when he passed there in 1815 in the retreat from Moscow.

equal contest of strength, we nevertheless can still defend ourselves. Defend ourselves with all means—and moral defense above all—is the command of the hour.

Jewish youth!

On none but you rests the national duty to be the pillar of the communal defense of the Jewish collective which stands on the brink of annihilation!

I *Let us defend ourselves during a deportation!*

For several months now, day and night, thousands and tens of thousands have been torn away from our midst, men, the aged, women, and children, led away like cattle—and we, the remainder, are numbed. The illusion still lives within us that they are still alive somewhere, in an undisclosed concentration camp, in a ghetto.

You believe and hope to see your mother, your father, your brother who was seized and has disappeared.

In the face of the next day which arrives with the horror of deportation and murder, the hour has struck to dispel the illusion: There is no way out of the ghetto, except the way to death!

No illusion greater than that our dear ones are alive.

No illusion more harmful than that. It deadens our feelings, shatters our national unity in the moments before death.

Before our eyes they led away our mother, our father, our sisters—enough!

We will not go!

Comrades! Uphold this awareness and impart to your families, to the remnants of the Jerusalem of Lithuania.

—Do not surrender into the hands of the kidnapers!

—Do not hand over any other Jews!

—If you are caught, you have nothing to lose!

—Let us defend ourselves, and not go!

Better to fall with honor in the ghetto than to be led like sheep to Ponary!

II *On guard over national honor and dignity*

We work for Germans and Lithuanians. Everyday we come face to face with our employers, the murderers of our brothers. Great the shame and pain, observing the conduct of Jews, stripped of the awareness of human dignity.

Comrades!

—Don't give the foe the chance to ridicule you!

—When a German ridicules a Jew—don't help him laugh!

—Don't play up to your murderers!

—Denounce the bootlickers at work!

—Denounce the girls who flirt with Gestapo men!

—Work slowly, don't speed!

—Show solidarity! If misfortune befalls one of you—don't be vile egotists—all of you help him. Be united in work and misfortunes!

—Jewish agents of the Gestapo and informers of all sorts walk the streets. If you get hold of one such, sentence him—to be beaten until death!

III *In the presence of the German soldier*

Instead of submissiveness and repulsive bootlicking, you are given the possibility in daily encounters with German soldiers to perform an important national deed. Not every German soldier is a sworn enemy of the Jews, not every German soldier is a sworn Hitlerite. But many have false ideas about Jews. We, the youth, by our conduct, in word and deed, can create in the mind of the German soldier another image of a Jew, a productive one, a Jew who has national and human dignity.

Comrades, show the Jews with whom you work and live together that this is the approach to the German soldier.

IV *To the Jewish police*

Most tragic is the role of the Jewish police—to be a blind tool in the hands of our murderers. But you, Jewish policemen, have at least a chance to demonstrate your personal integrity and national responsibility!

—Any act which threatens Jewish life should not be performed!

—No actions of mass deportation should be carried out!

—Refuse to carry out the orders which bring death to Jews and their families! . . .

—Do not let service in the police be turned into national disgrace for you!

—Jewish policeman, sooner risk your own life than dozens of Jewish lives!

Comrades!

Convey your hatred of the foe in every place and at every moment!

Never lose the awareness that you are working for your murderers!

Better to fall in the fight for human dignity than to live at the mercy of the murderer!

Let us defend ourselves! Defend ourselves until the last minute!

יוגנט-הימען

אונדזער ליד איז פול מיט טרויער
 דרייסט איז אונדזער מונטער-גאנג
 כאַטש דער שונא וואַכט ביים טויער, —
 שטורעמט יוגנט מיט געזאַנג:
 יונג איז יעדער, יעדער, יעדער ווער עס וויל נאָר.
 יאָרן האַבן קיין כאַטש,
 אַלטע קענען, קענען, קענען אויך זיך קינדער
 פון אַ נייער, פרייער, צייט.
 ווער עס וואַגלט אום אויף וועגן,
 ווער מיט דרייסטקייט ש'שטעלט זיך פּוס,
 ברענגט די יוגנט זיי אַנטקעגן
 פונעם געטאָ אַ גערום.
 יונג איז יעדער...
 מיר געדענקען אַלע שונאים,
 מיר דערמאָנען אַלע פרייער,
 אייביק וועלן מיר פאַרבינדן
 אונדזער נעכטן מיטן היינט.
 יונג איז יעדער...
 קליבן מיר צונויף די גלידער,
 ווידער שטאַלן מיר די ריי.
 גייט אַ ברייער, גייט אַ שמידער, —
 לאַמיר אַלע גיין מיט זיי...
 יונג איז יעדער...

Youth Hymn

Our song is filled with grieving,
 Bold our step, we march along,
 Though the foe the gateway's watching,
 Youth comes storming with their song:

Young are they, are they, are they
 whose age won't bind them.
 Years don't really mean a thing,
 Elders also, also, also, can be children
 In a newer, freer spring.

Those who roam upon the highways,
 Those whose step with hope is strong,
 From the ghetto youth salutes them
 And their greetings send along.

Young are they . . .

We remember all the tyrants,
 We remember all our friends,
 And we pledge that in the future
 Our past and present blend.

Young are they . . .

So we're girding our muscles,
 In our ranks we're planting steel,
 Where a blacksmith, builder marches,
 We will join them with our zeal!

Young are they . . .

Vilna ghetto, circa 1942

Con spirito

Un - dzer lid iz ful mit troy - er, — Dreyt iz
 un - dzer mun - ter - gang, Khotsh der soy - ne vakht baym

toy - er, — Shtu-remt yu - gnt mit ge - zang: Yung iz
 ye - der, ye - der, ye - der ver es vil nor, Yo - m
 ho - bn keyn ba - tayt, Al - te ke - nen, ke - nen, ke - nen oykh zayn
 kin - der Fun a nay - er fray - er tsayt.

Itsik Vittenberg

Somewhere crouching, hiding
 The foe, beastlike, biding.
 The mauzer keeps watch in my hand,
 Suddenly the Gestapo
 Leads one whom they've trapped oh!
 Through darkness, it's our commandant.

With lightning the night
 Tears the ghetto with fright.
 There's danger about and fears mount.
 Dear friends so devoted,
 Chains must be exploded,
 And vanish must our commandant.

Night faded, it tore us,
 As death stood before us.
 The ghetto in fever did pant.
 In turmoil the ghetto,
 Commands the Gestapo:
 It's death or it's your commandant.

Then spoke up our Itzik
 As quick as a blink is
 "I must heed this edict, that's clear.
 I'll not forfeit your lives
 To the tyrants' cruel knives."
 To death he goes without fear.

Again, crouching, hiding
The foe, beastlike, biding,
Again mauzer guards in my hand.
Now you're dear to me,
My savior you must be,
Now you must be my commandant.

Vilna ghetto, 1943

Moderato

S'ligt er - gets far - tay - et Der faynd vi a khay - e, Der
mau - zer, er vakht in mayn hant, Nor
plu - tsem ge - sta - po, Es firt a ge - shmud - tn Durkh
fints - ter - nish dem ko - men - dant. Nor dant.

86 Hirsh Glik

שטיל די נאכט איז אויסגעשטערנט
און דער פראסט — ער האט געברענט;
צי געדענקסטו ווי איך האב דין געלערנט
האלטן א שפייער אין די הענט.

Silence, and a Starry Night

Silence, and a starry night
Frost crackling, fine as sand.
Remember how I taught you
To hold a gun in your hand?

This song was written by Hirsh Glik (1922 - 1944) in 1942 after partisans blew up a German convoy of trucks. A member of the literary group of young poets, Yungvald, before the war, Glik was imprisoned in a concentration camp in Estonia and was killed by the Germans in 1944. Composer unknown.

In fur jacket and beret,
Clutching a hand grenade,
A girl whose skin is velvet
Ambushes a cavalcade.

Aim, fire, shoot—and hit!
She, with her pistol small,
Halts an autiful,
Arms and all!

Morning, emerging from the wood,
In her hair a snow carnation.
Proud of her small victory
For the new, free generation!

א מויד, א פעלצל און א בערעט.
און האלט אין האנט פעסט א נאגאן.
א מויד מיט א סאמעטענעם פנים
היט אפ דעם שונאס קאראוואן.
געצילט, געשאסן און געטראפן
האט איר קלייניקער פיסטויל.
אן אויטא א פולניקן מיט וואפן
פארהאלטן האט זי מיט איין קויל.
פאר טאג פון וואלד ארויסגעקראכן.
מיט שניי-גירלאנדן אויף די האר.
געמוטיקט פון קלייניקן נצחון
פאר אונדזער נייעם, פרייען דור.

Moderato

Shtil, di nakht iz oys - ge - shte - rnt,
Un der frost, er hot ge - brent; Tsi ge -
denk - stu vi ikh hob dikh ge - le - rnt
Hal - tn a shpay - er in di hent. Tsi ge - hent.

Never Say

Never say, this is the last road for you,
Leaden skies are masking days of blue.
The hour we yearn for is drawing near,
Our step will beat the signal: we are here!

From southern palms, from lands long white with snow,
We come with all our pain and all our woe.

72

74

הירש גליק

Zog Nit Keyn Mol זאג ניט קיין מאָל !

Zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg,
 Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg.
 Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho-
 Es vet a poyk ton undzer trot-mir zaynen do!
 Fun grinem palmenland biz vaysn land fun shney,
 Mir kumen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey,
 Un vu gefaln s'iz a shprits fun undzer blut,
 Shprotsn vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut.
 Es vet di morgnzun bagildn undz dem haynt,
 Un der nekhtn vet farshvindn mitn faynd,
 Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun in dem kayor-
 Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor.
 Dos lid geshribn iz mit blut un nit mit blay,
 S'iz nit keyn lidl fun a foygl af der fray,
 Dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent
 Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent!
 To zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg,
 Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg.
 Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho-
 Es vet a poyk ton undzer trot-mir zaynen do!

a זאג ניט קיין מאָל, אַז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,
 a כאָטש הימלען בלייענע פאַרשטעלן בלויע טעג.
 b קומען וועט נאָך אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה,
 b עס וועט אַ פּויק טאָן אונדזער טראַט - מיר זיינען דאָ!
 פּון גרינעם פּאַלמענלאַנד ביז ווייסן לאַנד פּון שניי.
 מיר קומען אָן מיט אונדזער פּיין, מיט אונדזער וויי,
 און וווּ געפאַלן ס'איז אַ שפּריץ פּון אונדזער בלוט,
 שפּראַצן וועט דאָרט אונדזער גבורה, אונדזער מוט.
 עס וועט די מאָרגנון באַגילדן אונדז דעם היינט,
 און דער נעכטן וועט פאַרשווינדן מיטן פּיינד.
 נאָר אויב פאַרזאַמען וועט די זון אין דעם קאַיאָר -
 ווי אַ פאַראַל זאָל גיין דאָס ליד פּון דור צו דור.
 דאָס ליד געשריבן איז מיט בלוט און ניט מיט בליי,
 ס'איז ניט קיין לידל פּון אַ פּויגל אויף דער פּריי,
 דאָס האָט אַ פּאַלק צווישן פּאַלנדיקע ווענט
 דאָס ליד געזונגען מיט נאַגאַנעס אין די הענט.
 טאָ זאָג ניט קיין מאָל, אַז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,
 כאָטש הימלען בלייענע פאַרשטעלן בלויע טעג.
 קומען וועט נאָך אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה -
 עס וועט אַ פּויק טאָן אונדזער טראַט - מיר זיינען דאָ!

Never Say

Never say this is the final road for you,
 Though leadened skies may cover over days of blue.
 As the hour that we longed for is so near,
 Our step beats out the message - we are here!
 From lands so green with palms to lands all white
 with snow,
 We shall be coming with our anguish and our woe,
 And where a spurt of our blood fell on the earth,
 There our courage and our spirit have rebirth.
 The early morning sun will brighten our day,
 And yesterday with our foe will fade away.
 But if the sun delays and in the east remains -
 This song as password generations must maintain.
 This song was written with our blood and not with
 lead,
 It's not a little tune that birds sing overhead,
 This song a people sang amid collapsing walls,
 With grenades in hands they heeded to the call.
 Therefore never say the road now ends for you,
 Though leadened skies may cover over days of blue.
 As the hour that we longed for is so near -
 Our step beats out the message - we are here!

Written in the Vilno ghetto, the song became the anthem of the underground resistance movement. Later it spread to other ghettos and partisan divisions. Today it is sung at all commemorative gatherings. It was written by Hirsh Glik (see note about author in *Shil Di Nakht*). He set the words to a melody by the Russian composer Dmitri Pokrass.

.
MAY 1 [1943]

1טער מיי [1943]

נעכטן אָונט, ווי מיר האָבן שוין פֿאַרצייכנט, איז דער זאַל פֿון שאַוולער 1 געווען איבערפֿולט מיט אַן אַרבעטער־ און אינטעליגענט־אוידיטאָריע. נאָך איידער די אַקאַדעמיע האָט זיך אָנגעהויבן, האָט דער גאַנצער עולם געוואָסט, אַז עס האַנדלט זיך וועגן אַ מיי־דעמאָנסטראַציע אין געטאָ. אויף דער „מיזרח־וואַנט“ פֿון זאַל הענגט אַ גרויסער קינסטלערישער פֿלאַקאַט (אויסגעפֿירט אומע און סוצ. 420) מיט אַ באַפֿוצעכץ פֿון פּאַפֿירענע מיי־בלומען. דער אויפֿשריפֿט: „פֿרילינג אין געטאָ“. ביי אַ טויטער שטילקייט און געשפּאַנטער שטימונג עפֿנט די אַקאַדעמיע פֿר' ק[רוק]. זיין דערעפֿענונגס־וואָרט ליגן מיר ביי. עס ריידן [לייב] אָפּעסקין אד"ט „פֿרילינג־מאַטיוון ביי... פּרצן“. אַ יוגנטלעכע זינגט דאָס פֿאַלקסליד וועגן הירשקען (הירש לעקערט). עס קומען דאָן אַ ריי לידער־דעקלאַמאַציעס, פֿידל־קאַנצערט. אַ ליד ליענט דער דיכטער אַ. סוצקעווער און דער פֿאַרזיצער ה. ק[רוק] שליסט די אַקאַדעמיע מיט פֿאַלגנדיקע ווערטער:

דער זיינער שטייט נישט. איצט איז דער 30סטער אפריל, 12 ביי נאַכט. און אַז דער זיינער רוקט זיך, רוקט זיך אויך דער... קאַלענדאַר. מאָרגן איז מיי און מיט אונדז איז דער פֿרילינג!

ממש מיט טרערן אין די אויגן איז פֿאַרביי די פֿניערונג. מענטשן, פֿול מיט באַגניסטערונג, האָבן [זיך] געדריקט די הענט און אַרויסגעזאָגט זייער באַגניסטע־אומע 420 אָלעניצקי און רחל סוצקעווער.

רונג און צופֿרידנקייט. דער אָונט איז פֿאַרביי אונטערן צייכן פֿון מיי און פֿון... עין תּחת עין, שן תּחת שן...

[דאָס דערעפֿענונגס־וואָרט איז נישט בייגעלייגט.]

עטלעכע טעג נאָך דעם האָט מען אין געטאָ גערעדט וועגן דער געלונגענער פֿניערונג ווי וועגן אַן אָפֿפֿריוונג און באַגניסטערונג.

Last night, as I said, the hall of Szawelska 1 was crowded with an audience of workers and intellectuals. Even before the commemoration began, the entire hall knew it was a May Day demonstration in the ghetto. On the "Eastern Wall" of the auditorium hangs a big artistic poster (done by Uma and Sutz).¹⁹ with a decoration of paper May flowers. The inscription: "Spring in the Ghetto." In dead silence and tense mood, friend K[ruk] opened the evening. I attach his opening speech. [Leyb] Opeskin spoke on the subject of "Spring Motifs in . . . Peretz." A young person sang the folk song about Hirshke (Hirsh Lekert). Then came poetry readings and a violin concert. The poet A. Sutzkever read a poem, and the chairman, H. K[ruk], concluded the evening with the following words:

Time does not stand still. Now it is midnight, April 30. And as the clock moves, so does the . . . calendar. Tomorrow is May, and spring is with us!

We went through the celebration with tears in our eyes. Very emotionally, people shook hands and expressed their excitement and satisfaction. The evening went by under the sign of May and . . . an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. . . .²⁰

A few days later, people in the ghetto were still talking about the successful celebration as refreshing and stimulating.

THE BUNDISTS MEET THIS AFTERNOON

At 6 P.M. today, the Bundist organization meets with its closest sympathizers. Tomorrow, May 2, a meeting takes place between the leading authorities, the partners in [the] May Day Celebration in the ghetto, 1943.

WHAT ABOUT ZALMEN TIKTIN?

Everything is done here to keep the issue of Zalmen Tiktin²¹ from being blown out of proportion. Meanwhile, rumors circulate that Tiktin is no longer alive. The information is not yet certain.

19. The artists Uma Olkienicka and Rachel Sutzkever.

20. An allusion to the partisan movement.

די פֿעסטונג

א
די פֿעסטונג איז אַלט,
אזוי טרויעריק אַלט,
אירע שטויבן — צעפֿאלענע שטערן.
ס'האַבן זיידעס געקלעפט איר געהיימע געשטאַלט
פֿון ליימען געוויקטע אין טרערן.

אַ האַלבן יאָרטויזנט געבויט און געבויט, —
אַ, ווייטע געדולדיקע
זיידעס!

עס וואָכן פֿאַרקנאַטענע ביינער
אין ווענט,
ווי פֿונעם גורל די עדות.

און הער זייער קול:

ניט פֿאַרזאַם,
ניט פֿאַרזאַם,
רייניק
דעם שטאַל
פֿאַראייניק
דעם שטאַם.

אַ וואַנט קעגן שרעק, און אַ וואַנט קעגן טרויער,
און ס'אייגענע לייב אין דער פֿעסטונג פֿאַרמויער!

The Fortress

I

The fortress is old,
So gloomily old,
Its dust — crumbled stars.
The grandfathers molded its hidden mold
Of clay soaked in tears.

Half a millennium, they built and built —
Oh, distant grandfathers,
Patient and great!

Bones kneaded into the walls
Stand guard —
Witnesses of fate.

Hear their voice:

Recover
Your trace,
Ignite
The steel,
Unite
The race.

A wall against fear and a wall to endure,
In the fortress, your own body immure!

ב
בני נאכט איז די פֿעסטונג פֿאַרלאָשן,
בלויז די שינאה גליט.
די גאַס האָט פֿאַרלוירן איר לשון —
די הייסע גאַלאַפּיקע טריט.

נאָר טיף אונטער איז און ליים
נעמען די שיכטן צעפֿאַלן:
מע בויערט, מע בויט אין געהיים,
עס ציען זיך ליכט דורך קאַנאַלן.

דאָ גראַבט מען אַ פֿעסטונג אַ צווייטע,
אין שטיינערנעם צאָרן — אַ שאַכט.
און קנויטן פֿיבערן גרייטע
אַ צונד זיך צו געבן אין שלאַכט.

ווילנער נעטא, 14 יולי 1943

★ [ג]

קלינג אין די גלעקער פֿון טויבן געוויסן
דו וועכטער גערעכטער פֿון טורעם.
זאל יעדער איצט ווערן אַ פֿעסטונג און שליסן
אַ בונד קעגן איזערנעם שטורעם.

ווי קוילן צעבלאָז די פֿאַרשטיקטע געמיטער
אַפֿילו ווען ס'גליט ניט קיין האַפֿן.
סע זאל אין די פֿינגער ניט געבן קיין ציטער
דער הייליקער יודישער וואַפֿן.

ווילנער געטא, פֿערצנטן יולי 1943

II

At night the fortress is dark,
Only the glow of hate.
The street lost its tongue —
Galloping steps of fate.

But deep under iron and clay
Layers are moved in the night:
In secret, they drill and they build,
Through channels, traces of light.

A second fortress they dig,
In stormy rage — a mine.
And wicks feverish, ready
To ignite for the battle a sign.

