JEWISH HISTORICAL INSTITUTE

Volume Eight

The Ringelblum Archive

Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto

JEWISH HISTORICAL INSTITUTE

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ONEG SZABAT PROGRAM

ASSOCIATION OF THE JEWISH HISTORICAL INSTITUTE OF POLAND

JEWISH HISTORICAL INSTITUTE

Diaries from the Warsaw Ghetto

Edited by

Eleonora Bergman, Katarzyna Person, Michał Trębacz, Zofia Trębacz

Warszawa 2023

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Translations from Polish:
Krzysztof Heymer

Translations from Yiddish:
Jennifer Bell Christopher Hutton
Dianne Levitin

Series coordinators:
Eleonora Bergman Maria Ferenc
Katarzyna Person

Graphic design: Room 33

Copy editor: Joyce Rappaport

Proofreading: Marta Wojas

Indices: Marta Tycner

Typesetting and text makeup: Dariusz Górski

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Preface to the English edition

The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw is proud to present to the English speaking public the 8th volume of documents from the Ringelblum Archive (The Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto) devoted to testimonies and journals of the Warsaw ghetto. It consists of two parts. The first one is a journal of Abraham Lewin – teacher, writer, social activist. He described the reality as a Warsaw Jew, but also collected information from refugees and people resettled from other ghettos. The second part contains twenty one diaries and notes of various authors, among them many collaborators of Emanuel Ringelblum – Eliyahu Gutkowski, Yekhiel Górny, Menakhem Mendel Kohn. Those documents are very varied and show the multitude of voices gathered in the Warsaw ghetto. Some focus on facts, others on emotions and personal reflections. As we read them this year, when we commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (1943), the final liquidation of the closed Jewish quarter, and the genocide of Polish (and European) Jews at the hands of the German occupiers we reflect profoundly on the fragility of human lives and the power of cruel ideologies. This collection of personal stories written "as it all happened" are a moving and resonant testimony standing against negation or distortion of the Holocaust. Among the pages of this volume we will also find the 'last will' of Nahum Grzywacz and David Graber who were assisting their teacher, and secretary of Oyneg Shabes group – Israel Lichtensztajn – to hide the containers with documentation of the Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto. "What we've been unable to shout to the world we had buried

in the ground" serves as the motto of permanent exhibition presented in The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute since 2018.

The Polish-language version, on which this edition is based, consists of 38 volumes. The publishing process took 25 years, beginning in 1997, with the final volume prepared for publication in 2023.

The Ringelblum Archive contains testimonies and unique documents of universal value. They are a first-hand account on the events of the moment 'zero,' recorded as they happened (or shortly after) and cover the period 1939–1943 during the World War II. Information was transmitted by the direct witnesses and victims themselves and collected by the Oyneg Shabes group. Emanuel Ringelblum and his colleagues created this collection of unprecedented character, showing the magnitude of suffering of the Jewish people at the hands of war criminals acting under the authority of the Nazi German state.

The documentation of the Ringelblum Archive served as proof against war criminals in the post-war trials, and furthermore has become a priceless resource for the researchers of the Holocaust. It is practically impossible to study the Holocaust without reaching for documents of the Ringelblum Archive maintained by the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Especially the testimonies collected in this volume speak forcefully for the victims, and should be read not only as a historical account but also as a memorial prayer for their souls.

We hope that this documentation will be a memorial to the Holocaust, as well as serving further research on the period.

The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute wishes to express the deepest gratitude to all persons and institutions who contributed their resources for creating this publication.

Monika Krawczyk
Director

May 2023

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Introductory note

The present volume is based on Volume 23, titled *Dzienniki z getta warszawskiego* (Diaries from the Warsaw Ghetto) of the series *Archiwum Ringelbluma. Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy* (Ringelblum Archive: The Clandestine Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto). The English translation contains the same selection of diaries and daily notes, concerning various topics, written from September 1939 until January 1943. Within the Ringelblum Archive there are also other diaries, included in the larger legacies of their authors (by Rachel Auerbach, Shimon Huberband, Peretz Opoczyński, Emanuel Ringelblum, Hersh Wasser) or in the volumes pertaining to particular subjects or territories (e.g. German-Polish war of September 1939, or the General Government).

The volume is divided into two parts. The first contains nine fragments that constitute the diary of Abraham Lewin. The second consists of twenty-one documents, composed by various authors. Some of the writings are cited by the authors' names, as with Mordecai Schwartzbard (Doc. 2), Menakhem Mendel Kohn (Doc. 20), and Nehemia Tytelman (Doc. 8); some are referred to by pseudonyms or nicknames, as with Abraham, or Avrom (Docs. 6 and 7), and some have unknown authorships (e.g. Docs. 1 and 21). In the first part, four documents derive from the JHI collection, another four from YIVO, and one from both institutions; in the second part, two documents include YIVO components. One of these is Yekhiel Górny's diary (Part II, Doc. 13). An important achievement has been the identification of a common edition of two parts of Eliyahu Gutkowski's diary (Part II, Doc. 15), which was identified only during the editorial process. We are grateful to the YIVO Institute of Jewish

Research in New York for its kind permission to use the materials belonging to the Hersh Wasser Collection as a base for our translation.

The editors of the English edition have updated footnotes and references, introduced a unified system of spelling, and extended the bibliography. The material now follows standards established in recent years through ongoing work on the Polish edition which was completed in 2023. Therefore, this volume provides the English-language reader with an extended editorial apparatus, taking into consideration current research in the field.

Each part has its own introduction and editorial notes, but we have created one common list of acronyms, abbreviations, and glossaries of specific terminology, names of institutions, political parties, social organisations, and terms pertaining to Jewish religion, common bibliography, and indices of names and places for all the documents in the volume.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AJDC	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
ARG	*Archiwum Getta* [(Warsaw) Ghetto Archive, Ringelblum Archive]
B.C.E.	before the common era, used calendrically by Jews instead of B.C., before [the birth of Jesus] Christ
BfG	*Bleter far geshikhte* [Pages of history]
BT	Babylonian Talmud
BŻIH	*Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* [Bulletin of the Jewish Historical Institute]
CENTOS	*Centrala Związku Towarzystw Opieki nad Sierotami i Dziećmi Opuszczonymi* [Headquarters of the Union of Associations for the Care of Orphans and Abandoned Children]
Doc.	document in the volume
Dr	Doctor
ed.	editor
G.	Germans
HWC	Hersh Wasser Collection
i.e.	*id est* [that is]
km	kilometre(s)
MP	Member of Parliament
OBW	*Ostdeutsche Bautischlerei Werkstaette* [East German Carpentry Workshop]
p., pp.	page(s)
pt.	part
POW	prisoner(s) of war

Ring.	Ringelblum Archive
SD	*Sicherheitsdienst* [Security Service]
Selected Documents	*To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!... Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S" ("Oneg Shabbath")*, ed. Joseph Kermish, Jerusalem, 1986
Sipo	*Sicherheitspolizei* [Security Police]
SS	*Die Schutzstaffel der NSDAP* [The NSDAP Defense Echelons]
TOZ	*Towarzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej w Polsce* [Society for Health Protection of the Jewish Population in Poland]
TSISHO	*Tsentrale Yidishe Shul Organizatsye* [Central Jewish School Organisation]
Vol.	volume
YIKOR	*Yidishe Kulturele Organizatsye* [Jewish Culture Organisation]
YIVO	*Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut* [Jewish Scientific Institute, i.e. YIVO Institute for Jewish Research]
WWII	World War II
ŻOB	*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa* [Jewish Fighting Organisation]
ŻSS	*Żydowska Samopomoc Społeczna* [Jewish Social Self-Help]
ŻTOS	*Żydowskie Towarzystwo Opieki Społecznej* [Jewish Society for Social Help]

Introduction

The diary of Abraham Lewin, a writer and teacher, is undoubtedly one of the most important personal documents from the Warsaw ghetto, an invaluable source of insight into the history of the ghetto and of the Oyneg Shabes group – a secret research collective documenting the fate of Jews on Polish territory under German occupation. As a result of the group's efforts, of which Lewin was a key member, a vast underground archive was compiled; it consisted of more than 35,000 pages of documents concerning the everyday lives of Jews during the Holocaust. The archive contains a great variety of source materials: letters, leaflets, school essays, personal notes and academic studies. Apart from the notes of the archive's founder, historian Emanuel Ringelblum, Abraham Lewin's diary is the most extensive account preserved in the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archive.

The author of the text was born in 1893 in Warsaw, into a family that for generations had been firmly rooted in the religious community. Although Lewin received a thorough traditional education – he studied in a heder and yeshiva – his ties with religious Jews had loosened quite quickly by the time he turned twenty. By then he already was responsible for supporting his family: his mother and three sisters, whom he had begun to provide for after his father's death.

In 1916, despite a lack of formal qualifications, he took up a job as a teacher of Hebrew and of Judaic history at the private secondary school for girls run by the Yehudiya Welfare Association at Długa Street 55 in Warsaw. Yehudiya was not a typical school for daughters of wealthy Jewish families. Merging the respect for Jewish tradition with Zionism in its curriculum, it set out

to educate socially engaged young women, instilling them with a strong Jewish identity. The success of the school was due in large part to its excellent staff, led by the headmistress, Stefania Szwajger. A pupil of the school reminisced:

> Stefania Szwajger and Abraham Lewin raised the gymnasium to that high level and gave it considerable publicity. Stefania Szwajger found the meaning of her life in running the school. Her dedication and considerate approach over the years earned her the respect of teachers, parents and pupils alike. To the pupils she appeared as a strict headmistress, demanding good behaviour and proper manners, and always upholding discipline. However, those who came to know her better were aware that she was a courageous person, a devoted daughter, and a loving mother of an only child.[1]

Lewin taught at Yehudiya for his entire professional career, and the school also influenced his private life. There, in 1920, he met his future wife, Luba Hutner,[2] a Hebrew teacher from a rabbinic family. The memoirs of Yehudiya graduates paint a vivid image of Lewin as an excellent educator, totally devoted to the school and its students, not only as a teacher but also as a spiritual guide for many of the girls.

During the inter-war period, Lewin was active in pioneering Zionist organisations, in the General Zionism (liberal) vein. He planned to emigrate to Palestine, but his intensions were thwarted due to the poor health of Luba and their daughter Ora, born in 1928. Like other teachers employed in Yehudiya, Lewin combined his professional obligations with social and political activity, even as he also conducted academic research. The latter resulted in *Kantonistn* (The Cantonists),[3] published in 1934 – a comprehensive study based on Russian archival documents and testimonies of the time concerning the forced conscription of Jewish boys into the Russian army under the rule of Tsar Nicholas I. In the introduction to the book, Lewin thanked another

1 Abraham Lewin, *Mipinkaso shel hamore miyehudiah. Geto Varsha, april 1942–yanuar 1943*, edited by Tzvi Shner, Beit Lochamei Hagetaot & Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1969, p. 7.

2 Also spelled as 'Hotner'.

3 Abraham Lewin, *Kantonistn: vegn der Yidisher rekrutshine in Rusland in di tsaytn frun Tsar Nikolay dem ershtn 1827–1856*, Warsaw 1934.

teacher from Yehudiya for his support, his colleague in the Warsaw section of the YIVO (Jewish Scientific Institute), Emanuel Ringelblum.

After the war began, Lewin, who remained with his family in Warsaw, continued to work as a teacher, teaching with his wife at underground Yehudiya classes. After the Warsaw ghetto was closed to the outside world, he, like many other pre-war social activists affiliated with different Zionist factions, found employment with the Jewish Social Self-Help Organisation. It is not clear at what point Lewin became involved in the work of the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archive. In the register of the Oyneg Shabes, which shows royalty payments to the authors of documents, his name is first mentioned in January 1942.[4] In view of his pre-war organisational and social ties, as well as beliefs he shared with Ringelblum and other Oyneg Shabes members, it is reasonable to assume that he had already been aware of the Archive's operations. According to his diary, in the spring of 1942 at the latest, he attended the weekly Saturday meetings of the tightest circle of Oyneg Shabes collaborators, people who were privy to all aspects of its underground operations and who jointly organised its efforts.

According to surviving written sources, Lewin made a special contribution as a copyist of documents included in the Archive. He signed them with the pseudonym 'Nowolipie', after the name of the street where he lived in the ghetto. He also submitted to the Archive transcribed interviews with refugees arriving in the ghetto. Some of these, including information about the massacre of Jews in Wąwolnica, which opens the diary, can be found in the Oyneg Shabes bulletin – a publication which aimed to provide the underground press with regular, current information about the Holocaust.[5] However, the most important document that Lewin donated to the Archive's collection was undoubtedly his diary.

Abraham Lewin's diary is not just a historical source for research on the Shoah, but is also one of the most interesting pieces of evidence of the work carried out by the Oyneg Shabes group. It should be added at this point that it is not clear how the diary itself fit into the Archive's research plan. The date of Lewin's initial entries would suggest that it was commissioned

4 *The Ringelblum Archive. Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto,* vol. 3. *Oyneg Shabes. People and Works,* ed. A. Bańkowska, T. Epsztein, Warszawa 2020, p. XXVI and Doc. 6.

5 *Ibidem*, pp. 219–220.

by Oyneg Shabes as a result of the campaign to encourage Archive collaborators to write their diaries, carried out in the spring and early summer of 1942 as part of the 'Two and a half years of war' project.[6] This would be confirmed by the content of the opening entries, which is quite different from what one expects from personal records: it conforms to the rules of conspiracy, strives for objectivity, and contains as many facts as possible.

In the present edition, Abraham Lewin's diary is divided into two parts. The first, preserved in seven documents concealed together with the first and second parts of the Ringelblum Archive, and today stored in the Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute and in the Hersh Wasser Collection in the Archive of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York, covers the period immediately preceding the *Grossaktion* in the summer of 1942. The initial entries in this part of Lewin's diary are mostly devoted to news reaching the ghetto from outside Warsaw, concerning the fate of Jews in other cities and towns. Lewin recorded the testimonies he heard from refugees arriving in the ghetto, and presented the individual life stories of his interlocutors, depicting the subsequent stages of the Holocaust on Polish soil. In this section of his diary, Lewin also managed to portray the atmosphere of the Warsaw ghetto in the last months before its destruction and the sense of increasing danger among its residents.

The second part of the diary, preserved in its entirety in the second portion of the Ringelblum Archive, is devoted to the Great Deportation of the summer of 1942 and to life in the so-called remnant ghetto. Lewin wrote the first part in Yiddish, but here he employed Hebrew, thus joining a tradition of recording the history of the persecution of the Jews. Here, Lewin's chronicle of the Holocaust takes on a very personal aspect. During the *Grossaktion*, his closest colleagues and pupils from Yehudiya, his friends, his sister, and finally his beloved wife, Luba, were deported from the ghetto. Despite these harrowing experiences, Abraham Lewin kept up his daily work on the diary, continuing to craft a unique testimony of life in the ghetto at the time of the first *Aktion*, one of the few such detailed accounts of the period. Lewin's testimony is all the more poignant due to the fact that, as a Ringelblum Archive collaborator, he was one of the first to learn the true extent of the destruction of Jewish Warsaw. On Friday, 28 August 1942, he was among a group of Ringelblum

6 *Ibidem*, pp. XLVI–XLIX.

collaborators who interviewed a fugitive from Treblinka, the young Zionist Dawid Nowodworski.[7] On 21 September, Lewin spoke with another fugitive, Jakub Krzepicki,[8] and on 25 September – with Jakub Rabinowicz who also fled from Treblinka.[9] As time passed, in Lewin's account the death of his wife and immediate family became increasingly intertwined with the author's realisation of the inevitability of his own fate. The last entry from the second part of Abraham Lewin's diary is from 17 January 1943, a day before the start of the next *Aktion* and the so-called January uprising of 1943. It is unknown whether Lewin was still alive in February, when his testimony was hidden along with the second portion of the Archive's documents in the building at Nowolipki Street 68.

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7 See: *The Ringelblum Archive. Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto,* vol. 5. *The Last Stage of Resettlement Is Death. Pomiechówek, Chełmno nad Nerem*, Treblinka, ed. B. Engelking, A. Skibińska, E. Wiatr, Warszawa 2021, Doc. 19.

8 *Ibidem*, Doc. 22.

9 *Ibidem*, Doc. 21.

Editors' notes

The first part of this volume includes nine documents which together constitute Abraham Lewin's diary. The table below shows their characteristics in terms of affiliation to the collection, the entries' dates, the language of the original and appearance in publication:

Doc.'s number	File number	Dates	Language of the original	Publication in:								Remarks
				Yiddish 1952–1954[1]	Polish 1956–1958[2]	Hebrew 1969[3]	English 1988[4]	English and Hebrew 2005[5]	Polish 2015[6]			
1.	ARG II 251a*	26.03.42	Yiddish	√	√	√	√		√			*duplicate ARG I 512
2.	HWC 31.11.	8.04.42	Yiddish			√	√		√			
3.	ARG II 251b	9–13.05.42	Yiddish	√	√	√	√		√			
4.	HWC 32.2.	14–15.05.42	Yiddish					√*	√			*fragments
5.	ARG I 431	16.05.–5.06.42	Yiddish	√	√	√	√		√			
6.	HWC 32.4.	6–12.06.42	Yiddish			√	√		√			
7.	HWC 32.7.	13–15.06.42	Yiddish					√*	√			*fragments

8.	HWC 32.6., ARG II 251c	[?] 30.06.– 10.07.42	Yiddish					√*	√	*fragments
9.	ARG II 252*	[20–21]. 07.42– 16.01.43	Hebrew	√	√	√	√		√	*first 12 pages missing from the original

1 *Bleter far geshikhte,* Nos. 4/1952, pp. 22–68; 1/1954, pp. 42–99, 2–3/1954, pp. 210–240.

2 *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego,* Nos.: 19–20/1956, pp. 169–206, 21/1957, pp. 136–137; 22/1957, pp. 85–114; 23/1957, pp. 71–79; 24/1957, pp. 42–55; 25/1958, pp. 119–130.

3 Abraham Lewin, *Mipinkaso shel hamore miyehudiah. Geto Varsha, april 1942—yanuar 1943*, ed. Tzvi Shner, Beit Lochamei Hagetaot & Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1969. Tzvi (Henryk) Shner (1912–1984) was born in Łódź, graduated from a high school there with the certificate of final examination in Polish and Hebrew, started to work as a journalist for one of the Yiddish newspapers. He then graduated with a degree in law and economics at the Warsaw University, and also studied in the State University of Journalism. He was active in the Union of Jewish Socialist Students. In 1934–1935 he served in the Polish army. From 1936 he worked in the YIVO Warsaw branch as a secretary, editor and author for *Yidishe Ekonomik*. He left Warsaw on 6 September 1939, was arrested by the Soviets in Kovel and sent to Siberia. In 1946 he returned to Łódź and started working in the Central Committee of Polish Jews. He married Sara Neshamit, a Zionist activist; in 1948 they emigrated to Israel. Together with Yitzhak Zuckerman he was one of co-founders of the Beit Lochamei Hagetaot and its museum. Among his research works on the Holocaust is the edition of Mordekhai Tamaroff-Tenenbaum's diary.