Vilna Ghetto, July 14, 1943

★ [ג]

צלצל בפֿעמוני המצפּון החרש,
אַתָּה הַשּׁוֹמֵר הַצּוֹדֵק אֲשֶׁר בַּחֹמָה.
יְהִי עֵתָּה מְבַצֵּר כָּל אֶחָד וְיַקְדֵּשׁ
בְּרִית נֶגֶד סוּפַת הַבְּרֹזֶל הַהוֹמָה.

להט כמו גחלים רוחות אדם מחנקים,
אַף אִם אֵין נֶמֶל הַמוֹסִיף בְּאֹרוֹ לַלַּחַשׁ.
כֹּל יִרְטֵט בֵּין פְּרָמִי אֲצִבְעוֹת הַדָּקִים
הַגָּשֶׁק הַיְהוּדִי הַקָּדוֹשׁ.

גיטו וילנה, ארבעה-עשר ביולי 1943

ה'תש"ג ה'אזן ה'ג'יטו

באותו חודש הופיע מאמרו של אהרנבורג על סוצקבר ב"פראבדה" תחת הכותרת "נצחון האדם". אהרנבורג מספר בו על חורבן גיטו וילנה, על זוועות הנאצים ועל הלחימה הפארטיזנית. הוא מדבר על הפואימה "כל-נדר", שאותה הוא שמע בטרם הגיע סוצקבר למוסקבה, ועל אוצרות התרבות שהמשורר הפארטיזן הביא אתו:

א' אהרנבורג,

טורז'אסטבו צ'אלובאקה

"פראבדה", 29.4.44

Торжество человека

В тихие эпохи мир иным кажется серым: черное и белое, благородство и низость бываюти прикриты туманом повседневной жизни. Страшнее у нас время — все обнажено, все проверено — на поле боя, на дыбе, у края могилы. Величие духа показал советский народ в дни испытаний. И хочу рассказать историю одного человека. Как много других, она свидетельствует о победе человека над силами зла.

Несколько дней тому назад в Москву приехал боец литовского партизанского отряда еврейский поэт Суцкевер. Он привез письма Максима Горького, Романа Розлана, — эти письма он спас от немцев. Он спас знаменитого слугу Петра Великого, рисунки Генина, картину Левитана, письмо Льва Толстого и много других ценнейших реликвий России.

Я давно слышал о стихах Суцкевера. Мне говорили о них и замечательный австрийский романист, и польский поэт Тувим. Говорили в те времена, когда люди еще могли говорить о поэзии. Теперь у нас выше тоны, и я прежде всего скажу о другом — не о стихах, об оружии.

В июне 1942 года возле Новой Вилейки валтелет в воздух немецкий эшелон с оружием. Кто заложил мины? Уэники вильнюсского гетто. Обреченные боролись. Немецкий эшелон шел на восток: немцы готовились ко второму наступлению. Эшелон паровали партизаны из вильнюсского гетто. Поэт Суцкевер тогда не думал о стихах. Он думал об оружии: он добывал пулеметы.

В Вильнюсе было восемьдесят тысяч евреев. Немцы не захотели убить их сразу: они желали насладиться длительной агонией. Они устроили два гетто — два лагеря смертников. Они растравили казни. Они увидели обреченных два года — партию за партией.

В Берлине до войны жил киноактер Киттель. Он хотел играть роковых злодеев,

но даже бездарные режиссеры «Уфы» считали, что Киттель слишком бездарен. Он нашел новое призвание: он стал знаменитым палачом. Он убил десятки тысяч жителей Риги. Потом он прибыл на гастроли в Вильнюс. Ему поручили «ликвидацию гетто».

Уэников утром выстраивали. Они знали, что если раздастся команда «направо», значит их погонят на работу, если раздастся команда «налево», значит — Паньери и казнь. Каждое утро они видели тот же перекресток и ждали — направо или налево. Сельсот дней...

«Вот вам подарки», — сказала Киттель. Суцкевер узнал алгате своей матери — ее расстреляли накануне.

Сажали живьем. Закапывали в могилу. Выкалывали глаза и выворачивали руки.

Поэт Суцкевер в первый день войны пытался пробраться на восток. У него на руках был ребенок — чужой ребенок, ребенок друга. Суцкевер не решился бросить ребенка, и этот легкий груз решил все — Суцкевера настигли немцы. А маленького сына Суцкевера убил Киттель.

Что происходило в этом мире смерти, где люди ждали казни, где женщины рожали, зная, что они рожают смертников, где врачи лечили больных, понимая, что казнь ждет и больных, и выздоравливающих, и самих врачей?

В январе 1942 года в гетто образовался партизанский отряд. Во главе его стоял соркалетский вильнюсский рабочий Виттенберг. Немцы узнали, что Виттенберг не сломен духом. Они пришли за ним, он скрывался под землей. Тогда Киттель объявил: «Если Виттенберг не слается живой, завтра будут убиты все». Виттенберг знал, что немцы все равно убьют обреченных, но он хотел, чтобы у партизан было время уйти в лес. Он сказал: «Горько, что я не могу застрелиться», и, простившись с друзьями, он

вышел к Киттелю. Немцы его пытали — выкололи ему глаза. Он молчал. Суцкевер проводил его до ворот гетто, и, вспоминая о Виттенберге, он повторяется.

Партизаны достали прифт для польской полновальной газеты. Так уэники гетто помогали своим братьям — литовцам и полякам. Гетто было советской землей: смертники слушали тайно радио, печатали сводки Информбюро, праздновали 1 мая, 7 ноября, 23 февраля.

В Буржайске взорвался немецкий арсенал. Погибли два еврея из гетто. Киттель думал, что это несчастный случай, но это были военные действия. Двое погибли не зря.

Тиктину было шестнадцать лет. Он прыгнул в замлобированный вагон, оттуда он брал ручные гранаты. Его накрыли и ранили, когда он пытался убежать. Его вывели, чтобы казнить. «Зачем вы кради гранаты?» — спросил Киттель. Тиктин ответил: «Чтобы бросить их в вас. Вы убили моего отца и мою мать».

Однажды веди на казнь очередную партию евреев. Они бросились на немцев: руками они задушили семь немецких солдат. Триста евреев в гетто добыли оружие. Немцы взрывали динамитом дома. Триста смелых вырвались из гетто и примкнули к литовским партизанам. Среди них был поэт Суцкевер.

Убегающие из гетто пробрались по трубам канализации. Один сошел с ума...

Крестьянка-литовка спрятала Суцкевера. В той деревне повесили литовца, и на виселище была надпись: «Он укрывал евреев». Немец сказал литовке: «Ты знаешь, что там написано?» Она ответила: «Знаю», и спасла поэта. Советский народ знает, что дружба — это не только слова.

В Вильнюсе работал «Штаб Розенберга» — это заведение для грабежа ценных книг, картин, рукописей. Во главе «штаба» стоял доктор Миллер. В Вильнюсе немцы привезли смоленский музей и сдали его докто-

у Миллеру. В самом Вильнюсе находилась институт с лучшей в Европе коллекцией еврейских книг и манускриптов. Суцкевер умал, что он погибнет, но он хотел спасти памятники культуры. Он спас рисунки Репина, рукописи XV и XVI веков, письма Толстого, Горького и еврейского писателя Шломо Алейхева.

Я сказал, что он думал об оружии, не о стихах. Но поэт всегда остается поэтом. Он вынул пулеметы. Он ждал казни. Он писал Киттеля. И он писал стихи. Осенью 1942 года он написал поэму «Колонидре», ее содержание напоминает трагедию древности, но оно взято из жизни гетто. Во время Лукинской тюрьмы евреи ждут казни. Старик призывает смерть. Немцы убили его жену, четырех сыновей и внуков. Приходит раненого с перебитыми ногами. На нем пинель красноармейца. Это пятый сын старика — двадцать лет тому назад они вместе играли. Отец узнал сына, сын не узнал отца. Приходит немец-штурмовик. Он требует, чтобы ему воздали царские почести. Раненый красноармеец кидает в немца камень. Тогда отец убивает сына, чтобы спасти его от пыток. Этот сюжет может показаться неправдоподобным. Но тот, кто видел Киттеля, знает, что нет предела низости, и тот, кто провозжал на пытки рабочего Виттенберга, знает, что нет границ для самотверженности.

Поэт Суцкевер вместе с другими партизанами сражался за свободу Советской Литвы. В его отряде были литовцы и русские, поляки и евреи. Они были спаяны не словами, но любовью к Родине. У поэта Суцкевера были в руке автомат, в голове — строфы поэмы, а на сердце — письма Горького. Вот они, листки с выцветшими чернилами. И узнаю хорошо известный нам почерк Горький писал о жизни, о будущем России, о спле человека... Новостанец вильнюсского гетто, поэт и солдат спас его письма, как знамя человечности и культуры.

Налья ЭРЕНБУРГ.

A Cup of Tears

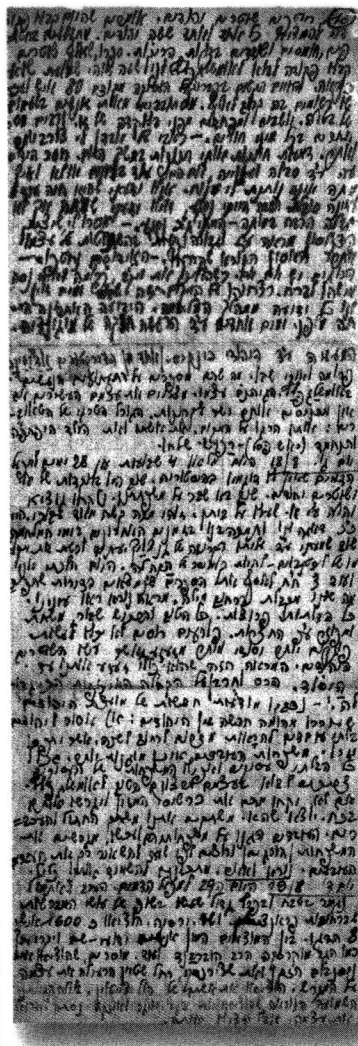
A Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto

by
ABRAHAM LEWIN

Edited by
ANTONY POLONSKY

Translation of the Diary by Christopher Hutton

Basil Blackwell
in association with the Institute for
Polish-Jewish Studies, Oxford



Part II Diary of the Great Deportation

Paper, ink, in Hebrew. 10.5 × 30 cm (Sign. AŽIH Ring II/202)

A paper-shop at the corner of Nowy Świat,¹³⁶ Daughter of P., Cecylia, was shot.