4 Abraham Lewin, *A Cup of Tears. A Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto,* trans. Christopher Hutton, ed. Antony Polonsky, 2nd edition, London 1990.

5 "Twilight Days: missing pages from Avraham Lewin's Warsaw Ghetto diary, May–July 1942", ed. Havi Ben-Sasson, Lea Preis, translated from Yiddish by Lea Robinson, *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol. 33, 2005, pp. 7–60.

6 *Dzienniki z getta warszawskiego,* Doc. 1–9, edited by Katarzyna Person, Warszawa 2015; Abraham Lewin, *Dziennik,* ed. Katarzyna Person, Warszawa 2015.

This is the second edition of Abraham Lewin's diary in English.[10] The first version, *A Cup of Tears,* of 1988, was largely based on the Hebrew edition, *Mipinkaso shel hamore* of 1969. Docs. 4, 7 and 8 were not included in either the Hebrew or in the first English edition, but were later published

10 The entries for 6–12 June 1942 (Doc. 6) were first published in English by Joseph Kermish; see: "Extract from the Diary of Abraham Levin", ed. Joseph Kermish, *Yad Vashem Studies* 1967, Vol. 6, pp. 315–330. It was probably also translated from Yiddish by the editor.

in fragments by Lea Preis and Havi Ben-Sasson, who also added important reference notes. Then followed two Polish editions, in 2015, based on earlier translations into Polish, published in the *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, completed with the translation into Polish of Docs. 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8.

In this volume, the translation of the main text of Lewin's diary is based on *A Cup of Tears,* revised with the use of original manuscripts, the transcription of the early 1950s[11] and *Mipinkaso shel hamore.* The latter is more faithful to the original than the JHI transcription of Doc. 9. It was particularly vital to have this for the first 12 pages of the document, which were lost sometime after 1955. We are aware that the transcription was not censored and that it contains all the pieces omitted from publication in BŻIH (listed by A. Polonsky),[12] and certainly included in this volume. Unfortunately, the microfilm of the complete file is probably lost.[13] Docs. 4, 7 and 8 were translated from Yiddish into English specially for the present edition.

The editors of the present version have the advantage of being able to incorporate the many finds and explanations of our predecessors: *Mipinkaso shel hamore* contains important biographical information in the introduction and extensive endnotes, with references to literature in Hebrew, Yiddish and Polish. *A Cup of Tears* has additional references to literature published up to 1986 in English and Polish. Due to the publication in Polish of all the Ringelblum Archive files we also have the advantage of being able to draw on its detailed knowledge, and we refer to its documents (most probably known to Abraham Lewin) much more often than our predecessors.

Although we have updated footnotes and references in regard to all previous editions, some footnotes are copied from previous versions; they are appropriately marked e.g. *117/123 (with reference to the numbers:

11 The typewritten transcriptions of many documents from the Ringelblum Archive were composed by unknown typists, most probably after December 1950 when the second cache was retrieved. These transcriptions can be found in the JHI Archives, identified by the old file numbers, i.e. those used as references in the years 1955–2008.

12 *A Cup of Tears,* p. 56.

13 Probably a copy of this microfilm was sent from the Jewish Historical Institute to Beit Lochamei Hagetaot, and became the basis of the Hebrew edition; see *Mipinkaso,* Introduction, p. 17; many thanks to Michalina Jadczak and Agnieszka Kamińska for the translation of the Introduction.

in the Hebrew edition / in the English edition). References to documents from the Ringelblum Archive which have been translated and published (including in forthcoming volumes) in this series, cite the volume's title and document number. References to documents from the Archive which have not yet been included in this series cite the file number according to the catalogue of the collection.[14] However, when referring to Emanuel Ringelblum's notes we send our readers to original documents, and not to *Ksovim fun geto,*[15] as is done in both the Hebrew and English editions. We hope that two of the volumes of our series, containing all the surviving Ringelblum writings from the war time, will be translated into English anew in the not-too-distant future.[16]

In the original manuscript, Polish, Latin, German and other words or expressions are sometimes transcribed in Hebrew and sometimes in Latin characters. In the footnotes, beside the translation, in the first case only the language is indicated; in the second case, we point out which characters have been used. As a rule, words and phrases in languages other than in the main text are left in the original in italics (if in Hebrew, Yiddish or Russian, transcribed in Latin characters). The exception is made for quotations from the Bible or Talmud and from classical poetry which are rendered only in translation, with the source indicated in footnotes.[17]

We have kept the graphic structure of the text, including asterisks *** dividing portions of the text as in the original. In some cases, we added divisions into paragraphs. We used spacing instead of the original underlining to highlight certain fragments of the text. Although we have not been consistent with the use of numbers, figures or terms for indicating the time in the whole text, we left them as they are. We have only unified the format of dates and street names and numbers (e.g. Dzielna Street 17). We use Polish

14 *The Warsaw Ghetto Oyneg Shabes-Ringelblum Archive. Catalog and Guide*, ed. by Robert Moses Shapiro and Tadeusz Epsztein, Bloomington 2009.

15 Emanuel Ringelblum, *Ksovim fun geto,* ed. Artur Eisenbach, Tatiana Berenstein, Bernard Mark and Adam Rutkowski, Vol. 1. *Togbukh fun varshever geto (1939–1942)*, Varshe 1961; Vol. 2: *Notitsn un ophandlungen (1942–1943)*, Varshe 1963.

16 ARG Vol. 29: *Pisma Emanuela Ringelbluma z getta,* ed. Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikov, Warszawa 2018; ARG Vol. 29a: *Pisma Emanuela Ringelbluma z bunkra,* ed. Eleonora Bergman, Tadeusz Epsztein and Magdalena Siek, Warszawa 2018.

17 Many thanks to Louis D. Levine for his help with locating the Hebrew quotations.

names of towns, like Wilno, Lwów (the author writes Lemberg throughout the text); in the case of Yiddish names we have added footnotes.

It is worth mentioning, like other diarists and witnesses of that time, Lewin does not use the name Auschwitz, but the Polish name Oświęcim. Also, he uses the adjective Hitlerite, and only incidentally: Nazi. In the Yiddish part of the diary, he uses the term *Judenrat,* but he does not in Hebrew, where he replaces it with the translation *moetzet hayehudim,* meaning Jewish Council (or Council of the Jews). Even more significantly, he often replaces the *Judenrat* or Jewish Council with Hebrew *kehillah* or Polish *gmina*. When writing in Hebrew (Doc. 9) he tends to translate various terms into Hebrew: *nekuda* (literally, point, from Polish *punkt,* a shelter for homeless deportees, usually in some former prayer room), and even translates *Umschlagplatz* into *migrash hageirush* (literally, site of expulsion). More often, he uses the abridged form *Umschlag*. Throughout the text, Lewin uses abbreviations *alef* (A.) or *alef, shin, koph* (Ashk.) meaning Germans, from Hebrew word *Ashkenazim*; we decided to replace it in translation with the 'G[ermans]'.

In general, perhaps at the expense of the smooth translation and contrary to the English edition of 1969, we have decided to leave some Hebrew terms in order to get closer to Lewin's language as it expressed his mood or feelings, or just the way of speaking with its traditional connotations. And so we left *she'erit hapletah* (instead of: survivors), *kiddush Hashem* (instead of: martyrdom), *Eretz Israel* (instead of: Palestine), *erev* (instead of: eve), *shomrim, shomrot* (instead of: members of Hashomer Hatzair), *halutz, halutza* (instead of: member of Hehalutz movement). We also decided to leave the word from Warsaw slang, *meta,* which means an underworld hideout.

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Documents

Part I

Abraham Lewin's notes and diaries

1

26 March 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Abraham Lewin, "...אין איין האלבע שעה" *[In just half an hour...]*

[1]

Thursday, 26 March 1942

In just half an hour

As a proof and illustration of the depths of the seas of misfortune in which we are drowning, let me adduce the page of 'news' that I gathered whilst walking about the ghetto for just half an hour. Today I went out at one o'clock in the afternoon to visit someone who is ill and who lives on what used to be called Kupiecka Street, later Meiselsa, and today, under the German occupation, it is called Kozia Street. I met a girl there aged around 19 or 20 who arrived today from the small town of Wąwolnica[1] in the Lublin District. The girl gave me an appalling account of the slaughter carried out there by the Germans last Sunday, 22 March 1942. A few days before, a 'freshly-minted' *Volksdeutscher* had been killed in the town. It was probably Poles who killed him. However, this was sufficient pretext for the Germans to attack and massacre a whole community of Jews. Last Sunday three lorry-loads of Germans

1 Wąwolnica (Puławy County). In the autumn of 1939, the Jewish population was approximately 2,000–2,500, including refugees from neighbouring localities. On 22 March 1942 several dozen Jews were murdered there in reprisal for Polish resistance fighters killing a head of the local Labour Office.

arrived and led all the Jews who had been rounded up, including the *Judenrat*, to the marketplace and shot them there. As many Jews had hidden in Christian homes, the Germans went to each Polish household and wherever they found Jews they took them outside and shot them on the doorsteps. Approximately 90 Jews were murdered in Wąwolnica. I failed to get a clear answer to my question as to the number of Jews living in the town. The girl just responded by saying that 'All, all the Jews in Wąwolnica were murdered.'

I returned by way of Nowolipki Street[2] and met a Jew with whom I had been acquainted before the war and who arrived just 2 weeks ago from Słonim.[3] In our short conversation he laid bare for me again the horrific wound of events of the 'Słonim secret'[?]. 'Right in front of me, before my very eyes,' he told me, 'they seized mothers and children and slaughtered them. I escaped [2] by a miracle. Out of the four families who lived in my building only I and an old Jew survived. Come home with me and I'll tell you the whole story. All the Jews of Nowogródek[4] were massacred as well. I arranged to visit him in a few days and walked on.

Coming into the street where I live, Nowolipie Street, I ran into another acquaintance who told me several tragic pieces of news that he had received by letter. They went as follows:

1. On Purim this year in Zduńska Wola,[5] ten Jews were seized and other Jews were forced to hang them on ten gallows in the marketplace.'

2. This also happened in Łęczyca, which is in the same area (apparently also in Bieżuń).[6]

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2 Abraham Lewin lived at Nowolipie Street 1; see *Oyneg Shabes. People and Works,* Doc. 1. However, in the entry for 13 August he cites his address as Mylna Street 2 – which was the same building.

3 Słonim (now Grodno province, Belarus). The first *Aktion* in Słonim, during which 1,200 Jews were murdered, was carried out on 17 July 1941 by the *Einsatzgruppen* unit stationed in the city. In the second *Aktion*, on 4 November 1941, some 8,000 people were murdered. On the Jewish community of Słonim before June 1942; see: *Accounts from the Borderlands*, Docs. 14–16 and HWC 21.1.

4 In the original, Novaredok, the name used by Jews. Nowogródek (now Grodno province, Belarus). A reference to the killing of more than 5,000 Jews of Nowogródek on 8 December 1941.

5 Zduńska Wola (Sieradz County). See *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Third Reich*, Doc. 92–94.

6 The information relates in fact to Brzeziny; see: *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Third Reich*, Doc. 92–94.

3. All the Jews of Izbica,[7] in the Lublin District, numbering about 500, have been deported and 1,000 Czech Jews were brought in their place, carrying their belongings in suitcases.[8]

As Yehuda Halevi puts it:

'Cup of sorrows, slowly, leave me alone a bit!
For my limbs and my soul have been filled with your bitterness!'[9]

It was in truth all too much for just one half-hour.

2

8 April 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Abraham Lewin, "...דייטשן און דייטשן" [Germans and Germans...]

[1] Germans and Germans

A woman acquaintance, who lives at Krochmalna Street, told me the details that she witnessed of an incident that happened one day recently. As is known, there is as yet no wall at Krochmalna Street, only a wire fence. Consequently, the location serves as the main centre for smuggling in the ghetto. While my friend was standing at a window overlooking the fence, she saw that the wire was being raised and that a sack of rye or something similar was being rolled from the Aryan to the Jewish side. This was happening in full view of the Polish policeman standing on guard. So far there is nothing remarkable in all this, for things like this are a regular occurrence. Except that the policeman failed to see that a German gendarme was slowly approaching. They were a little

7 Izbica Lubelska (Krasnystaw County). On 24 March 1942, some 2,200 Jews from Izbica were deported to the killing centre in Bełżec. Izbica was one of the so-called transit ghettos in the Lublin District. See: *Accounts from the General Government*, Doc. 42.

8 *7/7 Jews were brought there from Germany, Vienna and Theresienstadt.

9 Yehuda Halevi (Yuda ben Samuel ha-Levi) (1075–1141), Jewish poet and philosopher from Spain. The original quotation in Hebrew is from *Ode to Jerusalem*; see https://www.wlcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/HALEVIpoem.pdf, reprinted from: *The Song of a Distant Dove: Judah Halevi's Pilgrimage*, by Raymond S. Scheindlin, Oxford University Press 2007, and the translation there reads: 'Cup of sorrow, be gentle now! Let me be! Long enough have my guts been filled with gall.'

late in shouting the warning to him – that is, the shout 'Avrom-Peysekh' was delayed slightly, the meaning of which at this location, or *'meta'*, is 'Danger, gendarme approaching'. The gendarme arrived, but in the meantime the sack had disappeared. The Polish policeman stood there completely terrified and distraught but helpless. The gendarme had spotted the sack vanishing. He said to the policeman: 'I will come back in 20 minutes and by then the sack must be back where it was.' The gendarme went off, and the policeman was left standing completely lost, and thinking about what to do. His position was really difficult. There was no way of getting the same sack back, as it was far out of his sight. The minutes were ticking away fast. What could he do? Just at that moment he saw a Jew passing by on the 'Semitic' side, carrying a sack on his side. The policeman shouted out, 'Halt! Bring that sack here!' The Jew protested: he had a permit and the goods were from a perfectly kosher source. But the policemen didn't want to know anything. He shouted, 'I put myself in danger for your sacks and turn a blind eye to your smuggling and you've given me trouble over some sack. There is nothing to discuss: the sack stays here!' Other smugglers came up and tried to calm the Jew down. [2] They promised to collect money and to compensate him for the sack and its contents. The Jew stood there confused, uncertain what to do.

The 20 minutes passed and the gendarme returned exactly when he said he would. He asked the policeman whether the sack had been returned. The policeman pointed to the sack and said: 'There it is, in front of you!' The gendarme asked: 'Is this the same sack?', accompanying the question with a wink. The policeman replied that, yes, it really was the same sack. The Jew, who the whole time had been standing to one side listening intently to the exchanges, did not stand idly by, but went up to the gendarme and returned to his refrain, that he had a permit, that the sack was his and that the goods were perfectly kosher. Hearing this, the gendarme ordered the Jew to take the sack and rebuked the policeman severely. 'What is the meaning of all this?' The policeman stood deathly pale, not knowing what to do or to answer. Finally he explained, stammering, that the sack in question had disappeared and he didn't know where it had gone. He had been unable to get it back. 'In that case', said the gendarme, 'this will cost you 500 zlotys.'

Without much hesitation the policeman took out his wallet and paid the gendarme 500 zlotys in cash. The gendarme took the money, stood looking around him, then, catching sight of an old Jew crossing the street, he called out

to him: *'Komm her!'*[10] The Jew, trembling with fear, came up to the gendarme. 'How old are you?' asked the gendarme. '72 years old', the old man managed to splutter. *'Na, hast du 72 zloti'*[11] said the gendarme, and handed him the sum. Then he called over a girl from among those begging for a handout and put the same question to her. The Jews whispered in her ear that she should say '15'. The gendarme gave her 8 zlotys. The gendarme went on like this until he had distributed all of the 500 zlotys.

The Jews began to crowd round the strange gendarme. He smiled at them and said *'Ja, ein guter Deutsche, nicht wahr?'*[12]

The same woman told me about two other events that happened [3] in the last few weeks on this famous street.

In the first, a gendarme chanced upon a Jewish girl, about 10 years old, on the Aryan side. He ordered her to move some bricks from one place to another. The girl refused to carry out the order and replied stubbornly: 'What will you do to me? Shoot me? Go ahead, shoot! I've got nothing to lose and I couldn't care less' (both the gendarme and the girl were speaking Polish). When the girl tried to get back into the ghetto through a hole in the wall the gendarme fired and killed her on the spot.

In the second case, a gendarme came across a group of Jewish children, nearly 20 in number, in the corner of one of the courtyards on the Aryan side. Of course they were absolutely terrified. The German smiled at them from a distance and ordered them to come up to him. The children came. The gendarme called over a Jewish policeman and ordered him to lead the children back to the ghetto. One girl was sobbing bitterly. The gendarme asked why she was crying, and was told that out of fear she had left a few potatoes behind that had been collected from the Christians. She had left them in the corner of the courtyard, where they were discovered. The gendarme went with the girl, took her back to that corner and told her to gather up the potatoes. He then accompanied her until she safely reached the Jewish side.

Yes, it seems that there are Germans and Germans.

Warsaw, 8 April 1942.

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10 (German) Come over here.

11 (German) Well, here you are, 72 zlotys.

12 (German) Indeed, a good German, right? *10/10 On the same gendarme, nicknamed 'the gentleman'.

3 *May 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Abraham Lewin, [diary from 9 to 13 May 1942]*

Saturday evening, 9 May[13] *1942*

Heard and seen

Terrible things have been happening lately In Ostrowiec,[14] Kielce province, which had the reputation of being a quiet town where Jews, including many who had been driven out from other areas, mainly from Pomerania and Poznań and the so-called 'Warthegau'[15] – were able to carve out some kind of existence for themselves and where food was also cheap. One day recently – I don't know the exact date – Jews were quite simply being massacred. Several hundred Jews were shot down in the street. But this wasn't enough for the German butchers. After the massacre in the street they drew up a list of the 250 Jews best known in the town, and shot them. This news was to us brought by a woman who fled to Warsaw to the ghetto over the past few days. Her husband, a practising doctor in Ostrowiec, was on the list of the 250 Jews and was shot. (Heard from Dr. Syrkin-Binsztejn[16], in the '*gmina*'.)

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After seven and a half months' confinement in the Daniłowiczowska and Gęsia Prisons,[17] Hanka Tauber, the daughter of Dr. Majer Tauber,[18] was released.

13 In the original, 9 April.

14 On Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski; see *Accounts from the General Government*, Doc. 67.

15 (German) *Warthegau* or *Reichsgau Wartheland* (Land of the Warta River) – administrative region established during World War II on the central part of the Polish territory annexed to the Third Reich. See *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Third Reich*, Introduction.

16 Sara Zofia Syrkin-Binsztejn (1889–1943), before the war, the head physician of the Joint; in the Warsaw ghetto, head of the *Judenrat*'s Health Department. *13/13 She committed suicide in January 1943 in the railway car en route to Treblinka.

17 The Central Custody in Warsaw on Daniłowiczowska Street 7 and the Central Custody of the Jewish District on Gęsia Street 24 (so-called Gęsiówka); see *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

18 Majer (Meyer) Tauber (1880–1942), before the war – headmaster of the State Seminary for Teachers of Mosaic Religion in Warsaw. He continued to teach in the Warsaw ghetto. His daughter Hanka was a student at Yehudia school, where Lewin taught.

Last autumn she was arrested at one of the ghetto gates, where she was trying to smuggle her way in. She had laboured the whole summer in the fields in the Hrubieszów area, near Lublin. She and her friend Rubinsztajn travelled together as Aryans with Aryan papers on them. They were both arrested jumping off an Aryan tramcar that at that time still traversed the ghetto. The young man took the entire responsibility onto himself. In the last few days Miss Tauber was brought before a German court[19] and sentenced to seven months' imprisonment. Since she had already been in prison for seven and a half months, she was released.

The young man decided not to wait for his trial, which would have had much graver consequences for him as he was the main defendant. A short while ago he escaped. He was afraid that he would be sent to a concentration camp, something that recently has been happening repeatedly to Jewish prisoners in the Gęsia Prison. He climbed over the prison wall at dawn with a ladder and disappeared. As punishment, the Gestapo arrested his entire family, that is, his father, mother, sister, and brother. They are all in the Gęsia Prison.

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[2] My sister who lives at Dzielna Street 17 gave me the following account of what actually happened to someone who lives on the same courtyard. A 38-year-old house painter who had not been living in the building for very long left this week for work at 5 o'clock in the morning. In the street he was stopped by a gendarme who asked what he was doing on the street so early. He replied that he was a painter and that he was going to work. In that case, said the gendarme, come and block up a hole in the ghetto wall. The Jew went with the gendarme to the hole, took a look at it, and began to get ready to fix it. In the meantime a second gendarme arrived from a different direction and saw from the distance the Jew busy at the hole. Suspecting him of trying to smuggle himself out to the Aryan side, he didn't stop to ask questions but opened fire. The Jew fell dead on the spot.

19 Special Court (German: *Sondergericht*) was created by the Germans to examine crimes against wartime legislation. Jews were tried in it, if accused of crimes such as staying outside the ghetto without permission or not wearing the armband.

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Today on Leszno Street,[20] at about 6 o'clock in the evening I saw a police car drive by in the direction of Tłomackie or Karmelicka Streets, in which there were 2 Gestapo officers in the front and three or four bearded Jews in the back, with white faces and terrified, extinguished eyes.

The sight of these Jews in this elegant limousine made me shudder, as it did no doubt many of the other Jews who saw them pass.

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In the ghetto there are persistent rumours of disturbances or even of a revolution in Italy. There are several different versions.

Version one: there is supposed to have been a coup in Italy. Mussolini has been killed. Version two: Mussolini was dismissed and a new government is to be formed. Version three: a large demonstration of women has taken place against the war. The army is said to have been ordered to open fire on the women, but refused to carry out the order. The German Gestapo has been dispatched to Italy to bring the situation under control.[21]

—

Many Jews in the ghetto are quite convinced that the war will end in the coming months. The most fervent optimists claim that the war will end in the next two months, in June or July.

[3]

Sunday, 10 May 1942

Two Jews told me today that the Governor-General, Frank,[22] has issued an ordinance to soften slightly the anti-Jewish policies. It is for this reason that the expulsion of Warsaw Jews has not been carried out as planned. One of the narrators added that this ordinance is supposedly

20 Throughout the original text, sometimes Lesh, as it was called by Jews.

21 Benito Mussolini was removed from power at the end of July 1943. Italy concluded the ceasefire agreement with the Allies on 3 September 1943.

22 Hans Frank (1900–1946), lawyer, Governor General of the occupied Polish lands in 1939–1945. Sentenced to death by the International Tribunal in Nuremberg and executed.

the result of the efforts of German millionaires in America. Apparently there were threats to do to the Germans in America what is being done to Jews here. American German millionaires are supposed to have intervened in Berlin and as a consequence Frank's decree was issued.

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Refugees from Aleksandrów Kujawski[23] told me a few days ago that all the remaining Jews in Nieszawa County[24] – about 70 in number – have been deported. I heard from this same source that Poles were deported as well, because fortifications were being constructed there, on what was the German-Russian border. Today this same refugee told me that the Nieszawa Jews and all other Jews left there were believed to have been deported to Romania. This rumour is most probably close to the truth, as another Jew happened to remark to me that reports had arrived from Bessarabia from Lublin Jews who had been transported there by the Germans. Someone else told me that news had also been received from Romania from Jews who had been deported from Łódź. The Jews were said to be being deployed in agricultural labour.

—

One of my closest friends told me the following, which was recounted to him by someone who took part in the meeting I am about to describe: a meeting was held to discuss the removal of the Jews from Warsaw. At this meeting (exactly who the participants were I do not know) it was shown that Jews in the ghetto are productive and contribute a lot to the German economy, and in the context of this meeting two plans emerged: (1) to remove from the ghetto all the begging children, and (2) to introduce home-labour or small-scale production by women at home. For the first purpose, 10 Jewish entrepreneurs were said to have committed themselves to give 5,000 zlotys a month, making a total of 50,000 zlotys a month, and with this money all the begging children would be collected and sent out to a boarding-school which would be specially set

23 Aleksandrów Kujawski (Nieszawa County). See: *Letters on the Shoah* (forthcoming).

24 See *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Third Reich,* Introduction and Doc. 51.

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up for them in Otwock[25] or Falenica.[26] For the second purpose, Jewish women teachers of handicrafts from the former Jewish elementary [4] and middle schools would act as instructors to teach Jewish women how to make various small handicraft articles which would also go to the Germans. Several Jewish trade entrepreneurs would also take part in this initiative. As a result of this meeting it is said that the plan to remove all the Jews from Warsaw has been cancelled.

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Yesterday I heard that Polish policemen numbering several hundred – 200 or 600 – have received an order to report on Monday at 6 o'clock in the morning and to ready to travel. They must be being sent away from Warsaw. Where to – is not known. Perhaps to Lublin?

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Word has it that all the Poles have been removed from the even-numbered side of Marszałkowska Street and from the Aleje Jerozolimskie. It is said that many women, especially pregnant women, have been brought to Warsaw from Germany.

—

Someone by the name of Manel, who works at the headquarters of the Jewish police, told me an almost unbelievable yet true story about a Polish Jew who served for some time . . . in the German army. This is the story as I heard it. A young Jew, a farm worker, who comes from the area of Nowy Dwór on the Vistula,[27] and is a big, strong, well-built blond-haired man, set off eastwards at the outbreak of the war, when the Germans were approaching Modlin,[28] and got as far as Estonia, where he found work as a farm worker with an Estonian peasant, a *Volksdeutscher*. The Jew worked for the German,

25 Otwock (Warsaw County).
26 Falenica (Warsaw County).
27 Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki (Warsaw County).
28 Modlin (Warsaw County).

who was very pleased with his work, until the German army occupied Estonia.[29] Even then he continued to work.

As everywhere else, the authorities raised the *Volksdeutsche* to the status of first-class citizens and granted them certain privileges. The German accepted these with open arms. Then an order was issued requiring every *Volksdeutscher* to give up to the army's supply convoy a cart and two good horses and . . . one of his sons as a driver. Our *Volksdeutscher*, who was probably a good patriot and a devoted follower of Hitler, was not enthusiastic about the idea of giving up a son, his own flesh and blood. So he turned to the Jew and offered him 200 marks in payment for presenting himself with the horses and the cart as his son. The Jew agreed to the deal. For a while he served in a supply convoy and drove back and forth at the front, until the whole convoy was destroyed by the Russians. Then [5] all the remaining personnel from the convoy were taken into active service in the army. Our Jew from Nowy Dwór became a German artilleryman. He has horrific stories about the front. Whole fields were blasted into the air. People and earth were hurled dozens of metres into the air and then down into a deep pit. Mines were everywhere. The Jew was also involved in burying the dead bodies, of which there were vast numbers. In the course of this work, the Jew – and he was not alone in this – filled up his two breast pockets, one with around 75,000 marks, the second with a large number of gold rings, all found on the bodies of dead German soldiers.

The Jew continued to fight until he was wounded. He was brought into an military hospital. Firstly they emptied his two pockets, then they examined him and discovered that he was . . . a Jew. An inquiry was set in motion. The truth surfaced like oil on water and the 'criminal' impostor was handed over to a military court. The Jew said that he was well liked in his unit and his superiors didn't want him killed. To cut a long story short, a trial was held and our Jew was sentenced to just 6 months in a labour camp. The Jew spent the 6 months in a labour camp near Chełm.[30] Later he returned to Nowy Dwór, which he was subsequently forced to leave. Today he lives in the Warsaw Ghetto. However, his boss, the Estonian *Volksdeutscher*, and his son were both sentenced to death. Hitlerite justice.

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29 German troops marched into Estonia on 22 June 1941.

30 There were several forced labour camps for Jews near Chełm. Prisoners carried out drainage works. See *Forced Labour Camps* (forthcoming).

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Lately cases of Jews being grabbed on the street and taken into the Pawiak Prison have been on the increase.[31] Inside, appalling things are done to them. I have heard the details of two such cases and wish to recount what happened.

(a) Two Jews were seized; one of them was given a piece of wood and was forced to hit the other. After being subjected to prolonged and brutal torture, one of the Jews was released at about 9 o'clock that evening. He managed to run home in time. The second was not set free until 11 that night. The unfortunate Jew was shot dead on the street by a German patrol.

(b) A respectably dressed Jew was brought into the Pawiak. First he was viciously beaten. Then a beggar was brought in. Both were told to strip naked. The well-dressed Jew had to put on the rags of the beggar, who in turn had to put on the clothes of the better-off Jew.

These seizures are carried out in various ways. People are pulled off the street into cars; gendarmes on foot stop anyone they feel like stopping. It seems that in the main they pick on Jews with beards. But they also grab clean-shaven Jews. One place that has become particularly dangerous is the alleyway by the prison between Dzielna and Pawia Streets, called Więzienna.[32] It is overlooked by a watchtower with a guard, probably a *Volksdeutscher*, who looks down at the passing Jews. When the mood takes him, he shouts out '*Halt! Komm her*!'[33] Down below there is a Polish policeman. When the German orders it he stops the Jew and leads him into the Pawiak's yard. Lately Jews have been avoiding this Więzienna Street.

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The rumours about unrest in Italy persist in the ghetto. The strangest stories are going round: Italy has surrendered, Ciano[34] is said to have gone to London, the old King Emmanuel[35] has abdicated, there are serious disturbances

31 See: *Warsaw Ghetto. Everyday Life*, Docs. 61, 62, 63.

32 In the original, the name of the street is translated into Yiddish as *Tfise gesl*.

33 (German) Stop! Come over here!

34 Galeazzo Ciano (1903–1944), Mussolini's son-in-law, Italian politician and journalist, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy in 1936–1943.

35 Victor Emmanuel III (1869–1947), king of Italy from 1900 until his abdication in 1946.

in northern Italy, etc. Today a Jew who generally has accurate information told me the following in connection with the situation in Italy. Living in the ghetto is a young Jewish woman who before the war worked in the Italian consulate in Warsaw. Recently a Polish woman, a friend of hers, came to see her. She had worked with her at the consulate and still works today in an official Italian institution. She told her that Italy was in chaos and in the process of disintegration. The top officials are leaving their posts and fleeing.

The same person, the Jew who told me all this, through his work as an official in the *gmina*, comes into contact almost every day with Polish municipality circles. According to him, a belief is prevailing among the Poles that ultimately it must come to war between England and Russia, since otherwise England will be unable to implement the restoration of the Polish state; that is, a victorious Soviet Union would not permit this.

I can recall that the well-known Revisionist Dr. von Weisl[36] many years ago predicted that war was imminent between England and Russia. [c]His prophecy was not fulfilled then; let us hope that it will not be this time.[c][37]

[7]

Tuesday, 12 May 1942

Scarcely a day goes by without Jewish blood being spilled on the streets and paving stones of the Warsaw Ghetto. Yesterday a woman involved in smuggling was shot dead on Krochmalna Street.

Last night there were two further victims in the continuation of the Bartholomew Night massacre carried out by Germans in the ghetto on the night of 17–18 April; on that tragic Friday night, as is well known, 52 Jews were shot down in the streets like dogs.[38]

The head of the soup kitchen at Orla Street 2, S[z]klar,[39] was taken from his home that night, but his body was not found among the dead in the streets. No one knew where he was. He was thought most likely to be in the Pawiak Prison. In fact he had spent a few weeks in the Pawiak Prison. That night he

36 Benjamin Ze'ev (Wolfgang) von Weisl (1896–1974), Zionist activist, one of the leaders of Revisionist Zionism.

37 [c–c]Added from the margin.

38 On the night of 17–18 April 1942 Germans murdered 52 people in the Warsaw ghetto, based on name lists; the victims included both resistance fighters and Gestapo collaborators. See: ARG II 299 (Ring II/158) in Polish and ARG I 584 (Ring. I/293) in Yiddish.

39 See Shmuel Shainkinder's diary, Doc. 14, pp. [4–5].

was taken out on the street and shot on Nowolipki Street 54. In the morning his body was found.

The Hitlerite murderers shot a second Jew at Zamenhofa Street 19 by the Jewish post office. According to what I have heard he was a former tram worker, Bats. Apparently he had also been in the Pawiak. This morning at 10 o'clock I saw with my own eyes the large bloodstain on the pavement outside the post office. Woe to the eyes that must look upon such things. (According to another source, the murdered man was a currency dealer, who also had been held in the Pawiak.)

Wednesday, 13 May 1942

According to additional information that I received today, not two, but four bodies of shot Jews were found yesterday. As follows: at Zamenhofa Street 19 by the post office, at Nowolipki Street 54 and 68a, and at Pawia Street 64. The Jewish tram worker was apparently called Fas.[40] Who the other martyrs are I do not know.

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Last Wednesday, 6 May 1942, almost all the Jews of Dęblin and Ryki[41] were deported. I was told that about 50 Jews remained in Dęblin, those fit and strong, healthy and capable of manual work, along with their families. The others were sent off to an unknown destination.

—

Something happened yesterday in Warsaw for which there is no name in our impoverished human tongue. I know of no word that could convey or do justice to what happened. I will simply recount the facts as I heard them from different people, as well as from someone who heard about this from one of those involved [8] just after the devilish game had ended.

40 Roman Fas; see *ibidem*, pp. [5–6]. *32/32 The name of the tram driver shot on 12 May 1942 was in fact Roman (Abraham) Pat. He was the only Jew to work as tram driver in Warsaw before the war.

41 Dęblin (Puławy County). On 6 May 1942 approximately 2,500 Jews of Dęblin were deported to the Sobibór killing centre. On 7 May 1942 Jews from Ryki (Puławy County) were resettled to the Warsaw ghetto.

Yesterday the Germans, with the help of the Jewish police, rounded up young Jewish girls, and women both young and old, and also men with and without beards, on the street and in particular among the occupants of Dzielna Street 38. Two lorry-loads of Germans, air force, SS and men from other units, as well as a smaller vehicle with officers in it, drew up at the entrance to Dzielna Street 38. First, they photographed all the young girls. Incidentally, they had picked out girls and women who were particularly decently and expensively dressed. Then they pushed all the Jewish men and women into the bathhouse located in the corner of the courtyard of the above-mentioned building. Once inside they photographed all the women again. Then they forced the men and women to strip completely naked. German officers divided them into pairs made of one from each sex from among the Jews. They matched young girls to old men, and conversely, young boys with old women. Then they forced the two sexes to commit a sexual act. These scenes, that is, the sexual act (we must assume that they were only staged) were filmed with a special apparatus that had been brought in for the purpose. The number of Germans present is estimated at 200. These horrifically cruel and macabre barbarities took place in the Warsaw Ghetto on Tuesday, between 3 and 6 o'clock in the afternoon.[42]

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I have heard that large-scale round-ups took place yesterday on the Aryan side.[43] Kercelak Square was surrounded, all goods were confiscated and all men and women detained. Only the old people were allowed to leave. Everyone else was taken off directly to the railway station. Most probably they were sent to Germany to work.

In connection with the deportation of Poles to Germany, Jewish workers, in the first instance mechanics and metalworkers, are being sent to work

42 Footage taken by the Germans in the Warsaw ghetto in the spring of 1942 for propaganda purposes was later used in a documentary film *A Film Unfinished*, directed by Yael Hersonski (2010). See also Shmuel Shainkinder's diary, Doc. 14, pp. [7–8] and the comments in ARG I 518 (Ring. I/461).

43 On 12 May 1942 round-ups were carried out in the largest marketplace in Warsaw, the so-called Kercelak. Until 1942 it was located in the vicinity of Chłodna, Towarowa, Okopowa and Leszno Streets. Approximately 3,000 people were arrested, and a large portion of the goods was requisitioned.

on the Aryan side in the German *placówki*. These Jewish workers spend the whole week at their place of work where they are fed. On Saturday afternoon they are brought back inside the ghetto, where they remain until Monday morning. Then they have to go back to [work] on the other side of the ghetto.

4 *May 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Abraham Lewin, [diary from 14 to 15 May 1942]*

Thursday, 14 May 1942

From a letter which arrived from a Christian woman in Aleksandrów Kujawski it has been learned that the expulsion of the remaining Jews still residing there took place on the 21 April of this year, at 5 in the morning. They were given 10 minutes to get themselves ready for the journey. What happened to those Jews remains unknown to this day. They disappeared without a trace. None of their relatives in Warsaw, nor indeed those who are in labour camps in the Reich, have received the slightest news. Those Jews, it seems, were able to foresee what was waiting for them. A few weeks ago a letter arrived in Warsaw for someone from his sister in Aleksandrów, in which she bids him farewell and requests that he take care of her 15-year-old son, who is in a labour camp in Konin.[44] A copy was made of the letter.

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Today news reached me about an ugly and terrifying murder that took place a few weeks ago in the ghetto. It is reminiscent of a similar crime which happened after the world war, I think in the year 1919 in Warsaw, and which at the time shook the entire Jewish and Polish population to the core. I am

44 Labour camp for Jews in Konin-Czarków operated from March 1942 to August 1943. The prisoners were forced to build a railway station and an engine house. Lewin probably refers to the letter of 11 March 1942 from Sala of Aleksandrów to her sister Luta in the Warsaw ghetto. See: *Letters on the Shoah* (forthcoming).

referring to the case of Parizenberg. The murderer was a young man of 19 who at nightfall lured his colleague, a bill collector, when he had on him a million Polish marks, and out of sheer greed murdered him with a hatchet. This time it happened like this. At Świętojerska Street 30 lived a small trader in fur goods named Weiser. So long as he traded in furs things went quite well for him. But bad times began for him from the moment that all furs were taken away from the Jews.