At 14 Nowolipie Street, P. himself reappeared, miraculously back from the dead . . . This I heard from A.

28 Świętojerska Street – Monday – five in the afternoon eight in the evening, the house-porter at 13 Nalewki.¹³⁷

Tuesday¹³⁸ – five in the morning – 3 Niska Street, Smocza Street
The shopkeeper who opened for R. before five,
The policeman Ajzensztajn¹³⁹
Dr Sztajnk¹⁴⁰

The arrests – in the Supply Office (ZZ)¹⁴¹ and in the Jewish community offices.¹⁴²

15 Chłodna Street – more than 10
The Day of Judgement – whence will come our help?

We are preparing ourselves for death. What will be our fate?

Karmelicka Street – round-up into vehicles.

There is talk of 20 dead since this morning

Szmul of the ‘conquerers’ – 15 years.¹⁴³

Someone called Rozen and his father and uncle were shot yesterday before ten o’clock going into the shop.

Wednesday, 22 July¹⁴⁴ – *The Day before Tishebov*

A day of turmoil, chaos and fear: the news about the expulsion of Jews is spreading like lightning through the town, Jewish Warsaw has suddenly died, the shops are closed, Jews run by, in confusion,

terrified. The Jewish streets are an appalling sight – the gloom is indescribable. There are dead bodies at several places. No one is counting them and no names are being given in this terrifying catastrophe. The expulsion is supposed to begin today from the hostels for the homeless,¹⁴⁵ and from the prisons. There is also talk of an evacuation of the hospital.¹⁴⁶ Beggar children are being rounded up into wagons. I am thinking about my aged mother – it would be better to put her to sleep than to hand her over to those murderers.¹⁴⁷

Ora brings exaggerated stories from Sweden [that the war is coming to an end].¹⁴⁸

Thursday, 23 July – *Tishebov*

Disaster after disaster, misfortune after misfortune. The small ghetto has been turned out on to the streets.¹⁴⁹ My nephew Uri arrived at half past seven.¹⁵⁰

The people were driven out from 42–44 Muranowska Street during the night.

Garbatko, 300 women, 55 children.¹⁵¹ Last Tuesday in the night. Rain has been falling all day. Weeping. The Jews are weeping. They are hoping for a miracle. The expulsion is continuing. Buildings are blockaded. 23 Twarda Street.¹⁵² Terrible scenes. A woman with beautiful hair. A girl, 20 years old, pretty. They are weeping and tearing at their hair. What would Tolstoy have said to this?

On Zamenhof Street the Germans pulled people out of a tram,¹⁵³ and killed them on the spot. (Muranowska Street.)

Friday, 24 July, six in the morning

The turmoil is as it was during the days of the bombardment of Warsaw.¹⁵⁴ Jews are running as if insane, with children and bundles of bedding. Buildings on Karmelicka and Nowolipie Streets are being surrounded. Mothers and children wander around like lost sheep: where is my child? Weeping. Another wet day with heavy skies: rain is falling. The scenes on Nowolipie Street. The huge round-up on the streets. Old men and women, boys and girls are being dragged away.

The police are carrying out the round-up, and officials of the Jewish community wearing white armbands are assisting them.¹⁵⁵

The death of Czerniaków yesterday at half past eight in the Jewish community building.¹⁵⁶ As for the reasons: during the ceremony at Grzybowska Street,¹⁵⁷ he said: 'Szlag mnie i tak trafi, prozszę pani' [I'll die anyway, Madam].

The round-up was halted at three o'clock. How Jews saved themselves: fictitious marriages with policemen. Guta's marriage to her husband's brother.¹⁵⁸ The savagery of the police during the round-up, the murderous brutality. They drag girls from the rickshaws, empty out flats, and leave the property strewn everywhere. A pogrom and a killing the like of which has never been seen.¹⁵⁹

Merenlender's visit. She and her father were taken the first day. In what kind of train-wagons are the prisoner's kept? According to her they will not even last a night. Many buildings have received an order to present themselves on their own. The manager of 30 Świętojerska Street, Nadzia, gave himself up. People get attacks of hysteria; 11,000 people have been rounded up; 100 policemen held hostage. One of them let himself down on a rope, fell, and was badly wounded. The policeman Zakhajm has been shot. Terrifying rumours about the night. Will there be a pogrom?

Schultz is dismissing 100 Jews.¹⁶⁰ His explanation for his action. The great hunger in the ghetto. Someone saves his sister and a four-year-old child, passing her off as his wife. The child does not give the secret away. He cries out: 'Daddy!' I am trying to save my mother with a paper from the Jewish Self-help Organization [ŻTOS].¹⁶¹

Saturday, 25 July

Last night I couldn't sleep. It passed peacefully. Everything reminds one of September 1939. People rushing through the streets. The day is so long. Packages, mainly of pillows and bedclothes. Noisy movement. The never-ending questions: 'Mękn do durkhgen?' ['Can one get through there?']¹⁶² Disaster: Gucia has been thrown out of her flat. Five killed in Dzielna Street in the night. Terrible scenes in the streets. The police are carrying out elegant furniture from the homes of those who have been driven out. Umschlagplatz.¹⁶³ a policeman is crying.

He is struck. 'Why are you crying?' 'Meine mutter, meine frau!' 'Frau, ja; Mutter, nicht.' ['My mother, my wife!' 'Wife, yes; mother, no.']*¹⁶⁴ A smuggler who threw himself out from the fourth floor, I saw him on his sick-bed.

How did Czerniaków die? 10,000!¹⁶⁵ The Wajcblum family. The looting of property. Last night there were a lot of suicides.¹⁶⁶ Conditions at the *Umschlagplatz*. People are dying where they are being held. You can't go in or out. By yesterday 25,000 had been taken away, with today, 30,000.¹⁶⁷ With each day the calamity worsens. Many give themselves up voluntarily. It is supposed that hunger forces them into it.¹⁶⁸

The new proclamation: non-productive elements are being sent to the East.¹⁶⁹ Vast numbers of dead among those being expelled. The German Jews are content to go. For them it is a long journey. The Jewish Self-help Organization is flooded with Jews begging for mercy, stretching out their hands for help - who is there to help them? Then every Jew would come and ask for papers from the organization.

Since Tuesday there has been no newspaper in the ghetto, apart from the very sketchy 'Jewish' paper *Gazeta Żydowska*.¹⁷⁰

Sunday, 26 July

From = The 'action' continues.¹⁷¹ The buildings at 10-12 Nowolipie Street are surrounded. Shouts and screams. Outside my window they are checking papers and arresting people. Human life is dependent on some little piece of paper. It's really enough to drive you insane. A lovely morning, the sky is wonderfully beautiful: the sun is shining, the acacia is blooming and the slaughterer is slaughtering. The blockade of our courtyard. How it was carried out. Winnik's story.¹⁷² 'Good news' from Brześć.¹⁷³ The closing of the post office.¹⁷⁴ The seizing of an eight-year-old girl, prettily dressed. She screams: 'Mummy!' Libuszycki, Lejzerowicz.¹⁷⁵ The terrible hunger. Many give themselves up. They are not accepted, so great is the number that are going. Yet they still set up blockades so as to extort money. The terrible corruption of our police and their assistants. An outrage, an outrage!¹⁷⁶

6 Solna Street; 99 victims. Today 12,000 martyrs. The closing of the post office. A kilo of bread - 50 zloty. Potatoes - 20. The violence of the police. Warszawski's son,¹⁷⁷ an official of the Jewish community, was seized and ransomed for 250 zloty. Czudner [Meir Czudner, Hebrew poet, editor and translator, who died in the ghetto]. Kirzner's sister - seven people. The breakup of families - Mendrowski. Pola. It hurts so much. 37,000 martyrs today [till today, that is, in the first five days of the deportation]. The Jewish community and Jewish Self-help Organization workers are also not safe. Only the workers in the 'shops' seem to be still safe.¹⁷⁸

A new leadership for the community. Lichtenbaum, chairman, the deputies: Wielikowski, Sztolcman, Orliński.¹⁷⁹ The shot in Brustman's window. Lola Kapelus, the wife of a lawyer from Łódź. She goes twice with her daughter to give herself up because they are starving. 'We haven't eaten now for two days.' They send them away because of huge crowds of people giving themselves up. Confiscations of packages at the post office. First people were given a receipt confirming that the office had received the packages - then, the confiscation.¹⁸⁰

Monday, 27 July

The 'action' still continuing at full strength. People are being rounded up. Victims on Smozca Street. People were dragged from the trams and shot. One hundred dead (old people and the sick) at the *Umschlagplatz*.¹⁸¹ Huge numbers of dead at 29 Ogrodowa Street. The remaining occupants were taken out, no notice was taken of their papers. The cause - a piece of glass fell on to the street when there were Germans passing. Shooting all day. Dead on Pawia and other streets.

The terrible hunger. Bread - 60 zloty, potatoes - 20, meat - 80. There are round-ups in the street. The commandant from Lublin is in Warsaw.¹⁸² How high will the numbers of deported become? Opinions differ: 100,000, 200,000. Some will go even further: about 50,000 will be left and these will also be removed to Grochów or Pelcowizna.¹⁸³ Today the number of those deported will reach about 44,000. And according to Wielikowski there is no prospect of an end

to the 'action'. A break for 48 hours (so people are saying). Auerswald has returned.¹⁸⁴ Perhaps things will get easier? Suicides in great numbers. The Cytryn family, mother and son embracing. The attitude of the Poles. Kalman weeping over the telephone. He calls for revenge. Neustadt has been murdered.¹⁸⁵

Tuesday, 28 July

The 'action' continues relentlessly. There are many volunteers, two families from 8 Nowolipie left their flats and gave themselves up (10 + 5). The reason – the terrible hunger. Bialer – execution because he didn't remove his hat. The incident with Kirzner. Up to yesterday 45,000. Wealthy Jews have left Warsaw.¹⁸⁶ The Rozenwajgs on a wagon.¹⁸⁷ The seizure of Gutgold. Lazar: taken off a tram. Deaths on Smocza Street. How was a strong young man shot between the eyes? He tried to escape, was wounded in the arm. He begged for mercy, and was killed by two bullets in the head. Gruzalc's mother has been taken away.¹⁸⁸ He works at Többens'.¹⁸⁹

Pessimism of Kon.¹⁹⁰ The Germans want to leave 60,000 Jews in the town. The fate of those who work for the Jewish Self-help Organization. Some say that their identity papers will only be recognized as valid for another two days.¹⁹¹ This is what Szeryński is said to have announced.¹⁹² A blockade on our building for the second time. The two Walfisz boys were taken away.