On a certain day the 25-year-old Walfisz, son of a fur trader from the same street at number 38, proposed to Weiser the purchase of a small quantity of goods (furs) which were hidden somewhere in an attic. His wife advised him against taking with him the last of the money which he still possessed, about 1000 zlotys. Weiser listened to his wife and did not take the money with him. The two, Walfisz and Weiser, left together, but Weiser failed to return home. That same day Walfisz came to see Weiser's wife and told her that they, he and Weiser, had been standing near the loudspeaker listening to the radio news. Suddenly some Germans charged over and seized several Jews, including her husband. The woman was convinced that this was what had happened and she awaited news [2] about the fate of her husband. Meanwhile a tenant from Świętojerska Street 38 who lives on the third floor noticed how the ceiling was soaking, dripping a red fluid. At the sight of this the occupants of the apartment were shocked and terrified. They went up to the attic and discovered the murdered Weiser, almost completely naked.

An investigation quickly revealed that Walfisz had played a trick and murdered Weiser. Walfisz found no money on him. He just stripped him of his clothes and sold them.

The murderer was somewhat of a profligate youth. He had sold everything from his parents' home. He had gotten married, but his wife had left him. The murderer is said to have declared that he did not regret his action, that he did not feel sorry for anyone, but only felt pity for his mother. He asked that he not be tortured, just killed.

The murdered man was 48 years old and left behind a wife and several children. A close female friend of mine who also lives in that building and who had spent 3 weeks in his ground floor apartment while Warsaw was under siege and being bombarded described him as a very calm and good-natured person.

There is a report of another murder. The female caretaker of the building at Pawia Street 88 was murdered, also during a robbery. The details are yet unknown to me.

These happenings are themselves a product of the poisonous gases of war that the world as a whole and the ghetto in particular now is breathing.

According to a plausible piece of news, the staff of the Warsaw Gestapo is supposed to be departing on leave. At the end of their leave these upstanding individuals will head for the front. In their stead will come to Warsaw a new leadership from the local Gestapo. Whether this will mean good or ill for us will become clear in the near future.

Friday, 15 May 1942

Yesterday at 8 in the evening at the corner of Gęsia and Okopowa Streets (next to the cemetery) a Jew, the father of six children, was shot dead. The circumstances were as follows: several Jewish children were coming through from the Aryan side into the ghetto. The gendarme had confiscated small packs of potatoes from them which they had wanted to smuggle. The potatoes were lying next to the gate, that is, on the passage way [3] from one side of the wall to the other. When the gendarme looked away for a second the Jew grabbed a pack of potatoes and set off at a run. The gendarme noticed him, opened fire, and killed the Jew on the spot. The whole street was in tumult. The name of the murdered man is unknown to me.

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The Germans are making a film with Jewish content which is of course for antisemitic propaganda. To this end they arranged barbaric and perverse scene in the bathhouse at Dzielna Street 38.

The previous Thursday, on 7 May, in the maternity ward on Leszno Street at number [1], the Germans had filmed a Jewish circumcision. Two weeks previously they had come into the ward to inform themselves about any recently newborn boy. It happened that on that day a baby boy had come into the world. They ordered that the circumcision be prepared in complete and proper fashion, strictly according to Jewish law; this meant, according to their understanding, that the *mohel*[45] and the complete

45 Person (traditionally, a Jewish man) who performs circumcisions.

minyan[46] of Jews had to be bearded and a festive meal had to be prepared with both fish and meat. On the appointed day, Thursday, the entire circumcision ceremony was held down to the very last detail, together with the meal, in accordance with the letter of the law, and everything was preserved forever on celluloid. This was required to stand as proof of our barbarism and obscurantism.

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I received a greeting from Jews from Ciechanów near Mława.[47] Ciechanów, as is well known, has been incorporated into the Reich. At the present day there are still up to about 3,000 (three thousand) Jews living there. Fortunately Ciechanów avoided the tragic fate of nearby Jewish communities, such as Wyszków, Ostrów, Pułtusk and others, from which all the Jews have been expelled or murdered. A majority of the Ciechanów Jews have fled, for the most part to Warsaw. About 3,000 remain and live like slaves in a separate open residential district. All these Jews, young and old, women and men, must work at different kinds of forced labour at minimal wages. Nonetheless, as a Ciechanów Jew told me, people can get by in Ciechanów, because foodstuffs are cheap and the ghetto is open. Although any form of contact or trading relations between Jews and Christians is forbidden under pain of severe punishment, trading goes on in secret nonetheless and somehow people are able to manage.

In every town where Jews still live they are subjected to a range of peculiar anti-Jewish decrees. These are different in each town, depending [4] on the caprices, whims, and moods of the local satraps. Ciechanów also has its anti-Jewish decrees. Among others: Jews are not allowed to purchase anything, in particular food, from Christians. Jews are not permitted to walk on the pavement, nor in the middle of the street, only in the gutters. Jews may not eat eggs, meat, or pastries made from refined flour. If ever eggshells are found on a Jew then a severe punishment is handed out. Women are not allowed to comb their hair and of all things must wear a scarf as a head covering; Jewish women are also not allowed to use rouge on their faces,

46 Quorum of ten adult Jews (traditionally, only men) required for public prayer.

47 On Jews in Ciechanów; see: HWC 12/1.

nor use any make-up or carmine-red lipstick. Yet Ciechanów still belongs to the fortunate among the Jewish communities. 'We manage to get by.' The Jews of Mława have drunk much more deeply from the Hitlerite cup of bitterness than those of Ciechanów. On many occasions the Jewish community of Mława was attacked by Gestapo units and large numbers were sent to concentration or labour camps.[48] A few weeks ago the Mława *Judenrat* was arrested and sent to Oświęcim.[49] In addition, the Jewish police were arrested over smuggling issues. A certain Perlmuter aged thirty something, who made a fortune from various shady business deals with the Germans, was murdered by them in bestial fashion: he was simply chopped to pieces. This Perlmuter had married only four weeks earlier.[50] The widow he left behind was very young and comes from Warsaw. Her name is Renia Lindner. He had to pay with his life, because he had wanted an extravagant wedding reception and had bought his wife an expensive diamond ring: a Jew must not permit himself so much.

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The Jews of Garbatka[51] write that they live in terror. They are afraid of being sent off in 'an unknown direction'. In the meantime they are still in place. On the eve of Passover they experienced a day of judgement.[52] Gendarmes in the ghetto shot dead an unknown well-dressed Jewish man on the street. There is no Jewish cemetery in Garbatka. Dead bodies are taken to Zwoleń or to Kozienice,[53] which are near-by [Jewish] communities. The Jews of Garbatka

48 Deportations from Mława began in December 1939, when 3,000 Jews were taken to the Działdowo camp. In 1940, some 4,000 Jews were resettled in Biała Podlaska, Kosów Lacki and the Pomiechówek camp, among other locations. In November 1942 the remaining residents of the local ghetto were deported to Treblinka and Auschwitz. See: *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Third Reich,* Doc. 116.

49 Auschwitz-Birkenau – from 27 April 1940 a concentration camp; from 1942 on – also a killing centre. It was liberated by the Red Army on 27 January 1945. The number of people killed there is estimated at 1.3 million.

50 Eliezer Perlmuter, the first chairman of *Judenrat* in Mława.

51 Garbatka (now: Garbatka-Letnisko, Kozienice County). See: *Accounts from the General Government,* Doc. 93 and HWC 7.1.

52 Reference to Yom Kippur.

53 Zwoleń (Kozienice County).

wanted to bury the martyr at one of these two cemeteries. The authorities would not permit it, even for the price of the large fee which the Jews offered. The Jew must be buried in the ghetto, the Germans ordered. The murdered man was buried in a small wood, where the expelled Jews from the near-by village of Jabłonna[54] are living. The funeral was joyful. Throughout the night psalms were chanted and the entire Jewish population accompanied the deceased to his eternal rest. It was the reserve of Jewish women in particular who mourned and were preoccupied with the deceased – [5] those who do not know what has become of their husbands. In this way they performed the good deed[55] of paying their respects to the murdered deceased, returning the respects which others had paid to their departed husbands.

Before Passover, a train with Czech Jews passed through Garbatka. They sat in sealed [freight] wagons. The train halted in the Garbatka station for several hours. The commanding officer allowed the [local] Jews to enter the station and to bring them whatever they asked for. The [local] Jews brought plenty of bread and other foodstuffs, but the Czech Jews did not want to accept the food, saying that they had enough provisions with them; on the other hand they asked for water, as they had been underway for three days completely without water. Naturally their request was met immediately. Out of gratitude they presented the Garbatka Jews with confectionaries and other sweet foods. Most probably these were the Jews who before Passover were brought to Izbica, from which all the resident Jewish population had been deported.

The current war, especially the barbaric Hitlerite tactics, is exerting enormous influence on the rapprochement, consolidation, or equalisation of the different Jewish communities in the various European countries, which in the nineteenth century, with its emancipatory fog, economic boom and cultural and linguistic assimilation, had caused deep alienation among us, in particular the Western European Jews from us, the Eastern European Jews. So there is some good to be found.[56]

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54 Jabłonna (Kozienice County).

55 In the original: They offered their *chesed shel emet* (Hebrew, literally: grace of the truth), i.e. the burial carried out with kindness, without the expectation of anything in return.

56 On the reverse of p. [5] are notes – apparently with no connection to the diary – for children's plays based on biblical themes. A more detailed draft refers to events depicted in 1 Kings 1:5–31, i.e. Adoniyah's attempt to usurp the throne as King David's successor.

5

May–June 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Abraham Lewin, [diary from 16 May to 5 June 1942]

[1]

Saturday night, 16 May 1942

This Shabbat has been heavy with gloom and depression for me, although it may be that the first rays of light are glowing on the dark horizon, heralding a bright dawn. This depressed state of mind was brought on by the sad news heard from Rabbi H.,[57] of five murdered Jews whose bodies were taken by the Jewish police to Zamenhofa Street 19 in the middle of the night. They lay there until 5 in the morning. Later there was talk of 9–11 martyrs. Who these victims were and where they were murdered is for the time being unknown.

When I hear news of this kind my throat is choked and a terrible weight is on my head. I feel as if I am being throttled and suffocated by a black fear. The abyss is getting ever closer to each one of us, the bestial visage of the Hitlerite apocalypse, with the words: death, destruction, doom, death-agony written on its forehead. An unremitting insecurity, a never-ending fear, is the most terrible aspect of all our tragic and bitter experiences. If we ever live to see the end of this cruel war and are able as free people and citizens to look back on the years of war that we have lived through, then we will surely conclude that the most terrible and unholy, the most destructive aspect for our nervous system and our health was to live day and night in an atmosphere of unending fear and terror for our physical survival, in a continual wavering between life and death – a state where every passing minute brought with it the danger that our hearts would literally burst with fear and dread.

It all began in mid-November 1939 with the murder of 53 innocent [2] Jews from Nalewki Street 9.[58] Soon after this there followed the Kott

57 Apparently Shimon Huberband (1909–1942), Hasidic rabbi and self-taught historian; associated with YIVO. In the Warsaw ghetto, head of the religious department of Jewish Social Self-Help. One of the first and most important members of Oyneg Shabes from mid-1940, he submitted many of his own studies, his diary, and other texts to the Archive.

58 A reference to the murder of 53 tenants of the house at Nalewki Street 9 in retaliation for the death of a Polish police officer. It was the first act of mass terror directed against the residents of Warsaw during the German occupation.

affair[59] when a further 300 Jews were seized and killed. They were for the most part from the liberal professions, intelligentsia, doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc. From that moment on there has been no respite. A never-ending series of round-ups on the streets for forced labour, searches and looting, continual insults and humiliations. After the outbreak of the war between Germany and the Soviet Union, since the tidings of Job have begun to reach us, of mass murders and the extermination of entire historic and illustrious Jewish communities such as the Jerusalem of Lithuania,[60] Kowno, Słonim, Lwów, Lublin and dozens of others – who can begin to comprehend it all? The burden on our souls and on our thoughts has become so heavy and oppressive that it is almost unbearable. I am keenly aware that if our nightmare does not end soon, then many of us, the more sensitive and empathetic natures, will break down. I feel that we are standing on the threshold of the intolerable, between existence and annihilation. I remember that before the war a woman who was living in Vienna at the time Hitler occupied Austria[61] told me that the most terrible thing for the Viennese Jews was the fearful, sleepless nights, a continual pounding of the heart, a waiting for 'them' to come. In Vienna as here Jews were dragged from their homes and taken to concentration camps.

In the afternoon the megaphone announced the sad news of the fall of Kerch.[62] The news hit me very hard. For the truth is, nowadays our hearts beat in time with events taking place on Russian territory, where a life-and-death struggle is being waged between man and beast, between hope for a better tomorrow for the harried and bloodied and fear of the victory of the most

59 Between 14 and 25 January 1940, in retaliation for the escape of Kazimierz Andrzej Kott, commander of the Polish People's Independence Action (*Polska Ludowa Akcja Niepodległościowa*), from the Gestapo detention centre at Aleja Szucha. Germans arrested 255 Jews and executed several dozen of them; see *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

60 I.e. Wilno. In the summer and autumn of 1941 in the forests at Ponary, near Wilno, 70,000 Jews were murdered; see *Accounts from the Borderlands,* Docs. 21–29.

61 I.e. from the *Anschluss*, which took place on 12 March 1938.

62 Town in the south of Ukraine. From 1941 to 1942 heavy fighting took place between Soviet troops and Axis forces, as a part of the Kerch-Feodosia Landing Operation. On 30 December 1941, the Soviet army recaptured the city after a sea landing. On 15 May 1942 the Crimean Peninsula fell into German hands.

bloodthirsty Nero the world has ever seen. Every shift in the balance of Hitler's favour fills us with boundless misery and despair.

[3] But I also heard something cheering toward evening. I know a Jewish electrician who spends the whole week working for the Germans, in the midst of the degeneracy, at Aleja Szucha 25.[63]

This Jew listens all week to radio announcements from London and Moscow, even from America. Among other things, he gave me the following two items of news today. The first was as follows: on Thursday in London a political broadcast was transmitted in Polish. Its basic message was that Hitler is no longer in sole command of the German army, and that the war can be won only by someone who has the army on his side. The announcer also added that it is no secret that von Papen[64] is going round Ankara telling everyone that the establishment of a Fourth Reich is imminent. Could there be any basis to all this? The second item was the following. The Jewish workers receive a loaf of bread when they go home for half of Saturday and Sunday.[65] Yesterday they were given only half a loaf, with the explanation that there may be a shortage of bread. Bread has to be saved and stored for a time when no bread at all will be arriving. Instead of bread there will be soup. This goes to show that they are not exactly overflowing with supplies.

At this workplace, Aleja Szucha 25, a worker by the name of Winokur was shot dead yesterday at half past one in the afternoon. It happened in the following way: it is forbidden for Jewish workers to return individually to the ghetto, even though each receives an individual pass. The murdered man had obtained his pass at half past seven in the morning, because he said he needed to go home early. But for some unknown reason he didn't go with the group of workers in the lorry which took part of the work force back to the ghetto at 11. At about one o'clock he set off for home alone. His boss,

63 Before the war the building served as the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment. During the German occupation it housed the Office of the Commander of the Security Police and the Security Service of the Warsaw District, and was a Gestapo detention centre.

64 Franz von Papen (1879–1969), German politician and diplomat, ambassador of the Third Reich to Turkey, 1939–1945.

65 *45/45 From the beginning of 1942, certain employers stopped the practice of taking daily trips from the ghetto; henceforth the workers were held in labour camps near the factories and returned to the ghetto only on Saturdays.

driving by on Nowy Świat Street, recognised him. The Jew [4] also spotted his boss and tried to make a run for it. The boss set off after and caught up with him, took him back in his car to Aleja Szucha 25, and shot him there twice, killing him on the spot.

As regards further cases of filming I was told the following: at the corner of Żelazna and Chłodna Streets is a Jewish restaurant. Yesterday morning at 9 the Germans took out all the waitresses, young girls, and made them line up on the street, instructing them to put on happy and appealing expressions. At the same time they gathered together a crowd of begging children and made them line up on the street and told them to parade past the elegant waitresses with outstretched hands, into which nothing was put. This was recorded on film, and is intended to show that Jews are living in luxury and do not share anything with the hungry. After this the waitresses were taken to chairman Czerniakow's[66] flat at Chłodna Street 20, made to sit at a table and then orders were given that they be served with carafes of water to simulate vodka, and other refreshments. The waitresses were again ordered to be cheerful and appear in high spirits. This scene was filmed as well. Later the Germans took pictures in private Jewish flats at Chłodna Street 6 and elsewhere. Only finely furnished flats were filmed. This is supposed to be proof to the 'world' that Jews have it good in the ghetto. And here it is for all to see.[67]

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The Jew from Dzielna Street 17, a house painter, who was murdered at 5 o'clock on his way to work – I gave the story a few days ago – had the surname Dziedzic.[68]

66 Adam Czerniaków (1880–1942), social and political activist, member of the Tsentraler Yidisher Hantverker Farband in Poyln (Central Jewish Craftsmen Association in Poland), member of the Polish Senate; during the war – chairman of the Warsaw *Judenrat*. He committed suicide on 23 July 1942, the second day of the *Grossaktion* in the Warsaw ghetto. See *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

67 See footnote 445, pt. 2.

68 The surname added in parentheses, also in Latin characters.

[5]

Sunday, 17 May 1942

Yesterday a decree was issued forbidding non-Germans from moving to Warsaw.[69] The decree applies in actual fact to Poles, since Jews are in any case denied all freedom of movement. They are confined to the ghettos, and if they step outside the walls without special permission they are punished with death. In the Jewish prison on Gęsia Street alone, 25 Jews – men and women – have been shot for this sin.[70] Nevertheless a dread has descended on the Jews of Warsaw. Everyone is terrified. For a while now rumours have been circulating of plans to deport the Jews from Warsaw. Exhausted by this continual fear and trembling, waiting for something terrible and unexpected to happen, people were gradually beginning to calm down, since the days were passing and nothing unexpected had happened. But this order has revived the dread of an expulsion once again, because people are making comparisons with the case of Lublin. A short time before the terrible expulsion of the Jews of Lublin[71] a similar decree was issued, forbidding any movement to Lublin from elsewhere.

We don't know the extent to which the terror of the Warsaw Jews is justified. One thing we do know is that it is hard, very hard to live with permanent terror, and we feel this with body and soul, with every fibre of our being.

I can recall the German correspondent of *Reich* and of the DAZ[72] writing about a year ago in *Reich* (Goebbels' weekly) that Roosevelt had published a declaration beginning with the words: 'We cannot accept a world of permanent terror and uncertainty.' [6] This sentence was the substance, the essence of the president's declaration. And in truth Roosevelt captured in these words the tragedy of all the European peoples, and

69 Ludwig Fischer's order issued on 4 May 1942, prohibiting all non-German citizens from settling in Warsaw and in Warsaw County, subject to a fine, arrest or forced labour sentence.

70 There were two executions of inmates convicted for staying outside the ghetto without permission, carried out in the Central Custody at Gęsia Street 24. On 17 November 1941, 8 people were executed, and on 15 December 1941 – 15 people; see *Kiddush Hashem*, pp. 151–167.

71 In March and April 1942; see *Accounts from the General Government*, Docs. 18–21.

72 *Das Reich* (The Reich) – weekly founded on the initiative of Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda for the Third Reich, published in Germany from May 1940 to April 1945; *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (DAZ) – a German daily newspaper published from 1861 to 1945.

especially that of the Jews. What is important is security; a safe and certain existence must be fought for and won for Europe, one in which people will be able to lift their eyes up to the sky, to the sun, and not flicker and tremble like a candle flame in the wind.

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I have heard talk that the Germans have used gas for the first time on the Russian front, beginning with the attack on Kerch. They say that 30,000 Russian soldiers died as a result of the use of this horrific weapon. Someone told me that Churchill has spoken of this in the House of Commons and has 'sworn' that the whole of Germany would be gassed. Of course, the news of Churchill's 'oath' is not genuine and indeed it is questionable whether the Germans really did use gas. The rumours and stories that are born in the ghetto typify the moods and the feelings that govern us Jews. It is a human wish: 'I will see your revenge upon them.'[73] A higher morality cannot accept such feelings and desires. However, these are human yearnings, thoroughly human, in comparison with the inhuman and satanic acts of the Germans against us and other peoples.

Is the whole German people responsible for the Hitlerite crimes? Once again we find that we are in conflict with ourselves when we try to give an answer to this question. We want an answer: yes, they are responsible, yet it is difficult to answer categorically. We are after all not crazed like the Nazis. But for all that there will remain with us – and not only with us – an eternal grudge, a grievance against the German people in its totality for having hatched such a poisonous snake as Hitlerism and nurtured and raised it.

Monday, 18 May 1942, towards evening

Spring is late this year. It has been continually cold and wet. Not until today have we had a mild spring day. I am sitting at an open window and do not feel cold. But it is not possible to take pleasure in nature, in the beauty of God's world. We are rotting in a prison, the like of which has never been seen, for the ghetto the Germans have set up for us has no model or precursor in human history.

73 In the original in Hebrew, from Jeremiah 20:12.

I can remember a spring day, also 18 May, several years before the war, which has become engraved on my memory. I had to deal with some matter at the school administration in the office at Bagatela Street 12. I set off there at 9 in the morning. By 10 I had finished dealing with the matter. I took the tram back to my school on Długa Street along the Aleje Ujazdowskie. I was enthralled by the sea of green, the splendour of the tree-lined avenues and the wonderful radiance of the light, the tranquillity. This is why that morning is so deeply etched on my memory. Today, where can we find a patch of green, a tree, a field and the chance to walk without terror over God's earth? When will the hour of our liberation strike? When will the sun rise for us, we who are tortured and spat upon?

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Today Jewish Warsaw again mourns the loss of human life. 7 Jews were shot at the corner of Waliców and Chłodna Streets. Among the dead are said to be 2 Jewish policemen. Also a Jewish woman, a sweet vendor from Leszno Street 36, was among the victims. She left home at 6 this morning with her box [8] of sweets and it was only half past six when they brought back her body. No matter how many are devoured by the smuggling trade, it still continues to flourish and to develop. Even the shadow of death cannot wither it.

I live by the wall that divides the ghetto from Przejazd Street. A gap has appeared in the wall through which someone could quite easily crawl, or which is wide enough for a sack with 100 kg of potatoes or corn or other foodstuffs. The smuggling goes on without a break from dawn at 5:00–5:30 until 9 in the evening. What they must go through, those who spend all day busy at the wall, these smugglers, both Jews and Christians (who crawl through the wall to settle their accounts) and the carriers. So often the Germans appear suddenly, or *junaks* and civilian German agents, not to mention Polish policemen who for certain reasons will not allow themselves to be bought off. So many of the goods have been confiscated and so many people, Jews and Christians, have perished. A few weeks ago a 33-year-old Jew, Lewiński, was shot dead there; so was a young Christian. An hour ago, 3 shots were fired through the gap into the ghetto, though luckily no one was hit. But 5 minutes later the crowd of smugglers was back swarming and bustling round the hole. Every few minutes there is complete turmoil, everyone makes

a run for it, like mice to their holes. A minute later the smuggling starts up again at full throttle.

Flour, potatoes, milk, butter, meat and other produce are brought into the ghetto. And out of the ghetto still pours a continual stream of Jewish possessions to the Polish side. Jews are selling up everything they own. Lately a certain distinct type of smuggler has come to my attention. These are Christian women, young and older, who arrive at around dusk loaded down with sacks [9] full of kitchen utensils such as pots and pans, dishes, washtubs, frying pans and other items that they have acquired in the ghetto and smuggle through the gap or over the wall to the Aryan side. It turns out that these Christian women have become specialists in this area: they are buying out the Jewish kitchens. This is a new development. It had all begun with the Jews selling off clothes, furniture, then linen, covers, next pillows, and now it is the turn of the pot and the washtub. The poorest Jew or Jewess will have nothing to cook a meal with and nothing to wash his last remaining shirt in. This is a sign of the extreme deprivation into which the broad mass of the people has fallen. Now we shall have to start saying that someone has sold the pot from the kitchen, instead of 'the shirt off their back'.

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A telephone call was made this morning from Garbatka to Warsaw. For the time being the Jews are staying where they are, but they are terrified of expulsion. As regards Radom, it was said that there is talk that all Jews without jobs will be deported.

The expulsion from Dęblin[74] was apparently carried out in a particularly bestial fashion. It is said that all those being expelled from the town were divided into separate groups, children separately, women separately, men separately. If this is really what happened, then it is not difficult to imagine what became of the children.

Tuesday, 19 May 1942

There are additional stories about Jews being dragged off into the Pawiak Prison. Recently I was told about two such cases. Two bearded men

74 Dęblin (Puławy County). On the night of 5–6 May 1942 approximately 2,500 Jews from Dęblin were deported to the Sobibór killing centre.

[10] were seized and pulled inside. Their beards were shaved off, cutting their faces in the process. They were beaten until they bled, their clothes ripped and their faces half smeared over with tar. They were released in this state. This happened a few days ago. Yesterday two more Jews were grabbed on Smocza Street and dragged off to the Pawiak. One of them was released in the evening. The second was brought out dead early this morning.

This morning a Jewish woman with two small children came into the ghetto through the gap in the wall by our house. She had the appearance of a Christian. She told me the whole tragic story of what happened on her way to Warsaw. She is from Lublin. Early this morning she had taken the train from Lublin to Warsaw with her husband and children. They were travelling as Aryans. In Otwock the gendarmes recognised that her husband was Jewish. He was taken off the train and shot dead before her eyes. She managed to be strong-willed enough not to betray the fact that she belonged with him, but continued her journey and got herself and her children through the gap in the wall into the ghetto. The Germans' crimes and the Jews' tragedies are such that there are no words adequate to describe them. A similar story was recounted to me a few weeks ago by an acquaintance of mine, a Zionist, named Berson. During the expulsion of the Jews from Lublin he had spoken with the wife and daughter of a Lublin *feldsher* (whose name I can't now recall) who arrived in Warsaw by train travelling as Aryans. Their husband and father was shot down in Dęblin right in front of them. He had got down from the train to relieve himself (the toilet in the carriage was closed). On the platform he was stopped by a gendarme, his identity was checked, he was told [11] to run on and was shot from behind. The mother and daughter saw this happen through the train window and managed to hold on to themselves. Shortly afterwards the train moved off.

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The filming that the Germans have been carrying out in the ghetto continues. Today they set up a film-session in Szulc's restaurant at the corner of Leszno and Nowolipki Streets. They brought in Jews whom they had rounded up, ordinary Jews and well-dressed Jews, and also women who were respectably dressed, sat them down at the tables and ordered that they be served with all kinds of food and drink at the expense of the *kehillah*: meat, fish, liqueurs,

white pastries and other delicacies. The Jews ate and the Germans filmed. It is not hard to imagine the motivation behind this. Let the world see the kind of paradise the Jews are living in. They stuff themselves with fish and goose and drink liqueur and wine.

These despicable scenes went on for several hours.

Today the Germans set up an original film set at the corner of Nowolipie and Smocza Streets. It involved the finest funeral wagon that was possessed by the *gmina*. Around it were gathered all the cantors of Warsaw, 10 in number, with Szerman[75] at their head. This had been arranged by the Germans for the purpose of the film. It seems that they want to show that Jews not only live a cheerful, decent existence, but also die with dignity, and even get a luxury burial. No good will come for us out of this film lunacy.

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This morning at 9:15 my wife was stopped at the corner of Nowolipie and Karmelicka Streets and made to take part in a film. A German shouted one *'Sieh, diese ist ganz recht angezogen, ohne schmuck!'*[76] She was kept in front of the camera lenses for half an hour. Of course she wasn't the only one. Many women of various ages and classes were held for the same purpose.

[12]

Wednesday, 20 May 1942

Once again we have been shaken and dismayed by a new crime committed by these twentieth-century Huns. Yesterday afternoon, at half past two, two officers drove a 17-year-old Jewish girl out from the Pawiak Prison. They took her as far as Pawia Street 11a, led her into the entranceway, let her walk a few steps in front and shot her several times from behind with a revolver. They had found out that the girl was living on the Aryan side. Yesterday morning she was arrested in her flat, not fully dressed, wearing slippers. She was taken away as she was and after several hours in the Pawiak she was executed without further ado.

75 Pinchas Szerman (1887–1942), cantor; from 1909 until the outbreak of World War II he held the position of second cantor of the Great Synagogue on Tłomackie Street in Warsaw.

76 (German) 'Look, this one is quite well-dressed, and has no jewellery.'

It is impossible that so much innocent blood should be spilled without retribution. The day of judgement and the day of peace, the day of reckoning must and will come.

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We can only be astounded at the level of German brutality and savagery. It is inconceivable to us and will seem quite incredible to future generations, who will regard it as the product of our imagination, overexcited by misery and anger.

On Leszno Street, next to Żelazna Street, stand two Jewish boys aged about 10 to 12, quite well-dressed, looking into a shop window. Two gendarmes come up, raise their right legs and nick the boys with all their strength in the behind. It should not be forgotten that the boots of the Teutonic soldiers are heavily shod. I'm not making this story up, God forbid. It happened today, Wednesday, at half past twelve.

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[13] There are a few fortunate Jews who in the coming days will have the privilege of leaving our vale of tears, the whole European valley of blood and weeping, and will depart for one of the free South American countries.[77]

In the Warsaw Ghetto there are up to about 20 Jews who hold a passport from Uruguay, Paraguay or some other South American republic. Some of the passport holders are returning immigrants who obtained this citizenship whilst in America, while others were sent a passport from Switzerland since the outbreak of the war. It turns out that according to the laws of some of these South American countries one can also obtain citizenship from abroad, by buying a plot of land there. In the consulates of these countries in Switzerland it has been possible to buy a passport for a large sum of money.

77 Within the framework of the so-called Hotel Polski affair. In the spring of 1943, internment centres for Jews with passports from South American countries were set up at the Royal Hotel at Chmielna Street 31 and at the Polish Hotel at Długa Street 29. Most of those detained there were later murdered by the Germans (300 out of approximately 2,500 survived the war).

There is a family by the name of Wajngot[78] in Warsaw that consists of the parents and three children, two sons and one daughter. One of the sons lives in Switzerland and is rich. The second son was living in Lwów when the Russians were there. The brother in Switzerland sent two Uruguayan passports, one to the brother in Lwów and the other to the sister in Warsaw. The Germans, it seems, also viewed this sudden acquisition of a foreign nationality as legal. When the Germans occupied Galicia,[79] the brother from Lwów was able to get to Warsaw without difficulty on the strength of the passport and for a long time was able to make daily visits to the Aryan side.

A few weeks ago the younger Wajngot received an invitation to come on such and such a day at a given hour to the Pawiak Prison. The whole family was very frightened and went through several sleepless nights. The father is a Hasidic Jew and his rebbe lives in the ghetto. [14] He went to the rebbe to seek his advice as to whether his son should keep the appointment. The rebbe examined the invitation closely and said that it was all right to go. This advice was justified by the rebbe by the fact that on the invitation – not the instruction – was written as 'Mr' and not 'The Jew'. As this was the case, reasoned the rebbe correctly, there was no need to be afraid.

At the printed hour – 10 in the morning – Wajngot presented himself at the Pawiak. He was led into a large, heated room. There were 14 Jews gathered there, men and women. Several officers came in. One of them addressed the Jews in a dignified and respectful manner and informed them that relations with the states in South America were deteriorating and that it was possible that relations would be broken off. At present there existed the possibility to exchange Germans in South America for Jews who held appropriate passports (for each Jew, three Germans would be sent over). He proposed to the Jews therefore that they should leave Warsaw, travel to Switzerland and then continue across the Atlantic. The Germans would afford them every assistance and whoever wished to marry, but had no wife, could carry out the formalities quickly and take her as well.

78 The name of the family was actually Weingort, and the passports were from Paraguay; on letters of May and October 1941 to Ozjasz Leon Weingort from the Paraguay consulate in Berno; see ARG II 331 (Ring. II/312).

79 It was annexed to the General Government as the fifth district in July 1941. See *Accounts from the General Government,* Introduction.

All the Jews present immediately expressed their willingness to travel. There was just one old woman who explained that she was old and weak, lived with her children in Warsaw and couldn't set off alone into the wide world. The officer tried to persuade the old woman that she should, none the less, leave Warsaw, saying gently, she could see, couldn't she, how things looked in the ghetto, and that things would most likely get worse. It would be better for her if she left the ghetto.

[15] After this strange conference, all those Jews who years ago returned from overseas produced their American passports that they had not previously registered with the authorities. The Germans are searching high and low for Jews such as these and are not making it at all difficult for them to leave.

It's possible that some Jews have already left or will be leaving in the next few days.[80]

These Jews are fortunate indeed.

Thursday, 21 May 1942 – Erev Shavuot

There is great sadness in our souls and a fearful weight on our heart. News arrives constantly of the slaughter of Jews. I have heard that six Jews were killed in the Pawiak Prison last night. People say that one of the victims was an official of the Łódź *kehillah*, Nadel.[81] My friend K.[82] told me today of the mass slaughter of the Jews of Tomaszów Mazowiecki. Last week they murdered all the members of the *Judenrat* with their families – 170 people in all.[83]

I am amazed that I still see Jews bustling about, busy with 'important' matters. I have such an uncanny and terrible feeling when I hear bad news, and there is sadly no good news, so my heart begins to hurt, and

80 Jews holding passports from the United States and of South and Central American countries were interned in Pawiak prison in April 1942; a few weeks later they were taken to POW camps in Germany.

81 Pinkus Nadel (1895–?), social activist. Member of the editorial board of *Kronika Gminy Wyznaniowej Żydowskiej* (The Jewish Community Chronicle), published in Łódź in 1929–1934.

82 Reference to Menakhem Mendel Kohn (Kon), see: Introduction to Part II.

83 On 7 May 1942 in Tomaszów Mazowiecki several *Judenrat* members were murdered, including its chairman Lajbuś Warzager; see: Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim*, Kraków, 2004, p. 187.

the pain nearly drives me insane. Is there any hope left for us? When will the dance of death come to an end? When will we glimpse the brilliance of the morning star?

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Yesterday a Jew was killed in a manner that was exceptional for its refined cynicism and human degradation even by the standards of the German murderers and barbarians. [16] At 10 in the evening the Germans rang the bell of Dzielna Street 17. They brought in a poor and elderly Jew and said that he should be fed, since they had found him out late, when no one is allowed on the streets, and he had explained to them that he had nowhere to spend the night and that he hadn't eaten all day. On the same courtyard there is a bakery. The Jews in the air defence[84] who were standing guard at the entranceway went in to see the baker, took a loaf of bread from him and gave the homeless and hungry Jew this to eat. An hour later the Germans called again. They wanted to know if their order had been carried out and that the Jew had been fed properly. On receiving a positive answer they took the Jew and shot him on the spot. If I hadn't heard this from the mouth of my own sister who lives on the same courtyard, Dzielna Street 17, I wouldn't have believed that such barefaced savagery was possible.

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People are saying that lists have already been prepared of candidates for the labour camps. This afternoon rumours were going around saying that the Jewish police has been mobilised for tonight in order to carry out the round-up, well-known to us from a year ago (in Polish *łapanki*). This means that we are once again faced with the prospect of orgies of violence like those in the summers of 1940 and 1941. Once again, hundreds and thousands of ordinary Jews, Jewish workers and labourers, will pay with their health and their lives, and Polish earth will be covered with the fresh graves of Jewish martyrs.

84 Anti-aircraft defence in the Warsaw ghetto was set up in May 1941.

I have learnt from a completely reliable source that the industrial concerns that are being opened on the Aryan side are being obliged by the German authorities to employ [17] exclusively Jews. A certain metalwork, Jewish property that is under the management of a commissioner, has been closed up to now. Recently the commissioner made an approach to the authorities about opening the factory. An inspection committee concluded that the factory was important for the war effort and gave permission for it to open, but on the condition that all skilled workers had to be Jews. Apparently Poles with special skills have to be sent to Germany. The round-up that the Jews are dreading tonight is supposedly directed at the metalworkers who registered for work in the factories on the Aryan side but didn't present themselves for work. In Rudzki's enormous factory in Mińsk Mazowiecki[85] all the workers are Belgian or French.[86]

Hitlerism in this respect represents a throwback to the dark days of Babylonia and Assyria. It also aims to uproot and drive entire nations from one end of Europe to the other and even from one continent to another.

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The ghetto is most terrible to behold with its crowds of drawn faces with the colour drained out of them. Some of them have the look of corpses that have been in the ground a few weeks. They are so horrifying that they cause us to shudder instinctively. Against the background of these literally skeletal figures and against the all-embracing gloom and despair that stares from every pair of eyes, from the packed mass of passers-by, a certain type of girl or young woman, few in number it must be said, shocks with her over elegant attire. Their new outfits, their wavy peroxide [18] hair, beautifully styled, their brightly powdered cheeks and their purple-red lips, stab at the eyes of the onlooker. Walking the streets I observe this sickly elegance and I am shamed in my own eyes. These women look as if their silk garments are pulled over shrouds. It seems that a hunger for jewellery and fine clothes is a national

85 A factory owned by the K. Rudzki & Co. engineering enterprise, founded in 1858 and known primarily for bridge building. During the German occupation, the factory produced for the needs of the German army. It also housed a POW camp.

86 They were POWs.

weakness of ours. It is not for nothing that we can find regulations and decrees against women's silk dresses and jewellery in the records of the Council of Four Lands[87] and in many other places. These regulations and decrees were also issued as far as I remember in times of great upheaval and disaster for our people, for instance after the Chmielnicki massacres.[88] It pains me that Jewish women have so little sense of modesty and moderation, so little of what in Polish is known as *umiar*.[89] But what might have been expected is that in terrible and tragic days such as these this weakness for clothes and external beauty would have been contained and set aside.