The sight of Nowolipie and Smocza Streets at midday – a hunt for wild animals in the forest. The world has never seen such scenes. People are thrown into wagons like dogs, old people and the sick are taken to the Jewish cemetery and murdered there. I heard that a smuggler who lives on our courtyard wanted to get rid of her old, sick mother: she handed her over to the butchers. Jewish policewomen.¹⁹³ The huge numbers of people and sewing-machines assembled in the courtyards of 44–6 Nowolipie Street.¹⁹⁴

Wednesday, 29 July

The eighth day of the 'action' that is continuing at full strength. At the corner of Karmelicka Street – a 'wagon'. People are thrown up on

84

to it. In the courtyard of 29 Nowolipie Street the furniture of the occupants who were thrown out of the buildings is still standing there. A Jew sleeps in the open air.

Kon recounts: a young woman who returning from work at a *placówka* told of the murder of two 19-year-old boys, shot dead. One was left dying for a whole hour. They were shot for no reason. Ilenman Iglá, the daughter from the ZZ [Food Office] walks with her mother. Places of execution: Piaseczno, Pustelnik, Beżec.¹⁹⁵ People standing at the windows are shot at. A Christian woman on Leszno Street, seeing the wagons with those who have been rounded up, curses the Germans. She presents her chest and is shot. On Nowy Świat a Christian woman stands defiantly, kneels on the pavement and prays to God to turn his sword against the executioners – she had seen how a gendarme killed a Jewish boy.

A meeting of Oneg Shabbes.¹⁹⁶ Its tragic character. They discuss the question of ownership and the transfer of the archive to America to the Yivo if we all die.¹⁹⁷

The terrible news about the Germans' plans. It is being assumed that they intend to deport 250,000. So far, 53,000. The terrible pessimism of G. and K—n.¹⁹⁸ They talk of death as of something that will certainly come. Announcements in the streets: all those who present themselves voluntarily before the first of the next month will receive 3 kg of bread and 1 kg of jam.¹⁹⁹

'Workshop-mania'.²⁰⁰ Will that save people? The Germans thank ^{ב'הון קצ'ק} the police for their 'productive efforts'. It is said that they are going to put the police to 'work' in other locations. How are the Jews listening to the loudspeakers?²⁰¹ ... So far eight Jewish policemen have committed suicide. Conditions in the streets get worse every day. Many Jews with identity papers from the Jewish Self-help Organization have been arrested.

A bulldog that had been taught to attack only Jews with armbands in Warsaw-Praga. A Jew was seized by him.²⁰²

How do Jews hide? In couches, in beds, cellars, attics. The Rozenwajgs were set free for 500 zloty. A memorandum has been handed to the authorities, offering a ransom in return for the halting of the expulsion. ^{still think that it w by their lives} No reply has yet been received.

No Germans appear until four in the afternoon. The Jews do everything in an orderly fashion. Each day about 1 per cent of those

rounded up, between 60 and 70 people, are killed.²⁰³ They throw loaves of bread into the wagons. Those at the front grab even two or three of them, those at the back get none at all. The savage round-ups in the streets will go on until 1 August. Then those who are not working will receive orders. Children will not be separated from their mothers. Someone called our policemen 'gangsters'.

The day after Czerniaków's death the German officer W. came and apologized,²⁰⁴ justifying himself by saying he was not responsible for the death and giving his word of honour as a German officer that those being deported are not being killed.²⁰⁵

At the employment office there are lists of the community workers and employees of the Jewish Self-help Organization. For the moment they are being left alone. It is supposed that they are going to check them. For now they are sorting out the workshop employees.

Sometimes I am quite calm about my life and sometimes a little indifferent, but suddenly I am gripped by fear of death that drives me insane. Everything depends on the news coming in from the street. Blockades in the streets. On Nowolipie Street near the Jewish Self-help Organization they seized a girl aged 15 or 16 who was going with a basket to buy something. Her shouts and screams filled the air. In H. well-dressed women were found. About 95 per cent of the people are sent away without any kind of packing, of linen or clothes.

Thursday, 30 July

The ninth day of the 'action' that is continuing with all its fearfulness and terror. From five in the morning we hear through the window the whistles of Jewish police and the movement and the running of Jews looking for refuge. Opposite my window, in Nowy Zjazd Street, a policeman chases a young woman and catches her. Her cries and screams are heart-breaking. The blockade on our building. How was the Rajchner family saved? How did I save Mrs Minc?

Today the post office was opened again. Brandstetter was seized yesterday afternoon by the Germans.²⁰⁶ He was released at the Umschlagplatz. Dr Fuswerg's wife was seized, as was Klima.²⁰⁷ They were freed this morning.

From midday yesterday onwards the shooting has not stopped

next to our building. A soldier stands at the corner of Zamenhof and Nowolipie Streets and abuses the passers-by. Terrifying rumours: the authorities have closed the Jewish Self-help Organization. Brandt expresses his condolences to the committee members on Cz.'s death.²⁰⁸ Höfle defends himself by saying he was not responsible for the death.²⁰⁹ The terrible appearance of Nalewki Street. A woman shot dead there yesterday when she came out of the courtyard and began to run. Workers were removed and deported from Többens' workshop at 6 Gęsia Street. Community officials were also seized and deported. All the workshops were emptied. Those who hid themselves or refused to go were shot. All the workers have been removed from the workshop of the second section of the Jewish Self-help Organization, which was in the process of being set up. At the corner of Karmelicka and Nowolipie Streets they used axes to break off the locks and open up the shops. By midday 4,000 people had been rounded up, among them 800 volunteers. By yesterday evening the total number passed 60,000.

The notice in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*: they are broadcasting continually on London radio, 'SOS Save 400,000 Jews in the Warsaw ghetto whom the Germans are slaughtering. The "lie" of the English propaganda is clear to anyone who saw the film from the Warsaw ghetto.'

A letter from Bialystok that a Polish policeman brought, from a woman to her husband. She and her son are together with several other families and have to work hard in the fields, but they are receiving food. About 2,000 people have been removed from 27-9 Ogrodowa Street. Also a lot of children from the Pnimia children's home.²¹⁰ Today many employees of the community were seized (including teachers) and from the Jewish Self-help Organization. The story of Pigowski.

Friday, 31 July

The tenth day of the slaughter that has no parallel in our history. Yesterday a large number of officials were rounded up. The female director of Többens' workshop, Neufeld. At the corner of 11 Mylna Street they stop me and lead me up to an officer. The Jewish Self-help

Organization identity-cards 'have no value any more'. *Odjazd* - ambiguous.²¹¹ I was terrified.

They are driving out the old people from the old people's home at 52 Nowolipki Street. Those rounded up are divided up into: those fit for work (*arbeitsfähig*), those able to survive (*lebensfähig*) and those not fit to be transported (*transportunfähig*). The last group is killed on the spot.²¹² About 2,000 people have been removed from the buildings at 27, 29 and 31 Ogrodowa Street. Also from the boarding-school at 27 Ogrodowa Street. The official from the centre,²¹³ Rozen, and his father taken away. A certain young man, Frydland, who has been working for several months at one of the *placówki* has been seized and deported. Rabbi Nisenbaum's wife was put into the wagon.²¹⁴ Mrs Mławer was shot and wounded. They removed the caretaker and his family from Centos.²¹⁵

Yesterday 1,500 reported voluntarily.²¹⁶ Today by midday, 750. Among them members of the intelligentsia. There is talk that part of the 'squad' has already left for Radom.²¹⁷ The remainder are leaving tomorrow. I have heard that they will be taking 500 Jewish policemen with them from here. At four o'clock they suddenly took those who had been rounded up out of the wagons and announced that the action was being suspended. The joy and hope that this brought forth. At six to half past six the blockades started again.

A woman called Mydlarska jumped up into the wagon after her husband had been taken. In our courtyard a woman threw herself from the third floor - she was starving. Today about 3,000 people were taken away from Waliców and Grzybowska Streets. No attention was paid to identity papers 'Zay gezunt! Zay gezunt!' [Goodbye, goodbye!] a young Jew shouts from the wagon.

The calamity of the 'dead souls'. 120,000 fictitious food-coupons (*bony*).²¹⁸

Saturday, 1 August

'Outside there is destruction by the sword, and inside there is terror.'^o The 11th day of the 'action' that gets progressively more terrible and brutal. Germans are in the process of emptying whole buildings and sides of streets. They took about 5,000 people out of 20-2 and other

buildings on Nowolipie Street. The turmoil and the terror is appalling. There is a general expulsion of all the occupants of Nowolipie Street between Karmelicka and Smocza Streets. The awful sight: people carrying packages of pillows and bedclothes. No one thinks of moving furniture. Fajnkind says to his sister-in-law: 'Hide yourself and your beautiful child! Into the cellar!'

The nightmare of this day surpasses that of all previous days. There is no escape and no refuge. The round-ups never cease, Sagan²¹⁹ and Chilinowicz,²²⁰ Sztajn,²²¹ Zofotow, Karcewicz, Prync,²²² Opoczynski have been seized.²²³ Mothers lose their children. A weak old woman is carried on to the bus. The tragedies cannot be captured in words.

The rabbi from 17 Dzielna Street has been seized and apparently shot. Children walking in the street are seized. The property of those who have been expelled is grabbed by neighbours who are left, or by the new tenants, the 'shop'-workers.