Even in peace-time the contrast between women's clothing in Berlin and here in Warsaw was very marked. There was unadorned simplicity, the hair combed neatly under a hairnet, a clean, simple dress. Here, by contrast, we can recall the dazzling luxury of the Warsaw streets. It is understandable that certain Germans, even the better ones, gape in amazement at our decked-out ladies. The worst ones, the Nazis, hate us all the more for this. In either case this is in my opinion a very undesirable and unhealthy phenomenon. It would be a good idea if action were set in motion in our own little world against blatant female luxury. Of course, I am talking about an education campaign only.

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[19] In the last few days we have begun to see very many German Jews[90] in the ghetto. They are recognisable by a yellow Star of David with the word *Jude*.[91] They go in procession to and from work. They also walk around singly.

87 Council of Four Lands – central body of the Jewish self-government in the Kingdom of Poland, active between 1580 and 1764; see: Antony Polonsky, *History of the Jews in Poland and Russia,* Oxford/Portland, Oregon, 2010, vol. 1, pp. 40–68.

88 Reference to armed uprising of the Dnieper Cossacks and the Ruthenian peasantry against the magnates and Polish nobility. Between 1648 and 1657 more than 12,000 Jews were murdered. See: *ibidem,* pp. 169–172.

89 (Polish, in Latin characters) restraint, moderation.

90 In April 1942, approximately 4,000 Jews were brought in the Warsaw ghetto from Frankfurt, Hanover and Berlin. They were placed in the Great Synagogue on Tłomackie Street. See: *Czerniaków's diary,* entries of 4, 5, 16 and 18 April 1942.

91 (German) Jew.

For the time being no contact has been established between us and them. Between us and them there still stands a wall of many hundred years of prejudice and linguistic division. In the final analysis it is difficult for a Jew from Hanover to have a conversation with a Jew from Piaseczno or Grójec[92] and vice versa. They simply are not able to communicate. Let us hope that time will bring about a rapprochement. They will mix in with us and assimilate with us. Similar things have happened more than once in our history: the exiles from Spain in Germany and Poland, and recently the Yemenite and German community in Eretz Israel. Here I would just like to draw attention to the external appearance of the German Jews, to the anthropological side of the problem. I look closely into their faces and am amazed at the powerful similarity to us: they resemble us like two peas in a pod. If it weren't for the yellow star on their chests we would have no way of telling that a German Jew of many generations was in front of us. Thus hundreds of years of climatic (to some extent), linguistic and cultural differences have not been able to erase or blur our common origin and shared anthropological build. On the basis of this observation we can say that the concepts of West European and East European Jews are merely superficial, lacking substance. For in reality we have been formed of the same dough, we are like two brothers, one of whom fate has dispatched to some far-off place, to America, whilst the second remains in his Polish or Lithuanian town. When the two meet [20] after 15 or 20 years there is a certain feeling of estrangement or bashfulness between them. But in the course of time the sense of brotherhood conquers all the feelings of alienation that time and differences of culture have given rise to. Thus Abe Cahan (the editor of *Forverts*)[93] tells in his memoirs how, when his younger brother came to America, it was difficult for him to address his older brother as a member of the same family, with *du* for 'you'. Kahan had to work very hard to break down the distance and timidity of his younger brother. We and the German Jews are also brothers who have been separated from each other for rather a long time. In fact we left Germany in the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Now we meet again under tragic circumstances. We still feel estranged from

92 In the original, Gritse, the name used by Jews.

93 Abraham 'Abe' Cahan (1860–1951), Lithuanian-born American editor, writer and social activist. In 1897, he was one of the founders of the Yiddish newspaper *Forverts* (Forward) and was its editor in chief for 43 years.

each other, but this estrangement will soon disappear and we will be at ease with one another, like brothers once again.

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In one of his stories (if I'm not mistaken in 'Rvatch' – the arriviste), Ehrenburg[94] describes in an artistic and aesthetically successful way, full of seriousness and truth, the tragedy of a woman who had been the director of the middle school before the revolution and who was transformed subsequently into a helpless and ridiculous creature, into a wet rag, as Ehrenburg puts it. This is the tragedy of the declassed, of people who have lost their property and position in society. They have to suffer not only material deprivation but also moral humiliation and shame. The tragedies of this kind are no less grave, pitiful and dismaying than the tragedies that are caused to us by the German vandals.

In our parochial, decaying little world there are certain individuals who have made their way up to the top, up to the Eastern Wall,[95] [21] individuals who are not fit or suited to be at the head of a Jewish community, and this the greatest in Europe, and at such an appalling time. This is one of the inevitable results of war, the calamity of 'the good are cast down and the lowly raised up',[96] the curse of leaders who are not fit for their office.

It seems that no part or sector of our public life is free from this curse. Apparently this is how things have always been with us Jews. Of the period of seizures of children under Tsar Nicholas I the writer Josef Rabinowicz[97] writes that at the head of the communities could be found either holy men, ready to sacrifice themselves for the good of the whole, or contemptible scoundrels. The holy men are moved aside, the contemptible remain, the dregs of our society. Today we find ourselves in this position again. These men are the cause of the tragedies that I recount in these lines.

These thoughts came to me as I was standing in one of our societal organisations and I watched as Messrs K. and S. bustled about in the pose

94 Ilya Ehrenburg (Erenburg) (1891–1967), Russian writer, journalist and poet. Author of many novels, including *Rvatch* (The Grabber) (1925).

95 Reference to the most desired place to pray in a synagogue.

96 In the original in Hebrew, from Talmud, Bava Batra 10b.5.

97 Yosef (Osip) Rabinovich (1817–1869), Russian writer and journalist.

of leaders, directors. They 'don't see' anyone around them, do not recognise anyone (except of course other important people), so their whole demeanour cries out: *Nye tron myenya*'[98] (don't touch me).

Let us hope that this cancer will be removed from our collective body along with Hitler.

[22]

Friday, 22 May 1942 – first day of Shavuot

To put the record straight I will set down the exact details of the murder that occurred on Wednesday at Dzielna Street 17. The murdered man was a Jewish beggar aged about 30. A German patrol ran into him in the street at half past nine. One gendarme wanted to shoot him, but the other stopped him. They took him to the above-mentioned building and ordered that he be fed and given a place to sleep. He was fed without delay. The question of a place to sleep was more difficult. In the same entranceway there is a little brothel. The 'tenants' live four to a room. The Germans went to the brothel and gave instructions that the beggar was to sleep there. The gendarmes then left. A row started between the girls, their boss and the beggar. They didn't want to let him sleep there with them as he was so dirty. They offered him money. The beggar stubbornly refused to leave; he wanted to sleep there, since that is what the Germans told him to do. When they tried to get him out by force, he began to shout 'Police!' A second patrol arrived. The girls explained that they were too disgusted to sleep with the filthy beggar. The Germans told the Jew to go with them, took him to the church[99] opposite the Pawiak and shot him.

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Even though people said that nothing would happen, there was a round-up last night carried out by the Jewish police.[100] The Jewish police came to our building three times, looking for certain young people. Two of them [23] were not sleeping at home and one has a chest illness so they did not take him. However,

98 (Russian, in Cyrillic characters) Don't touch me.

99 St. Augustine church at Nowolipki Street 48/50 (now No. 18). During the German occupation it did not handle religious functions.

100 I.e. a round-up of people who were subsequently sent to forced labour camps.

they took away a young man who had hidden in our building. The poor man fell into their hands by pure chance.

As yet I have no knowledge of the round-up or how it was carried out.

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Today I received political news that sounds quite sensational. Goering[101] has had a meeting with Laval.[102] As a result of their meeting Laval has approached Roosevelt[103] as an intermediary with a peace proposal on behalf of Germany. Germany proposes the following conditions: Hitler and Himmler will leave power, a new government will be created with Goering, Hugenberg (the representative of heavy industry),[104] von Papen at its head. Roosevelt has informed the government in London of the peace proposal. Because of the importance of peace, a special sitting of parliament has been called. The parliament decided unanimously that no kind of negotiations would be entered into with this Germany, that is, that only capitulation can end the war. After the sitting Churchill made a speech and stated that if the German people does not come to its senses, peace will be concluded over the ruins of the German cities.

A degree of confirmation of this news can be seen in the *dementi*[104] published today in the German press. There it is stated that it is true that Goering has been in Paris, but he had no political discussions with Laval [24] and also has no intention of having any such discussions in the future. And everything that the enemy press writes on this subject is untrue.

If something is denied, it is a sign that something did indeed happen: *qui s'excuse, s'accuse*.[105] The Pope also approached England on behalf of Germany and Italy with a favourable peace proposal. The Pope proposes a peace between the two Axis powers and England and America, without including Russia. This reflects the old German notion of dealing with the Russian bear. Hess probably

101 Hermann Wilhelm Göring (Goering) (1893–1946), the Third Reich Minister of Aviation in 1933–1945, commander of the German military aviation (Luftwaffe) from 1935 to 1945.

102 Pierre Laval (1883–1945), French politician, twice a prime minister in pre-war France; in 1942 he was the acting chief of the Vichy government.

103 Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882–1945), American politician, the president of the United States from 1933 to 1945. He was a member of the Democratic Party.

104 (Latin) denial.

105 (French) One who excuses oneself accuses oneself.

flew to England on 10 May 1941 with a similar offer.[106] My informant knew no further details about the Pope's peace proposal. Let us hope that the Anglo-Saxon world will have sufficient decency not to accede to such an evil plan.

The Spanish foreign minister, Serrano Súñer,[107] is supposed to have made an attempt to act as an intermediary for peace. We have no further details.

If it is true that the Germans have begun such an energetic peace campaign, it would be very cheering news indeed, proof that we are approaching the end of the greatest tragedy that the world has ever endured. In 1918 it all began (the beginning of the end) with the approach to Wilson and with changes in the German government: Ludendorff[108] dismissed, Max von Baden,[109] with liberal tendencies, serving as Chancellor.

All this with the proviso that the news is true.

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[25] I have also been told about a particular letter that has reached Warsaw from Sweden. The sender writes that he is not planning to ship any further parcels here given that the post is so slow and that we are on the brink of important and decisive events, which will make the sending of parcels superfluous. He hopes that things will clarify soon.

Could it be that these are swallows heralding an imminent spring?

Once again we can observe scores of Jewish children from the age of 10 to 12 or 13 stealing over to the Aryan side to buy a few potatoes. They hide these in their little coats, with hems swollen so that the children look like balloons. Whole hosts of them can be seen climbing over the walls, crawling through

106 Rudolf Hess (1894–1987), one of the leaders of NSDAP, Hitler's deputy. On 10 May 1941 he flew to Great Britain, to engage in peace talks on his own initiative. The British government treated him as a prisoner of war, and then placed him in a psychiatric hospital, where he stayed until the end of the war. During the Nuremberg trial, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

107 Ramón Serrano Súñer (1901–2003), Franco's brother-in-law, Spanish politician, foreign affairs minister from 1939 to 1942.

108 Erich Ludendorff (1865–1937), German military commander during World War I. Dismissed by the emperor Wilhelm II in October 1918.

109 Prince Maximilian von Baden (1867–1929), German politician, the Chancellor of the German Empire and Prime Minister of Prussia in 1918.

the gaps or the so-called *mety* and passing through the official entrances where gendarmes and the Polish police stand guard. There are some Germans who show a little mercy on these unfortunate children and pretend not to see them, turning away deliberately, and the children dart with their little overcoats bulging, scampering along like birds. There are also vicious guards who hit the children with murderous blows, take away their potatoes, and often even use their weapons. More than one child has fallen victim to their bloodlust. These poor unfortunate Jewish children! There are among them such pretty, nice, agile, smart little guys. What wonderful human potential is being lost to us. After the war we will have a serious problem with abandoned children and children without families, just as there was in Russia after the revolution (‘*bezprizornyye dyeti*’).[110] It is high time that we gave some thought to this enormous and difficult problem.

[26]

Saturday, 23 May 1942 – second day of Shavuot

Five weeks ago the events of that terrible Friday took place, the Bartholomew Night put on for us by the Germans on that unforgettable 18 April. Since then there has been a never-ending series of murders and violence in the ghetto. Not a day passes without word of a murder or of Jewish arrests, of people being dragged into the Pawiak and so on. This morning a woman came to us who works as a washerwoman and cleaner. She told us that a Jew was shot dead yesterday on Pawia Street next to the prison alleyway that has become so deadly (Więzienna Street). He was a flour dealer named Hurwicz. A German Gestapo officer suddenly turned off Więzienna Street on to Pawia Street, which is very crowded as Jews avoid going along the prison alleyway and take Pawia Street. All the Jews in the street threw themselves into the entranceways to escape the Angel of Death. (Every German, and above all every Gestapo officer, is an Angel of Death in the eyes of every Jew. I can recall that my friend Henig from Kraków[111] confessed to me in the first weeks of the war, saying: ‘I was an officer in the Austrian army and served throughout the war at the front, but whenever I see a German

110 (Russian, in Cyrillic characters) children left without care or attention.

111 *73a/71 Reference to Haim Henig, member of the Central Committee of the Left Poalei Tsiyon and regular contributor to its journals. He left Warsaw in May 1940 and settled in Palestine.

in the distance my heart misses a beat.') The officer chased after the Jews, ran into an entrance and dragged out the Jew, Hurwicz, killing him in bestial fashion on the street. According to another version that I heard from Mr W.,[112] he didn't kill him but beat him up brutally in the street and then dragged him off to the Pawiak. Later he was released.

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[27] Over the past few days the level of anxiety has risen again among prominent political and social figures, especially among Bundists, because a great many of the victims have come from their ranks. They had started to breathe more easily and had begun sleeping at home again. Now they live in fear of acts of terror and as a precaution are not sleeping at home.

The frenzied filming continues unabated. I was told about one of these filming sessions that took place last Thursday morning at Twarda Street 22 at a bread shop. A large crowd of Jews was rounded up, each given a 500 zlotys note to hold, and made to press forward to buy a loaf, of course a white loaf. A ragged young boy had to try to steal a loaf of bread, be seized by a Jewish policeman and beaten severely. Of course this last detail was also part of the scenario. The intention of the film is quite transparent. Rich Jews stuff themselves on white bread and pastries and are rolling in money whilst the poor have to steal their meagre daily crust and are beaten for it.

Viewed objectively, the position really is like that. Those who have money can get anything, from white pastries to the best fish, and the poor are dying on the streets from hunger. Who, though, is responsible for the indescribable misery and the vast and widening gulf of inequality in the ghetto, if not the Germans and their anti-Jewish policies?

Whether we can say with a clear conscience that 'our hands did not spill this blood'[113] is a separate question well worth careful consideration. On another occasion I will try [28] to give an answer to this question.

The 500-zloty notes were of course collected back from the Jews. The boy who was beaten received 50 zlotys as recompense for the blows he was handed out.

112 *74/72 Reference to Hersh Wasser; see: Introduction to Part II.

113 In the original in Hebrew, from Deuteronomy 21:7.

Today my former pupil Hanka T.[114] visited me. She spent seven and a half months in prison . . . for not wearing a Jewish armband and for travelling by train without permission. Her use of Aryan papers and illegal entry into the ghetto went unpunished.

I have already recounted that she worked in the fields last summer in the Lublin area, had wanted to see her parents and travelled home for Sukkot using the papers of a Christian woman. She entered the ghetto on the number 17 tram and tried to get out with her friend R[ubinsztajn] at Świętojerska Street. They were stopped by a gendarme who happened to be passing. She was held for 2 weeks at Daniłowiczowska Street,[115] together with prostitutes. She went hungry there. Later she was moved to a Jewish prison on Gęsia Street for another 7 months.

Miss T. shared her impressions with me of the time she worked in the fields and of the prison on Gęsia Street. Here I will set down many of the details that seem to me to be really interesting and that have stayed in my memory.

The estate where she was working, located in the area of Hrubieszów near Sokal and Bełz,[116] is very large. It is 600 *morgen*[117] and for a long time has belonged [29] to a Jew from Lwów, Max Glazerman. He and his father before him have run the estate which is called 'Dłużniów'.[118] The local population is Ukrainian and hostile in its attitude to Jews and even more so to Poles. Production there is massive and is used in the manufacturing industry. Corn and potato in the distilleries, beet in the sugar-factories, barley in the breweries, clover for perfume and . . . gases for military purposes (this means that for some time now the Germans have been preparing and producing gas). Wheat is also produced.

Glazerman is perhaps the only Jew whom the Germans have allowed to continue managing his own property in the role of tenant, because he is known to be a good administrator and is by training an engineer. He has

114 Hanka Tauber.

115 See the entry for 9 May 1942, footnote 17.

116 Sokal (now Lviv province, Ukraine); Bełz (Sokal County, now Lviv province, Ukraine).

117 A *morgen* is an obsolete land measure, approximately 0.56 hectare or 1.4 acre.

118 Dłużniów (Hrubieszów County). See: D. Libionka, L. Weinbaum, "A New Look at the Betar 'Idyll', in Hrubieszów", *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol. 37:1, 2009; *Accounts from the General Government,* Doc. 34.

good relations with the authorities, i.e. with the *Landrat*[119] in Hrubieszów, and to this day manages the estate, which has the character of an American industrial farm. He gives over the greater part of the production as part of the so-called 'forced-quota'. But he has an agreement with the Germans that after the quota has been filled he has a free hand to sell a considerable amount of produce. This, it turns out, is how he makes a living.

The farm is worked on by a great number of Ukrainian peasants, who are farm workers. The Betar[120] organised a large youth group from Warsaw, young men and women, students from bourgeois families, who have been working there since early last summer. They are 30 in number. They live in two rooms, in a brewery, and have a communal life style, on the model of the *kibbutzim* in *Eretz Israel*. Three of them stay behind each day [30] to prepare food for the whole group. One of them, a cook, works in the kitchen each day; the other two change over each week. The working day lasts as a rule from sunrise to sunset, with a break at midday. Only during the very long summer days are they allowed to work from 6 in the morning, so that they will not have to work 15 or 16 hours a day. They receive full board from the owner in the following measure: half a kilo of bread, one and a half litres of milk, potatoes, grits, beans, peas, meat and bacon. Each person receives bread and milk as daily rations. In addition they each receive one zloty a day. They work 6 days a week. Sunday is a rest day. They spend it at home, mending linen and clothing, and in the remaining free time they sing or read books. The Jewish young men and women are without exception employed in the fields, doing the same work as labourers who come from generations of peasant stock. The work is hard, says the tall, slender Miss T., but they are able to keep up with the Ukrainians. The owner is satisfied with them; otherwise he wouldn't employ them. He is apparently a simple Jew, not a man of ideas. The group have work-cards and are under the protection of the office of employment. Relations between the group and Glazerman are in general quite cordial, although from time to time there are the tensions which are unavoidable between employees and employer. Thus he complains that they don't work hard enough and are rather lazy. The young people complaint about the

119 (German) county commissioner.

120 Acronym for Brit Trumpeldor, youth movement of the Revisionist Zionist party, founded in 1923 by Włodzimierz (Zeev) Żabotyński (Jabotinsky) (1880–1940).

food, which deteriorates periodically. Then they have an argument and the air is clear again.

[31] There are no more than 12 kilometres between where they are living to the former Russian-German border. Large numbers of German troops have assembled there, mostly Austrians. They have a friendly attitude to the group. They were – in the main – hostile to Hitler. They maintained that they would rather be Jews under Hitler's rule than Austrians. They knew in advance that war would break out with Russia and had predicted the day. (The whole thing is somewhat mystifying: something that every German soldier on the frontier knew as early as 10 June was still unknown to the Russian general staff on the 21st.)

Of life in prison Tauber recounted the following. There were 11 girls held in a small cell, all of them in prison for leaving the ghetto illegally. One time they were visited by the Swiss doctors[121] from the Swiss Red Cross. They asked each prisoner in turn why they had been locked up. On receiving the same answer each time: for leaving the ghetto – they shook their heads: 'Is that a crime? Is it forbidden? And people are executed for this? Then this must be the only prison in the world where the inmates are not criminals'– the representatives of the Red Cross noted.

Food rations in the prison are as follows: 200 grams of bread per day with bitter coffee, soup twice a day, at midday and in the evening. Of course this is a starvation diet. Many prisoners receive parcels from home – these are shared with those who do not receive them.

[32] There are 1,600 Jews in the prison, roughly half men and half women. Many die from hunger. The prison has no sick room or hospital. Those who are ill lie in their cells until they die. Only then are they carried out. Everyone is in prison for leaving the ghetto or for smuggling. The female guards treat the prisoners humanely. Serving as guards are intelligent Jewish women, some of them highly educated.[122] One of them has taken the exams to enter the judiciary. The prisoners are let out four times a day to tend to their natural needs. In exceptional cases one can be let out specially, or can use a container in a cell.

121 Swiss representatives of the Red Cross visited the Central Custody at the end of March and in April 1942. See HWC 43.1.

122 *78/77, 204/193. The prison warders' unit was headed by Mrs Horowitz, a lawyer from Łódź.

There are frequent cases of starvation-diarrhea, a sign that death is imminent. In such cases people are not let out of their cells. They dirty themselves until they die. The prisoners spend the whole day sitting locked up in the cells, so life is extremely monotonous. The more intelligent read books sent in from outside. Every now and then the prison goes through upheavals. On 9 January 1942, the councilor Rosen[123] came to the prison and spoke to the assembled prisoners – men and women separately – and solemnly announced an amnesty from the Germans, in recognition of the large number of furs that had been handed over and the contribution the Jews had made. The release – also carried out with much pomp and circumstance – took place on 11 March when the chairman, Czerniaków, and a representative of the German authorities, among others, were present. Czerniaków gave a speech, bread and sweets were distributed, and about 150 people were freed.[124]

[33] There is also no shortage of tragedies to report from the Jewish prison. On two occasions large groups of prisoners were sent to Treblinka, to the notorious labour and concentration camp, from which there is no return, as with Oświęcim.[125] On the first occasion, a group of 20 men and women had broken the edict requiring furs to be given up.[126] The second group of deportees was made up of men who had been arrested for smuggling. One of them was a tall, powerfully built man – a giant. He had gone to the aid of a poor Jewish woman from whom a *junak* had tried to snatch some potatoes. He beat up the *junak* and disarmed him when he tried to fire his revolver. The prison has also seen two horrific mornings of executions, with 8 and 17 Jewish men and women executed for the sin of leaving the ghetto.[127] Women made up the vast majority

123 Chil (Hilel) Rozen (1899–1942), tradesman and teacher, member of the Labour Battalion Committee in the Ghetto, and later the chairman of the Labour Department Commission of the *Judenrat*.

124 See *Czerniakow's diary*, entry for 9 January 1942. He noted that prisoners sentenced to death for crossing the ghetto borders could be released in exchange for contributing 150 furs.

125 References to the Treblinka I penal labour camp, established in 1941 by the nearby gravel pit, and to the Auschwitz I concentration camp, the first of the camps forming KL Auschwitz, later serving as the main camp. The first mass transports of prisoners were brought to Auschwitz I in June 1940.

126 The forced seizure of furs from Warsaw ghetto residents in December 1941; see: *Warsaw Ghetto. Everyday Life*, Doc. 59.

127 See footnote 70 pt.1.

of those executed. Among these were also women of prominent families, for example, the 27-year-old Mikanowska,[128] the niece of Herman Czerwiński, who was active in the community and died a few days ago.

The R.[129] family, who had been arrested because their son escaped from prison, was released over the past few days.

Here is a small illustration of the tragicomedy of German justice. The Germans' special court[130] sits on Długa Street. Last Friday (yesterday) [34] this court, acting in the second instance, considered the appeal from a Jew from Łowicz who had been sentenced to a year in prison for . . . slaughtering a goose in a ritual manner with normal kitchen knife. He was seen by a German sergeant. The court on Długa Street gave the Jew an extra six months. Thus for the stir of cutting a goose's throat with a simple kitchen knife the Jew was sentenced to a year and a half hard prison. Perhaps he will be saved by the swift demise of these new Hamans?[131]

Sunday, 24 May 1942

Last night once again a number of Jews were shot. At the moment we know the names of four of them: Szymonowicz, Hurwicz, Mandel and Lewin. They are all said to have been closely connected with the 'Thirteen', the German agency at Leszno Street 13, headed by Gancwajch.[132] Early this morning I went to see the spot where Szymonowicz was shot, at Przejazd Street 9. I found his congealed blood still there between the paving stones, and bloodstains were on the window of the shop near where he had been standing when he was shot. It put me in a state of shock. It is said of Szymonowicz that he had recently made a fortune in brush production,

128 Róża (Edzia) Mikanowska (1913 or 1915–1941); Herman Czerwiński (?–1942) was a journalist, collaborator of *Gazeta Żydowska;* see: Doc. 14.

129 Reference to the Rubinsztejn family; see entry for 9 May.

130 The German Court (*Deutsches Gericht*) operated in Warsaw from 1940 at Długa Street 7. It mainly passed judgement in cases involving Germans and *Volksdeutsche*, but also dealt with crimes against war legislation; see Barbara Engelking, Jan Grabowski, *'Żydów łamiących prawo należy karać śmiercią!'. „Przestępczość" Żydów w Warszawie 1939–1942*, Warsaw 2010, p. 40.

131 Haman – figure from the biblical Book of Esther; he was the highest official to the King of Persia. Haman tried to persuade the king to kill all the Persian Jews.

132 Abraham Gancwajch (?–1943), journalist, refugee from Łódź; in the Warsaw ghetto, chairman of the Office to Combat Usury and Profiteering, the Gestapo agency, popularly called the 'Thirteen'; see: *Warsaw Ghetto. Everyday Life*, Docs. 70–71.

almost 4 million zlotys. He was said to be a good-natured person, spending quite a lot to support his own family and strangers alike. Last week he married off a daughter. The wedding dinner is supposed to have cost 25,000 zlotys. That's what the Jews say. It wasn't because of this expensive wedding dinner [35] that his life was ended but because of his close relations with the Gestapo. The German Nazis treat their assistants and servants, Jewish renegades and informers, according to an old German practice: *Der Mohr hat seine Arbeit getan, der Mohr kann gehen*.[133] This is how they dealt with the Jew Hanusel, whom they murdered as soon as they got into power, even though he had served them with all his heart and soul and worked so closely at their side. This is how they behave down to the present day. Word has it that they visited the homes of the two 'big men' Gancwajch and Szternfeld but they were not there. They are in hiding.

A certain engineer by the name of Sz., a reliable man, told me about a murder the Germans committed on a young girl at Pawia Street 11a last week. The man who murdered her was an older German officer, aged between 55 and 60. After he shot her, he went out into the street just as a woman was passing, an acquaintance of the above-named engineer. The street suddenly emptied. However, the woman didn't manage to take refuge anywhere. The officer was deathly pale. He took the woman by the arm, led her into the entranceway, pointed to the dead body and told her to find the janitor and make arrangements to get the body moved to the side of the courtyard and the blood washed away. At the same time he explained to her that it wasn't his fault, he was just following orders. He showed her the order on a piece of paper.

Is it possible that a German Gestapo officer could feel a twinge of conscience? Maybe he too has one or more daughters the same age as the murdered girl?

[36]

Monday, 25 May 1942

We hear terrible reports from the groups of refugees arriving from Łódź, so terrible that if we did not know of other well-documented cases of equal bestiality we would not be able to believe them. A Jew from Łódź, an engineer called R., told me that children up to the age of 10

133 (German) The Moor has done his work, the Moor may go. From Friedrich Schiller, *Fiesco; or, the Genoese Conspiracy*.

are being slaughtered in the ghetto there. It is hard for the tongue to utter such words, for the mind to comprehend their meaning, to write them down on paper. There is no greater crime, no greater savagery than the murder of young and innocent children.

The blood of our children will never be erased from the mark of Cain of the German people. Only now in these ways have I come to appreciate and understand Bialik's[134] poem of anger: *On The Slaughter*. I must confess that, though I am one of Bialik's most fervent admirers, his *In the City of Slaughter* and *On The Slaughter*,[135] containing such fiery talk of blood, murder and revenge, have never been my favourites. I have always been drawn to his transcendent lyrics and his superb, brilliant epic poetry. But now I recall his cry from the heart:

"Accursed be he who cries out 'Avenge this!' Vengeance for this, for the blood of a small child, the devil himself has not created."

or

'If there is such a thing as justice, let it show itself now! But if only after my destruction, justice appears under the heavens, may its seat be destroyed for ever!'[136]

And if Kishenev alone were able to evoke such anguished echoes in a Jewish heart, what will be in our hearts after the greatest disaster that has ever befallen us? But perhaps because the disaster is so great there is nothing to be gained by expressing in words everything that we feel. Only if we were capable of tearing out by the force of our [37] pent-up anguish the greatest of all mountains, a Mount Everest, and with all our hatred and strength hurling it down on the heads of the German murderers of our young and old – this would be the only fitting reaction on our part. Words are beyond us now.

Our hearts are empty and made of stone.

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134 Haim Nahman Bialik (1873–1934), Hebrew- and Yiddish-language poet, prose writer, essayist, translator. Bialik greatly contributed to the revival of Hebrew poetry and language.

135 In the original, Hebrew titles: *Al hashechitah* [On the Slaughter] (1903), *Ba'ir haharegah* [In the City of Slaughter] (1904) – Bialik's poems concerning the pogrom at Easter 1903 in Kishinev (now Chișinău, the capital of Moldova).

136 In the original in Hebrew, excerpts from Bialik's poem *Al hashechitah*.

My sister who lives at Dzielna Street 17 came to me deeply agitated and upset. She had witnessed two incidents.

An officer had two Jews brought to him from Pawia Street, one young and one older. He took them into the Pawiak. 20 minutes later the young man came out. He was covered in blood; it was literally pouring off him, from his head and face. She didn't see the older Jew come out.

The second incident: on top of the watchtower of the Pawiak overlooking the infamous Więzienna Street were standing 5 Gestapo men. The alleyway was deserted. Jews avoid passing along it. An elderly Jew turned off Pawia Street. He was walking in the middle of the alleyway. The butchers above shouted out *Komm her!*[137] The Jew became disorientated and terrified. He ran as fast as he could towards Dzielna Street. The 5 murderers took out their Brownings and took aim at the old man. They didn't shoot. When the old man had disappeared into Dzielna Street they all broke out into devilish laughter.

The Jews of Pawia and Dzielna Streets are living through a life in Golgotha – more on this follows.

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[38] All flats overlooking Pawia and Dzielna Streets, across the street from the Pawiak, have for some time been obliged to have their windows completely covered and screened with black paper, just as for the regulation black-out at night, 24 hours a day. It is extremely dark in these Jewish front rooms, and they can never be aired out. I hardly need to describe what it means for the occupants' eyes and lungs, their state of mind, this continual dark existence without fresh air, even ghetto air. If there is electricity, then they can have electric light by day, but since the electricity is cut off in a lot of homes, and in those places where it isn't its use is severely restricted, people sit the whole day in the dark. The guard at the Pawiak watches to make sure that the unthinkable doesn't happen and a Jewish window is opened and the black paper or blankets removed to one side. A few weeks ago a Jew[138] at Pawia Street 30 who shifted the window covering to one side was shot dead.

137 (German) Come over here.

138 A blank space was left after the word 'Jew'; the author surely expected to learn and insert his name.

The grabbing of Jews and the dragging of them into the Pawiak, the brutal beating of Jews by the Gestapo heroes as they pull up at the Pawiak or walk in or as they come out again also goes on in the neighbouring streets such as Karmelicka, Nowolipki, Dzielna and Pawia. The Germans often carry out raids on buildings – by day or by night. What the people go through who live in those buildings is not hard to imagine. All that is needed is for a ray of light to shine through the window and the Germans take all the men from the building into the Pawiak.

[39] The lot of the inhabitants of the ghetto is hard and bitter, but the lot of those who have the misfortune to live opposite the Pawiak is still harder and yet more bitter.

Tuesday, 26 May 1942

The Germans have gone on the offensive on the Russian front. Their starting point was at Kerch, AND now they are reporting victories to the south of Kharkov. Three Russian armies were said to be surrounded in a 'kettle,' as they call it. Strangely enough, these announcements didn't make a particularly deep impression. Somehow my heart is at peace and full of hope. Either consciously or unconsciously I am making comparisons between the present German attack and their last general offensive in March 1918.[139] Just as then this was their last great push, followed six months later by their retreat and ultimately their collapse, and so it will be this time, more or less. It may be that they will have some victories in Russia, but in at most six months, and perhaps a lot sooner, they will reach the end of the road. In the last few days I have become more and more certain that the war will end this year – 1942 – by the time winter comes. Is this just a mood or simple presentiment? Of course a mood can suddenly overtake us without rhyme or reason, quite irrationally, and this has a lot to do with it. It is possible that tomorrow, when our hearts may be overflowing with gloom and bitterness because of news of fresh disasters for Jews, [40] I will view the political and strategic position differently, and will look into the future with less optimism. Today I'm in good spirits and think that my clairvoyance is based on a sober appraisal of the facts. I consider it certain that the Anglo-American invasion of Europe, or the creation of a second front, must and will come

139 The German offensive on the Western Front, which began on 21 March 1918. The Germans initially succeeded, but in April the offensive was broken by the Allied counteroffensive.

to fruition in the near future. I think that America, that is the USA, is rapidly developing into the greatest military power in the world. According to an article in the latest edition of *Reich*, the American army will have grown by the autumn to 3,600,000 men. And England has an army a million strong. In the British Isles alone there are close to 4 million soldiers.

This huge army will hit the continent like an avalanche and strike a death blow at the enemy of humanity, Hitlerism, which is bleeding profusely, but still winning occasional victories.

In general, Jews are stubborn optimists. A simple Jew gave me the following interpretation of the stories in the newspapers which are very unfavourable to us. The Germans have surrounded the Russians, but the Russians have surrounded the Germans as well. The Russians control the territory 130 kilometres west of Kharkov, and in Kharkov itself are the Germans. Who will eventually surround whom and keep the upper hand we will have to wait and see. And here is another sensation: the Italian Crown Prince is said to have ordered the army to be ready. . . to lay down its weapons when the order is given. Hitler has convened the *Reichstag* on account of this.

This is how a people creates its own legends and dreams of a better tomorrow. And perhaps this old and new dream: *Wolt sie, ist das kein Märchen*.[140]

[41] This morning the exit from the courthouse on Leszno Street, where the ghetto tax offices[141] are situated, was blocked off and all the Jews who were in the hallway had their papers checked. All the cash that the Jews had on them was taken and they were issued receipts. This is highway robbery, plain and simple, with the fig-leaf of a receipt. Only under Hitler would such lawlessness and thuggery be conceivable.

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Today at 4 o'clock in the afternoon a German wagon loaded with carrots was driving along Smocza Street. A young Jewish boy ran up to the wagon and

140 (German, incorrect) If you want something, then it's no fairy-tale; a paraphrase from Theodor Herzl's *Altneuland* (1902).

141 A branch of the Revenue and Stamp Duty Office, where personal income taxes were collected, was located on the ground floor of the Courts building at Leszno Street 53/55. For some time the building served as a meeting place for the ghetto inmates and their families, partners, etc. from the other side.

snatched a carrot. The German who was walking behind the wagon took out a revolver and with slow deliberation took a shot at him. With the same nonchalance he put the revolver back in its holster.

The boy was wounded in the leg and taken by rickshaw to hospital.

[42]

Wednesday, 27 May 1942

Today marks the end of 1,000 days of war. What a terrible and tragic anniversary!

The action of the tax authorities against the Jews continues. During the day today they closed off the street markets in the ghetto, on corner of Grzybowska and Ciepła Streets and on Leszno Street 42. All the dealers and traders had their money confiscated; also their goods were confiscated and payment demanded for their return. My next door neighbour happened yesterday to be at the *'Sądy'*[142] when the confiscations were being carried out. German gendarmes pushed all the Jews into a large hall and officials carried out the searches, taking everything the Jews had on them, from money to valuables. The Jews were beaten in the process.

Word has it that the special ghetto trading has become completely stagnant, is at a complete standstill. As is well known, a large percentage of Jews in the ghetto live from selling off their belongings, from clothes to bed linens to the kitchen pot. Everything passes over to the Aryan side. Lately the Poles have stopped buying on account of the repressive measures taken by the tyrants. A great many businesses and goods have been confiscated from them. Also vast numbers of them have been rounded up in the streets and sent to Germany to work. An atmosphere of great insecurity and anxiety reigns over there. The men stay inside at home, just as the Jews were doing. My brother-in-law, Dr T.,[143] who last Thursday had been in the German court on Długa Street, told me that the Polish streets are completely deserted. You see very few passers-by. Warsaw, the bustling, jostling Warsaw, is no more. It has become a dead, dreary, melancholy, deeply provincial town. I often sit on a balcony on Sienna Street from which you can see clearly the corner of Marszałkowska and Sienkiewicza Streets. It is quite astonishing: [43] there

142 (Polish) Courts. Court building on Leszno Street, meeting place for ghetto and non-ghetto population.

143 Jakub Tombak, husband of Fruma, Lewin's sister.

are a few lone passers-by. Very occasionally a droshky or a tram. It is as quiet as at 4 in the morning. No, even quieter. The streets used to be busy with droshkies and cars even in the middle of the night, never mind daytime or evening. You had to wait several minutes to be able to get across on one of the streets that intersects with Marszałkowska. This street was one of the liveliest in Warsaw's nervous system. So much life, movement, prosperity. Today it has become a graveyard.

If the Poles are not buying, then there is no one to sell to. The price of all valuables has fallen. Even at these lower prices it is difficult to find customers. (Prices are 30–40 per cent lower in comparison with 2–3 months ago.) But the price of foodstuffs has risen. The crisis in the ghetto is getting more acute. What is there for the Jews to live on?