Fifty of the customers, 10 staff were removed from the officials' kitchen at 30 Nowolipie Street.²²⁴ People who have hidden are shot. I spent the whole day at 25 Nowolipki Street and didn't go to eat, so was saved.

Sunday, 2 August

I spent the night at my sister's, at 17 Dzielna Street. The 12th day of the 'action', which becomes more and more intense. From yesterday the parents of police have been excluded from the category of those protected.²²⁵ Last night a lot of people were killed or wounded.

A new proclamation in the streets of the ghetto from the head of the Jewish police: the action will continue. All those who are not employed in organizations or by the German authorities have to report voluntarily on 2, 3 and 4 August and they will receive 3 kg of bread and 1 kg of jam. Families will not be split up.²²⁶

Today three people were taken away from the kitchen at 22 Nowolipie Street. It looks like they have stopped recognizing the identity papers of the Jewish Self-help Organization.²²⁷ Yesterday evening a large group of hundreds of Jews who have been driven from their homes was taken into the Pawiak. Early today some of them were brought out of the Pawiak, among them old people, young women

3 בגים לא 25: (הגנין) מחוץ תצפיה-חירב (מחזרים י.א.א) ←
ובקרה א.א.א

with small babies on pillows. They were led by Jewish policemen. Jehoszua Zegal has been seized. Among the tragedies: Karcewicz has been taken away; she left behind two children aged four and seven. Magidson. People murdered on Nowolipki Street. The 'action' continues. People are saying that there will be a break for three weeks from 5 August. Those who remain will be able to get themselves fixed up with work. When that period is up, they will return and take away and liquidate anyone who is not working. A large number of people – estimated at 15,000 – have been taken from the small ghetto. Grandmother was killed by a single shot: she was standing at the window that looks over Sienna Street. Mother has gone to Gucia's.

Monday, 3 August

The 13th day of slaughter. A night of horrors. Shooting went on all night. I couldn't sleep. In the morning I went to L.'s sawmill.²²⁸ A mass of people, men, women and children, were gathered in the courtyard and in the garden. They were trying to save themselves. Will they be saved? It is said that from those who were taken to the *Umschlagplatz* yesterday about 2,000 were freed who had various papers. People are consoling themselves with the thought that the savage round-up will stop tomorrow and it will be carried out in an orderly way.

Everyone was taken from TOZ [Society for the Protection of Health] who was found there.²²⁹

At the cemetery 56 Jewish prisoners were killed. A few days ago more than 100 people were murdered on Nowolipie Street. Today the Germans have surrounded the following streets: Gęsia, Smocza, Pawia, Lubiecka, and took away all the occupants. Yesterday the following were taken away: Kahanowicz,²³⁰ Rusak, and Jehoszua Zegal's whole family.²³¹

Tuesday, 4 August

The 14th day of the 'action' that is being continued at full speed. Today the blockades were set up at ten in the morning. The Germans

work together with the Jewish police. The small ghetto was surrounded and also Gęsia and Zamenhof Streets. There are stories of terrible lootings and violence during the expulsions. They deport the people and loot and pillage their possessions. Shops are also broken open and the goods carried off. In this participate Jewish police, ordinary Jewish neighbours and Germans.

It was announced that 14 Jews were killed who had sought refuge at the cemetery, those who work in the cemetery organizations, in addition to the 56 sentenced to death, who were killed.²³²

I have heard the following: they found a woman who had recently given birth and her three-day-old child on Szczęśliwa Street. They shot dead both the mother and the child – this is a true story. They are expelling the occupants from the buildings once again: from 45 Nowolipie Street and other buildings. Even if someone is not seized and sent away to die there is no certainty that when they return home they will find a roof over their head.

Again there is talk that the savage round-up will stop today. But we have heard this before and nothing came of it. The workers from the kitchen at 8 Prosta Street have been removed. A Junak was crying: 'Szkoda tych Żydków' [It's a shame about these Jews']. At 9 Nalewki Street a sick woman was murdered. The 'action' will continue until 17 August. Zegal's father has been taken away. How do they get the corpses out? Tozsa Apfel has been taken and sent away.²³³ Our feelings have been numbed! We hear of great calamities happening to those closest to us and we do not react. A letter from Baranowicze. The writer is working as a farm-labourer. She asks for underwear. Life is cheap, 7 zloty for white bread, 1.80 for potatoes. It would be good if she could be sent underwear. The letter came by post.²³⁴

Wednesday, 5 August

The 'action' continues unabated. We have no more strength to suffer. There are many murders. They kill the sick who don't go down to the courtyards. Yesterday about 3,000 volunteers reported. Not all of them were taken. These they sent away. In the town they are rounding up people regardless of the papers they have. Whoever falls into the hands of the Germans or the Jewish police is seized. The Jewish

policemen took away Hillel Cajtlin.²³⁵ He was released. Balaban has been taken.²³⁶ At 13 Dzielna Street they killed Mrs Grun who was ill and a girl. Yesterday the 'actions' in Radom began.

Thursday, 6 August

The 16th day of the 'action', which is continuing. Yesterday they took away everyone from the offices of the Jewish Self-help Organization who were there at the time, about 60 or 70 people. Some of them (Dr Bornsztajn,²³⁷ Sztolcman, a girl) were freed. They are predicting a hot day today. Once again there are the theories that the action will be suspended tomorrow because the annihilation squads are about to leave for Radom. Conditions in Landau's sawmill. The expulsion of the occupants of 10-12, 23 and 25 Nowolipki Street. Redoubled savagery and the maltreatment of Jews. While flats are being emptied out and people come to save their belongings, the SS arrive and seize the occupants.

Kohn and Heller have been killed.²³⁸ During a blockade by the Germans the Jewish police storm into Zylberberg's building. They are terrified that they have found them and say: 'Hide and lock yourself in well!' It was then that the whole family of the Radomsko rebbe was killed.²³⁹

P—wer saw orders with regard to trains and their numbers that were sent to Treblinka (the place of execution?)²⁴⁰ Starvation haunts the survivors more and more, a kilo of bread - 45 zloty, a kilo of potatoes, 15 zloty. Today they have already taken about 5,000 Jews from the small ghetto. Tosza Apfel has been caught and deported.

Friday, 7 August

The 17th day of the massacres. Yesterday was a horrendous day with a great number of victims. People were brought out from the small ghetto in huge numbers. The number of victims is estimated at 15,000. * They emptied Dr Korczak's orphanage with the Doctor at the head.²⁴¹ Two hundred orphans. In the evening they drove out the people from the flats in the square bounded by Dzielna, Zamenhof,

Nowolipki and Karmelicka Streets. There are no words to describe the tragedies and disasters. Rozencwajg's two sisters were sent away. One with a child of six months, the other with a four-year-old. Mrs Schweiger is not there.²⁴² How terrible. Today Germans and Ukrainians came to the sawmill of the L. brothers and they rounded up a large number of women with their children from among the factory-workers, and women who just happened to be there. Wasser,²⁴³ Smolar,²⁴⁴ with her child, Tintpulwer and others, many others.²⁴⁵

The workers turn on the intellectuals. A shocking experience. Many rabbis have been sent away. Mendel Alter from Kalisz,²⁴⁶ and more, more. During the pogrom on Nowolipie Street about 360 people were killed. At number 30 more than 30 people were killed. Górný's mother has been killed by the Germans,²⁴⁷ and he came to sell meal-coupons as if nothing had happened. So dulled have our feelings become.

The hunger presses in on us in a terrible way. Today I had no bread for breakfast. I ate pickled cucumber. Today a kilo of bread costs 55 zloty. A new order has been issued that if people report voluntarily for deportation from 7 to 14 August they will receive a kilo of bread and half a kilo of jam. From this it can be deduced that the 'action' will continue for at least a week. Stupnicki has been sent away.²⁴⁸ Three thousand were brought from Otwock directly to the Umschlagplatz. The number who have fallen victim is enormous. The crematorium near Malkinia and Sokołów.²⁴⁹ I have heard that Erlich (nicknamed Kapote) has disappeared.²⁵⁰ The shooting and the killing flourishes. During the blockade on Leszno Street four people were killed. Hirschhorn has committed suicide.²⁵¹ Many kill themselves. It is a miracle that there are people still alive.

Saturday, 8 August

The 'action' continues. The 18th day. There are still reports of our cherished and loved ones who fell victim yesterday: our children. The children of our boarding-schools led away (to be killed): 12-14 Wolność Street,²⁵² about 1,200, 18 Mylna Street, Koniński with his wife and the children from the boarding-school.²⁵³ They intend to

eradicate the whole of Warsaw Jewry. I hear reports today that the Germans are blockading Żelazna and Leszno Streets. They are driving people out of all the buildings on Miła Street. We have lived through a shattering and terrifying day – 30 Gęsia Street.²⁵⁴

The numbness of everyone is staggering. Górný loses his mother and sells meal-tickets. Smolar has lost his wife and daughter.²⁵⁵ Tintpulwer – widowed – goes around in despair, a broken man, and tries to 'find' work so as to be involved in something, not to be superfluous. Terrifying reports from the town. At 64 Lubięcka Street victims, many victims on Miła Street. All the cows were taken away – about 120 – from the 'farm'.²⁵⁶ A loss of millions: there will no longer be the small amount of milk that was distributed to the children.

In the evening a pogrom in the streets. A great many killed at various locations: Smocza, Pawia, Miła, Zamenhof and others. I was on my way home at half past eight. Hela comes towards me. Luba and Ora are not there.²⁵⁷ I am sure they have been seized. They come home at nine o'clock. During the blockade they had stayed in the boarding-school at 67 Dzielna Street.²⁵⁸ What Luba recounted of the children (150) and the women teachers during the blockade. Their packages in their hands, ready to set off – to their deaths. Kon said yesterday: 'I am writing a testament about the events.' Chmielewski's parents were taken away yesterday and he comes to the factory and is still on his feet.

Sunday, 9 August

The 19th day of the 'action' of which human history has not seen the like. From yesterday the expulsion took on the character of a pogrom, or a simple massacre. They roam through the streets and murder people in their dozens, in their hundreds. Today they are pulling endless wagons full of corpses – uncovered – through the streets.

Everything that I have read about the events in 1918-19 pales in comparison with what we are living through now. It is clear to us that 99 per cent of those transported are being taken to their deaths. In addition to the atrocities, hunger haunts us. People who during the war were previously well-fed come to ask for a little soup at a factory kitchen. The 'elite' still get some, but the rabble don't even get that.

Twenty Ukrainians, Jewish policemen (a few dozen) and a small number of Germans lead a crowd of 3,000 Jews to the slaughter. One hears only of isolated cases of resistance.²⁵⁹ One Jew took on a German and was shot on the spot. A second Jew fought with a Ukrainian and escaped after being wounded. And other cases of this kind. The Jews are going like lambs to the slaughter. Yesterday 23 Jews were killed in one flat.

I have heard that the 'action' in Radom is already over after a week and three days – 7,000 victims.²⁶⁰ That is the target they set in advance. And here we have no idea when they will say – enough. I have heard about letters that arrive from France telling of expulsions of Jews there. They also say that they will be brought to the Warsaw ghetto. It is a wonder that people can endure so much suffering, living the whole day on a knife-edge between life and death and clinging with all their might to life in the hope that they may be among the ten survivors.

Monday, 10 August

Yesterday was horrific in the full sense of the word. The slaughter went on from early morning until nine and half past nine at night. This was a pogrom with all the traits familiar from the Tsarist pogroms of the years 1905-6. A mixed crowd of soldiers of various nationalities, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and over them the Germans, stormed into flats and shops, looting and killing without mercy. I have heard that people are being slaughtered with bayonets. Yesterday there were vast numbers of deaths.

In the town, proclamations have been published ordering the occupants of the small ghetto to leave their homes today by six o'clock.²⁶¹ This is a further terrible calamity. Firstly for all those who have remained there. There is no possibility for them to take out with them a few of their possessions, clothes and bedding, because there is a danger of being seized while moving. And secondly, where can they move to? A great many streets and blocks of buildings have been emptied by German factory-owners. The number of buildings still in Jewish hands is very low.

The number of those deported out (read: murdered) is estimated at

150,000. Yesterday the Guzik family was seized. He was freed, his family not.²⁶²

It is reported that the community organization is to be dismantled²⁶³ and a commissar appointed. I have heard that Gancwajch, whom they wanted to kill a few weeks ago, has climbed back to prominence.

I was unable to go home. We all spent the night at 30 Gęsia Street. It was a very difficult night. Until two we sat on chairs, from two to five – we lay on plywood boards. We were told that 2,500 officials of the Jewish community and two members of the *Judenrat* have to present themselves at the *Umschlagplatz*. Later this was denied. The embitterment of the workers against the unwelcome intelligentsia is growing continually. They feel they have been wronged by them. The wife of the editor Wolkowicz has killed herself.²⁶⁴

The terrible hunger: bread, 88 zloty, potatoes, 30. The appalling appearance of the Jewish streets. The shops and flats stand open, the Jewish crowds have remained – looting. In a building on Leszno Street, where 150 people used to live, there are now 30 left. Of these eight were killed yesterday.

I have heard that in the course of the massacres yesterday the famous Warsaw singer Marisia Ajzensztat, the only daughter of her parents and a former pupil at the Yehudia School, was attacked and killed.²⁶⁵ I have heard that yesterday Kohn's sister and her husband were killed. And she who had celebrated her recent marriage so exuberantly. A worker sat weeping, Jewish policemen had come to his home and taken away his 16-year-old son. What brutality!

Tuesday, 11 August

Things are deteriorating fast. Appalling, horrendous. The brutal expulsion from the small ghetto. Whole buildings have been emptied of their occupants and all their possessions left behind. Christians are already beginning to loot. 24 Sienna Street, 28 Śliska Street. Except for Jakob's family,²⁶⁶ there is not even a single tenant remaining in the building; the house-porter is also gone. Aunt Chawa and Dora Fejga have been seized and deported. The destruction of families. Early this morning the Germans and the rioters spread through the ghetto. By

the evening they were distributed throughout the ghetto and were seizing people. In the course of five minutes they drove out all the occupants on Gęsia Street between Zamenhof and Lubiecka Streets. They pay no attention to papers.

The Jewish community offices have moved to 19 Zamenhof Street, the post office building.²⁶⁷ They have reduced their personnel by half. The number of victims has already risen above 150,000. Today they will complete three weeks since the beginning of the terrible massacre. In the night a large number of women who worked at Többens' were removed. It looks like there is a policy to liquidate women and children. Yesterday at Többens' three Jews died at their work. Blockades and murders in the streets that still belong to the ghetto. The heavy blockade on the entrance to the buildings of the Warschauer Union, with two killed and a vast number seized, nearly 100 women, children and men. The mortal terror that gripped us as we sat in the office.

Smolar rang Sokołów. He was told that those that are deported, or if they are to be deported to Tr., are going to their 'death'.²⁶⁸ The news that K. brought. In Warsaw there is a Jew by the name of Slawa who has brought reports of Treblinka. Fifteen kilometres before the station at Treblinka the Germans take over the train. When people get out of the train they are beaten viciously. Then they are driven into huge barracks. For five minutes heart-rending screams are heard, then silence. The bodies that are taken out are swollen horribly. One person cannot get their arms round one of these bodies, so distended are they. Young men from among the prisoners are the gravediggers, the next day they too are killed. What horror!

Wednesday, 12 August

Eclipse of the sun, universal blackness. [My Luba was taken away during a blockade on 30 Gęsia Street.] There is still a glimmer of hope in front of me. Perhaps she will be saved. And if, God forbid, she is not? My journey to the *Umschlagplatz* – the appearance of the streets – fills me with dread. [To my anguish there is no prospect of rescuing her. It looks like she was taken directly into the train. Her fate is to be a victim of the Nazi bestiality, along with hundreds of thousands of

n/a

1st rep
of gas
chamber

his wi

Lupa
35

Jews. I have no words to describe my desolation. I ought to go after her, to die. But I have no strength to take such a step. Ora – her calamity. A child who was so tied to her mother, and how she loved her.

The 'action' goes on in the town at full throttle. All the streets are being emptied of their occupants. Total chaos. Each German factory will be closed off in its block and the people will be locked in their building. Terror and blackness. And over all this disaster hangs my own private anguish.

Thursday, 13 August

The 23rd day of the slaughter of the Jews of Warsaw. Today about 3,600 people were removed from Többens' buildings, mainly women and children. Today is Ora's fifteenth birthday. What a black day in her life and in my life. I have never experienced such a day as this. Since yesterday I have not shed a single tear. In my pain I lay in the attic and could not sleep. Ora was talking in her sleep: 'mamo, mamusiu, nie odchódź beze mnie!' ['Mother, Mama, don't leave me']. Today I cried a lot, when Gucia came to visit me. I am being thrown out of the flat at 2 Mylna Street: they have already taken most of my things. Those who have survived are thieving and looting insatiably. Our lives have been turned upside down, a total and utter destruction in every sense of the word.

I will never be consoled as long as I live. If she had died a natural death, I would not have been so stricken, so broken. But to fall into the hands of such butchers! Have they already murdered her? She went out in a light dress, without stockings, with my leather briefcase. How tragic it is! A life together of over 21 years (I became close to her beginning in 1920) has met with such a tragic end.

Friday, 14 August

The last night that I will spend in my war-time flat at 2 Mylna Street. The sight of the streets: the pavements are fenced off, you walk in the middle of the road. Certain streets, such as Nowolipie (on both sides of Karmelicka), Mylna and others are completely closed off with

fences and gates and you can't get in there. The impression is of cages. The whole of Jewish Warsaw has been thrown out of the buildings.²⁶⁹ There is a full-scale relocation of all Jews who have not yet been rounded up and are still in the town. Whole streets that have been given over to the German firms: Müller, Többens, Schultz, Zimmerman, Brauer and others.²⁷⁰ We have been sold as slaves to a load of German manufacturers. The living-conditions of those in the workshops: hunger and hard labour. Their ration: a quarter kilo of bread a day and a bowl of soup.

The 'action' continues – today is the 23rd day. Yesterday they took away from Többens' workshops about 3,000–4,000 men and women, mostly women and children. This morning the Jewish community-council posted a new announcement: all Jews who live in Biała, Elektoralna, Zielna, Orła, Solna, Leszno, odd numbers in Ogrodowa, Chłodna Streets have to leave their flats by tomorrow, 15 August. Yesterday and today, a huge number of people killed – victims of the blockades. I am moving my things over to Nacia's at 14 Pawia Street.

Setting up of blockades on Nowolipie and Karmelicka Streets. Further victims – there are more deaths today, and very many driven out. There is talk of 15,000. I have heard that measures decreed in the expulsion orders are directed mainly against women and children. The police commandant of the second district is trying to save his wife and children. A new raid on the Jewish Self-help Organization at 25 Nowolipki Street. Dr Bornsztajn and his wife taken away, Elhonen Cajtlin with his son and others.²⁷¹ This was carried out by Jewish policemen without the Germans, that is, on their own initiative. Renja Sztajnwaajs. I have heard that Yitshak Katznelson's wife and one of his children have been seized.²⁷² The second day that I am without Luba. I am now also without a place to live. I have nowhere to lay my head. The number rounded up has reached 190,000, just counting those expelled, excluding those who have been killed and those who have been sent to the *Dulag* at 109 Leszno Street.²⁷³

Every crime in history, like the burning of Rome by Nero, pales into insignificance in comparison with this, Kirzhner has been taken away from work and deported. Together with him they took away a further 28 people. All were aged 35 and over. The same thing has happened, I have learnt, in another *placówka*: 29 people were taken away and deported.

Saturday, 15 August

Today is the 25th day of the bloody 'action' carried out by the butchers. I spent the night at 17 Dzielna Street. The rain of shooting started at half past nine in the evening. Deaths in the street. The whole night incessant movement in and out of the Pawiak. Gutkowski sends his only son, three and a half years old, to the cemetery to have him taken to Czerniaków.²⁷⁴

I have nowhere to rest my head at night. Gucia is being thrown out of her flat. Nacia and Frume are not allowed to enter. All the orphanages have been emptied.²⁷⁵ Korczak went at the head of his children. The pain because of the loss of L. is becoming more intense. My soul can find no peace, for not having gone after her when she was in danger, even though I could also have disappeared and Ora would have been left an orphan. The most terrible thing is that Landau and Sonszajn misled me by saying that Luba wasn't in the queue. Be that as it may, the anguish is terrible and it will never be dimmed.

Rumours about reports arriving from women who were deported from Biała-Podlaska and Białystok.

PT Today by eight o'clock there was a blockade on Miła, Gęsia, Zamenhof and other streets. 'Our spirit is weary of the killing.' How much longer? Yesterday a huge number of bodies were brought to the cemetery, victims of the blockade of Többens' workshops. Today they were also taking people from the 'shops'. It will soon be seven o'clock and the blockade on Gęsia is still continuing, around our factory. The Jewish police have been looting, breaking open flats, emptying cupboards, smashing crockery and destroying property, just for the fun of it. More people were killed today in the course of blockades. People killed during the blockade. Mirka Priwes, her mother and brother have been deported. Yitshak Katznelson's wife and two of his children have been seized and deported.

The desolation and chaos is greatest on the streets from Chłodna to Leszno Streets, all the Jewish possessions have been abandoned and Polish thugs with the Germans will loot everything. The whole of Jewish Warsaw has been laid waste. That which remains is a shadow of what was, a shadow that tells of death and ruin.

31 : 3 יתן עיניו לאורגים < כ' - ציבג נסו' ה' יג' מ' . נ'מ'ו : 3
I faint before the killers

92

Sunday, 16 August

Today is the 26th day of the 'action', which is continuing with all its atrocities and animal savagery, a slaughter the like of which human history has not seen. Even in the legend of Pharaoh and his decree: every newborn boy will be thrown into the river.

People who have returned from the *Umschlagplatz* have told of women who were seized yesterday who were freed if they sacrificed their children. To our pain and sorrow many women saved themselves in this way - they were separated from their children, aged 3 to 12 to 14, and if they had identity papers, they were freed. Any woman carrying a child or with a child next to her was not freed. The Germans' lust for Jewish blood knows no bounds, it is a bottomless pit. Future generations will not believe it. But this is the unembellished truth, plain and simple. A bitter, horrifying truth.

The Jewish police have received an order that each one of them must bring five people to be transported. Since there are 2,000 police, they will have to find 10,000 victims. If they do not fulfil their quotas they are liable to the death-penalty. Some of them have already received confirmation that they have presented the required number. Since every Jew has some kind of documentation - in the main valid ones - they tear up every document they are shown and round up the passers-by. It is now dangerous for every Jew to go out on to the street. No one goes out.

Rumours have reached me again that letters have allegedly arrived from the deportees saying that they are working in the area of Siedlce and conditions are not bad. Lifschitz's son (my friend from elementary school) told me that his daughter herself had read one of these letters from an elderly couple.

As things are developing, a handful of Jews will be left, those of a designated age. Apart from this there will be no way for a Jew to survive: there will be nowhere to live and no bread. The position of the old is especially tragic: they have no way out. They can either give themselves up into the hands of the butchers, or take their lives themselves, or hide out and live in dark corners and cellars, which is also very difficult because of the general expulsions from the buildings and the upheaval of the residents. In those buildings that have

been taken over by new occupants, no strangers are let in. It is easier for an animal to find a hiding place and a refuge in the forest than for a Jew to hide in the ghetto.

Now (four in the afternoon) I have heard that there are no Germans at all in the *Umschlagplatz*. There are only Jews there and they are carrying out the bloody and terrible operation. Today rumours are going round that an order has been issued that all wives and children of officials have to report at the *Umschlagplatz*. Josef Erlich and his family have been killed, so I have heard. According to certain reports, Czerniaków's place here with us - à la Rumkowski²⁷⁶ - will be inherited by Gancwajch, the man they had been hunting and trying to kill. He is outside the ghetto at the moment.

Monday, 17 August

The 27th day of the annihilation. Yesterday I came to 14 Pawia Street very late at night by a round-about route (via Zamenhof) and was anguished to hear the terrible news about Jakub, Frume and Uri. A very great blow. There is still a faint hope that they can be saved, since there were no train-wagons yesterday and they weren't taken straight to the train. This morning I saw in the streets an announcement about a new reduction in size of the ghetto. Very many streets and sides of streets (the odd or the even numbers) must be vacated by the Jews by 20 August, at four in the afternoon. The ghetto will be a third or a quarter of its original size, if there are no further decrees of this kind. They are emptying those streets that had already been handed over to the German firms, and been fenced off, for example Mylna, Nowolipie, Dzielna Streets and many others. The enemy's claw is reaching out for us and it is still not sated.

Yesterday hundreds of officials of the community and of the Jewish Self-help Organization were taken away. The Gestapo commandant Brandt stood there and struck the detainees with his own hands. Jakub, Uri and Frume were hit. The 'action' is continuing today. There was a blockade on the cemetery. Ora, who works with the group from Hashomer Hatsair, was in great danger. The group was saved today thanks to the intervention of Commissar Hensel.²⁷⁷

Jewish policemen round up people all day. It is said that they have received an order that each policeman must find six Jews. They abuse those who are rounded up, and smash and loot the empty flats. I have heard that a thousand policemen have received an order to report at the *Umschlagplatz*. This report turns out to be false - for the time being.

Harsh conditions at the factory. Before 80 people were employed there and now almost a thousand are registered there. Hundreds of people wander around bored with nothing to do. They sit around in dread of German blockades and many hide themselves in all kinds of dark corners.

The pain over the loss of L. is getting more and more intense. During the day I am often choked with tears. The fact there is no news about her suffering and torment, whether she is alive or dead, how she died - gives me no peace. If I knew that she was alive and that she was not suffering too much, I would be calm. And if I knew that she had died but did not suffer much at her death - then I would also be calm.

I have been told that Yitshak Katznelson shows great inner strength and endurance, keeping hold of himself after the terrible disaster that has befallen him.

The Ejduš's have been seized. Every day there are killings. When Jakub, Frume and Uri were taken away, someone tried to escape. He was killed on the spot. For a week now we have had no news of the progress of the war. The last report was a few days ago of the heavy bombardment of Mainz. The story about the Jew Chunkis (one of the directors of Adriatika).

Frume and Uri have returned. What they have told me about what is going on at the *Umschlagplatz*. Hell, pure hell. The rich save themselves, if they are not shut into the wagons straight away. The tragic fate of the Taubers. He was killed on the spot, his wife and beautiful and charming son (with statuesque features) - Rapusz - were deported.

Tuesday, 18 August

Today marks 4 weeks or 28 days of this blood operation, which has no parallel in history. The Germans and the Jewish police have

been carrying out further blockades. Disaster has struck our family once again. Gucia and Hela have been taken away by the Germans, who entered their building. This is a very heavy blow for me. She had been so concerned for us and helped us in the war-years. I have heard talk again about the new rise of Gańcwajch. He will take over Lichtenbaum's place and become commissar of the Jewish community.

Today I went with three friends to collect up the books that are in the flats that our firm has been allocated on Miła Street. We set eyes on an appalling vision, all the doors broken open, all the goods and property smashed and scattered through the courtyards. Russian pogromists would have been unable to make a more thorough and shattering pogrom than that carried out by the Jewish police. This sight, which is everywhere to be seen, stunned us. The destruction and the annihilation of the greatest Jewish community in Europe.

New proclamations from the *Judenrat* have been hung up which have caused panic among the Jews. Jews who are not employed are not permitted south of Leszno Street. Those who are caught there will be shot.²⁷⁸ The families of those working are no longer protected. In fact all those who are not working, even the families of those who are employed, have to report voluntarily at the *Umschlagplatz*. Otherwise their food-cards will be taken away and they will be driven out by force. We can see that the Germans are playing a game of cat and mouse with us. Those employed have protected their families, now the families are being deported (killed) and they want to leave behind the working slaves for the time being. *What horror!* They are preparing to destroy us utterly.

Wednesday, 19 August

The 29th day of the bloody action. Last evening ended in a massacre and with a large raid on the brush workshop on Franciszkańska and Świętojerska Streets.²⁷⁹ About 1,600 people were removed. Eight were killed. Among those taken away were large numbers of well-known and cherished individuals such as Mrs Mokarska,²⁸⁰ Rabbi Huberband and others.²⁸¹ I have been informed that Nisenbaum's father and Szczeranski have been seized.²⁸² Rokhl Sztajn poisoned herself at the *Platz*.²⁸³ Hillel Cajtlin's wife was taken. Last night the

terrible news reached me that Mrs Schweiger has been taken away.²⁸⁴ Inka tried to poison herself, but they saved her.

There is no 'action' in Warsaw itself today. The squad has left for Otwock.²⁸⁵ And there is an 'action' there, according to reports. The Jewish police is carrying out checks in the buildings in search of 'outsiders' who are certain to be hiding there hidden in dark corners and cellars. Large numbers of Jews commit suicide.²⁸⁶ The number of victims of the expulsion has reached approximately a quarter of a million. Today is the seventh day since the great calamity that befell me. If only I could die and be free of the whole nightmare. But I am still tied to life and it is still difficult for me to take my own life.

The squad is running riot in Otwock. I have heard that they have emptied Brius and Sofjówka.²⁸⁷ Who knows how many cherished and beloved victims we have lost today. And to think that many had gone to Otwock to find an escape from death.

Thursday, 20 August

There was no 'action' yesterday in Warsaw. However, it is reported that there was a hunt on the Aryan side for Jews who had fled there. The squad carried out the action in Otwock with the help of 500 Jewish police from Warsaw (so it is said). I have heard that those rounded up have been marched to Warsaw on foot.

My sister Gucia is lost and her daughter Hela killed. This new disaster adds still further to the weight of my gloom. She was the best of sisters and was very concerned for me during the war-years. It is such anguish and only death will end my suffering.

An order for the caretakers in the buildings has been issued: to collect up and gather in one place all the goods and possessions of those who have been driven out and hand them over to the community representative who will call. A great looting is being prepared, Nazi-style; the Germans are preparing to remove all the Jews' possessions.

Friday, 21 August

Yesterday evening after six the Jewish police moved into the buildings which were supposed to have been evacuated by the occupants. They

persons!
friends