—

Today a new decree was issued by the commissioner of the ghetto, Auerswald,[144] concerning the armband that Jews wear on their right arm as an identifying mark. The decree states that Jews may only wear the regulation armband, and are forbidden to wear more than one and to alter it in any way, with the exception of the policemen, who in addition to their normal Jewish armband wear a special *Ordnungsdienst* one. Up to now different kinds of officials, such as for the *kehillah* and others, and also certain professions such as doctors and dentists, have created special armbands designating their specialisation, thus supposedly bestowing on themselves a certain degree of protection in the street against German thugs. These special armbands were intended to announce: we are not simple, ordinary Jews, we are carrying out important duties and therefore should have certain privileges. This decree puts an end to all that. There are no different categories of Jew. There is just one great mass of Jews, without rights, [44] without status, hunted, tortured, spat upon, trodden on, raped and murdered. German thugs on the ghetto street will not have to stop and consider if they should also bash in the head of the Jew who is a doctor. From today we have become one great, undifferentiated and

144 Heinz Auerswald (1908–1970), lawyer, member of the SS; the German commissioner for the Jewish District (*Kommissar für den jüdischen Wohnbezirk*) in Warsaw from May 1941 to November 1942.

indistinguishable flock of sheep, without a shepherd and surrounded by wolves and tigers.

Thursday, 28 May 1942

Yesterday at 9 o'clock in the evening a Jewish boy aged 13 to 14 was shot dead in front of my window. The murder was committed by a Polish policeman. He shot through the gap in the wall and hit the boy straight in the heart. The boy ran on another 10 steps and then fell dead. A small pool of blood was left behind on the pavement. I was told that his mother was involved in smuggling and arrested on the Aryan side. Now he dealt with smuggling and has left this life, so young, and under such tragic circumstances.

The hole in the wall on Nowolipie and Przejazd Streets has been bricked up countless times. Each time, the Polish and Jewish policemen on both sides of the wall are bought off and before the lime has a chance to dry the bricks are taken down and the smuggling continues. Yesterday the hole was bricked up for the umpteenth time. This happened at about 6 or 7 in the evening. Immediately an operation was launched to take down the bricks. Apparently the policeman had not been settled with, or he had not wanted to agree to the smugglers' proposal. As soon as a small opening had appeared in the wall the size of half a brick he put his gun in the gap and fired. The victim was not one of the rich, well-fed smugglers, but an impoverished young boy, an errand boy of the smuggler-entrepreneurs.

[45] Today there was an announcement in the only rag of a newspaper that appears under the occupation in Warsaw, in Polish,[145] declaring that all Gypsies who are detained in Warsaw County will be deported and confined to the ghetto.[146] In addition, certain 'humanitarian' warnings are given: the men 'may be' sent to labour camps and all their property 'may be' confiscated without compensation, meaning their meagre possessions such as the tools of their camp and their horses. In short, everything that a Gypsy family owns and travels around with. In practice this will mean

145 A reference to *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*; it appeared from October 1939 until January 1945.

146 See: "Zarządzenie dotyczące ograniczenia pobytu Cyganów w Warszawie", *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, 28 May 1942, p. 2. In April 1942, the decision was made to move the Romani people living in Warsaw to the ghetto, mainly those deported from the Reich and holding German citizenship. In April and June 1942, about 190 Romani were brought to Warsaw in several transports from Łowicz and other locations. They were initially placed in Central Custody on Gęsia Street.

that the Gypsy men will be transported to work in labour camps, and that they will die out from overwork and undernourishment. The others will be sent naked and barefoot and without any means of earning a livelihood into the ghetto, where they too will die of starvation and disease.

This is a blow to the ghetto as the overcrowding will be even more unbearable and disease will spread even faster. Even so, I have only compassion for the unfortunate Gypsies. They are our companions in misery. In my eyes they have gained the stature of holy martyrs. They will undoubtedly awaken in us feelings of compassion and pity, though we will not be able to help them, just as we cannot help the thousands of our own refugees who are dying each day before our very eyes. The Gypsies' blood, like our blood, will cry out for ever from the earth and will cover with shame and contempt the faces of German blond beasts. The 'voice of thy brother's blood that cries to me from the earth'[147] will, I believe, never be stilled and will demand for ever: 'Revenge!'

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[46] Last Sunday the Germans took Jewish musicians into the Pawiak Prison and had a really good celebration. The entertainment lasted from 6 to 9 in the evening. Since then the streets around the Pawiak have been quiet. The Jews presume that the group of sadists who had preyed on the streets around the Pawiak has left Warsaw and taken its farewell from us to the accompaniment of Jewish music. This is the reason why everything has been quiet since that night. May everything that in our hearts we wish upon them happen to them.

—

A German Jewish woman, one of the recent refugees from Berlin, told me that dissatisfaction and opposition to Hitler is growing in Germany. This woman believes that the war will not last long and that a revolution will occur in only a matter of time. In Germany the number of anti-Hitler slogans appearing

147 In the original in Hebrew, from Genesis 4:10.

in public places is increasing. The popular propaganda that can be read on the streets is as follows:

1) *Juden haltet aus,*
   Mit den Lumpen ist bald aus!
2) *Lieber der König,*
   Lieber der Kaiser von Gottesgnaden
   Als der Lump von Berchtesgaden[148]

No great significance can be attached to the prophecies of a Jewish refugee, but it is an important sign of a certain fermentation and unrest in Hitlerland, a *signum tempori*.[149] The wall-slogans tell us to hope.

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[47] A few days ago at exactly five past nine in the evening a Jew was shot dead by the wall at the corner of Grzybowska and Gnojna Streets. I heard this from a Jew, Mr A., an occupant of Grzybowska Street 6 who was standing at the window that looks out onto the street and was an eyewitness to the terrible crime.

This morning there were more killings, with several Jews shot dead on Bagno Street for their involvement in smuggling. Among the murdered was also a Jewish policeman. As for the number of dead, I have heard different versions. The first gave said that there were two victims, the second, three, and the third five.

Literally not a day passes without the stones of the ghetto being stained with Jewish blood.

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The taking of detainees into the Pawiak continues unabated. My sister, who lives opposite the prison, told me just today that on this day alone, Thursday,

148 (German, in Latin characters) 'Jews, hold on! The scoundrel will soon be dealt with! A king, an emperor by God's grace is better than the scoundrel from Berchtesgaden!' Berghof, the official residence of Hitler in 1936–1945, was located near Berchtesgaden in the Salzburg Alps.

149 (Latin) sign of the time.

she saw two lorry-loads of prisoners being taken in. In one she saw 8 Poles, their heads hanging down, looking totally wretched. Those in the second lorry were not visible since 4 Germans were sitting at the back and they obscured any view of those sitting inside. The annihilation machine never rests.

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I heard the following details about the boy who was shot on Wednesday evening under my window. He was being brought up by an aunt, Mrs Szparag, who is involved in smuggling items over to the Aryan side. That Wednesday she was arrested by the Polish police.[150] [48] They demanded 10,000 zlotys for her release. Between them the smugglers raised 5,000 zlotys and she was set free. The boy was waiting for her and had taken out the bricks from the wall so that his aunt could crawl through. It was then that he met his death.

Friday, 29 May 1942

Yesterday I passed by the ghetto gate at the corner of Nalewki and Świętojerska Streets and saw how a gendarme was mistreating a young Jew for wearing a dirty armband. He made him stand still (as if at attention) and his thundering voice could be heard far and wide. What the Jew went through is not difficult to imagine. But it was not only the Jew being mistreated who endured several anguished moments. A cold shudder went through all the Jews who were witness to this barbaric scene.

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From 1 o'clock in the afternoon onwards today the Jewish police carried out round-ups on the ghetto streets. Jews up to the age of 40 whose work cards were not in order were seized, that is, those who are not registered with the labour office as being employed. The purpose of carrying out this round-up is not immediately clear to me. Be that as it may, it offers new possibilities for abuses by the Jewish police. Those who can pay a few zlotys will manage to get themselves out of trouble. The poor will suffer again, just as they did last year and the year before. I have heard that in the course of the round-up last Friday night 350 Jews were detained.

150 In the original, Polish prisoners, apparently by mistake.

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[49] Today rumours have been going round that Gancwajch has been caught in Otwock (others say it was in Radomsko or Częstochowa) and shot dead. As is well known, the following 4 are wanted: Gancwajch, Szternfeld and 2 Zachariasz brothers.[151] At every gate in the ghetto there hangs an announcement saying that whoever hides the wanted men or helps them in any way whatsoever will be shot along with their entire family. The same fate threatens all the occupants of the building where one of the fugitives was found. All of them collaborated with the Germans and now they are being disposed of. I heard a maxim on this subject today: 'If you eat the Germans' meat you have to give them up your bones.' Very true and succinctly put. If you sell your soul to the devil you have to give him your body too.

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The last issue of *Reich* contained an announcement of great significance. Germany is liquidating 10 per cent of all banks – that is, a tenth of all branches are being closed. This means that economic conditions in Nazi-land are getting tighter and tighter. How much longer will Germany be able to endure the deep crisis that is gnawing and digging at its foundations?

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8 in the evening. Something extraordinary just happened. On Leszno Street opposite the courthouse young Jewish men were rounded up to be deported to labour camps. They were put into a tram and were being taken to Zamenhofa Street 19 where a collection point had been set up for the *lageristn*.[152] When the tram reached Karmelicka Street, the young men broke open the tram and fled. 2 of them came back to the building where I live. This

151 Dawid Szternfeld (?–1943), owner of one of several companies licensed to exchange goods with enterprises outside the ghetto; one of the commanders of the 'Thirteen', he collaborated with the Gestapo; see *A Guide to the Perished City*, p. 220 and ARG I 519 (Ring. I/1001).

152 (Yiddish) literally, campers, probably patterned on Polish *obozowicze*, which usually refers to scouts at a summer camp. The same word is found in many testimonies for the forced

feels like a foretaste, a prelude in miniature of what will happen when the hour of our liberation comes, and we tear off the chains of our servitude.

[50]

Saturday night, 30 May 1942

This day has been among the most difficult, the most nightmarish of all days that we are now living through. First, the round-up. Yesterday's round-up brought a rich harvest. I do not know the exact number of those seized, but by all accounts, their numbers ran into the hundreds. This means that hundreds of Jewish lives are exposed to the gravest danger, the danger of destruction. This morning they were all taken away, in trains, in closed freight or cattle trucks, of course. Where they were being sent is not known for sure. I have heard from several sources that they were being sent as far away as Bobruisk to build fortifications.[153] If this is so, it may be that their position will be even more tragic and bitter than that of the *lageristn* seized and sent to work last year or the year before, because at that time the Warsaw *kehillah* and also that of the town nearest to the camp tried to assist the unfortunates. Their position was not greatly alleviated, but a certain protection and small-scale help did reach them, and it was of some slight consolation. Today? If those who have been rounded up are sent to the former Russian territories, there will be no one to take care of them and help them in some way. There are no Jewish communities in Russia proper, and Jews have disappeared from all those areas occupied by the Germans: either they have retreated with the Russian army, or they have been slaughtered by the Germans. Whole Jewish metropolises have vanished. It is horrific, horrific!

And once again we see the sad complicity of the Jewish police. With great regret they are 'obliged' [51] to carry out their duties and round up people. They carry out these duties conscientiously. Thus, both large numbers of Jews are seized and the pockets of the Jewish police are filled with ill-gotten gains. Apparently, one could get released without difficulty for 10 zlotys.

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labourers in the Nazi camps. The editors decided to leave the original Yiddish term, to avoid confusion.

153 See: Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem*, pp. 102–106.

Last night we had a repetition of the Bartholomew Night action on a smaller scale. It was another Friday night, like the infamous 18 April.[154] The number of those brutally murdered is said to be 11, among them a woman and policeman. All Jews. 4 men from one flat were killed in the house at Mylna Street 11: an elderly Jew Wilner, his son and son-in-law Różycki, as well as his tenant. The old Wilner was partly paralysed. In his terror he couldn't speak and was unable to move. The Germans put him on a chair and threw him out of the second-floor window. The old man was killed instantly. The other 3 men were taken down into the street and shot. There is also talk of a murdered barber from Nowolipie Street 50, and a policeman, who six months ago had been on duty in the hospital on Stawki Street when two Jewish reserve officers in the Polish army escaped, Gomuliński and one other. Also a Mrs Judt was shot. She had worked for the Germans and had managed to obtain permits for the Jewish theatres.[155] Altogether, as mentioned above, eleven Jews.

The background to these night-time murders is hard to state. One opinion I heard was that they were all 'racketeers.' This is, however, not completely accurate. Thus I have heard that the Wilners owned a brick factory in Grodzisk; his son-in-law is supposed to have been a teacher and a very respectable person. [52] The barber from Nowolipie Street 50 is said to have been a member of the Bund. In short, we do not have the key to these terrible murders and none of us has any idea about the fate awaits us.

All people more or less involved in the running of an organisation live each day in terror for their lives.

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This morning the gendarmerie drove up with *junaks* on Przejazd Street and took away 4 Jews who were involved in smuggling. They were standing on the ruined house's wall at Przejazd Street 11, looking over to the Aryan

154 During the night of 17/18 April 1942 52 persons in the Warsaw ghetto were shot. Among those shot were activists of underground organisations, as well as smugglers and informers. See ARG II 299 (Ring. II/158) and ARG I 584 (Ring. I/293); *A Guide to the Perished City*, pp. 694–697.

155 Regina Judt, a Gestapo collaborator, owned a license to run a cafe in the ghetto.

side. I heard that Auerswald himself was present at the arrest and that on his orders the group was deported immediately, along with those Jews who had already been rounded up. The mother of one of those deported was sobbing pitifully by my window.

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Today a group of community activists were sitting together and for two hours a lawyer from Lwów recited the Book of Lamentations of Lwów and the whole of eastern Galicia. And what he said was so horrific and gruesome that words cannot convey what has happened. Lwów alone has lost 30,000 martyrs. The slaughter was carried out in 3 main stages. As soon as the Germans entered Lwów they carried out a large-scale round-up and thousands upon thousands of Jews were murdered in the prisons where the bodies of the victims of the Bolsheviks lay. The second stage took place later, when Jews had to move into the ghetto, next to the [53] 'bridge of death'[156] that became so tragically notorious, and the third took place in March during the great resettlement of Lwów's Jews, when up to 10,000 Jews died. In the action to dispose of people over 60, several thousand Jews were killed. The details of these events are so devastating that they are not suitable for the pages of a diary. This must all be told in full. I hope and believe that this will one day happen, that the world's conscience will be taken by storm and that the vile beast who is at the throat of the peoples of Europe and choking them to death will be bound and shackled once and for all. The lawyer from Lwów estimates that the number of dead in eastern Galicia is in excess of 100,000. All the Jewish communities along the Hungarian border have been obliterated from the face of the earth. Thus Jaremcze,[157] which had a population of 1,000 Jews, has become *judenrein*.[158] All were brutally murdered. The same in Tatarów[159] and so on.

156 A railway bridge over Pełtewna Street in Lwów, which Jews had to traverse in November and December 1941 when they moved to the ghetto. At the bridge, they were subjected to searches, selected and beaten up upon entering the ghetto. See: *Accounts from the Borderlands,* Doc. 39.

157 Jaremcze (Nadwórna County, now the Ivano-Frankivsk province, Ukraine).

158 (German) free of Jews.

159 Tatarów (Nadwórna County, now the Ivano-Frankivsk province, Ukraine).

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When the lawyer had finished his account of these horrors and Mr G.[160] had thanked him, many of us had tears in our eyes.

Those two hours belong to the darkest of my life.

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On my way home from this meeting I had the 'good fortune' to be stopped and made to work at loading bricks. The Germans were stopping only more respectably dressed Jews. The work lasted an hour. lt wasn't so much hard work [54] as humiliating. A soldier stood over us and yelled insults: *Verfluchte Juden!*[161] and struck one of us with the back of an iron rod. It is certainly no pleasure to taste German barbarity and Jewish servitude, even for just one hour, but I did none the less have a certain feeling of satisfaction. I have experienced at first hand, albeit in small measure, that which millions of Jews have been enduring for almost 3 years now. For this reason it was worthwhile.

Sunday, 31 May 1942

I have heard that the number of those deported in the Todt sections[162] to work in Bobruisk was 900. Nine hundred young lives are now as good as over, lost. There are said to be 150 prisoners from the Jewish prison on Gęsia Street among them. Several people also told me that 120 male children aged between 12 and 14 were also removed from the prison and deported.[163] Where to and what for? To work or to be killed? Who can know? There is nothing of which Germans are not capable, no crime and no bestiality which they could not commit.

It is interesting to hear how some Jewish women reacted in one incident during the round-up and saved a young Jewish student, a person with great

160 Reference to Eliyahu Gutkowski; see the introduction to Part II.

161 (German) Damned Jews.

162 Todt Organization – entity comprised of construction companies and state enterprises, founded in Germany in 1938, it dealt in the construction of military facilities. During World War II, it extensively used forced labour.

163 According to Adam Czerniaków, on 29 May 1942 approximately 240 inmates aged 15–18 and four inmates pardoned by the governor-general were transported from the Central Custody in an unknown camp; see *Czerniakow's diary*, entry for 29 May 1942.

qualities, our friend Fl.[164] He was seized on Komitetowa Street, bundled into a bus belonging to the firm Kohn-Heller,[165] and was on his way to the assembly point. On Ciepła Street several of the young people jumped out through the small windows. Fl. also jumped and tried to get away. A Jewish policeman ran after him. He ran into an passageway. Women – ordinary women – began to argue [55] with the policeman, who hit a woman in the face with his fist. He grabbed hold of Fl. and began to lead him out of the entrance. In the street the women – whose numbers had grown in the meantime – began to attack the policeman again. He started struggling with the women. Taking the chance offered by the scuffle Fl. ran off. So in this way he was rescued, we can be pretty sure, from death. Bless you, Jewish women, who have saved one Jewish soul.

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Whilst carrying out my duties in [the second district],[166] I made a one-off payment of 25 zlotys to a woman named Rivka Ruda. I got to talking with her and an old wound was opened up in front of me, the destruction of a historic Jewish community of 700 families or three to four thousand souls. This woman comes from Dobrzyń on the River Drwęca.[167] She told me that the Germans entered the town as early as 3 September 1939, the third day after the outbreak of war. After no more than six days all the Jews without exception had been removed from the town. They were so devilish in their execution of this plan that they announced that if the Jews were to give up

164 Daniel Fligelman (1920–1942), student from Aleksandrów Kujawski, an Oyneg Shabes associate. He wrote, recorded, and probably also copied testimonies in Polish. His works are recognisable for their exquisite style, use of foreign languages, and references to belles-lettres.

165 Moryc Kohn and Zelig Heller, merchants and entrepreneurs from Łódź, members of the 'Thirteen', co-owners of the Kohn & Heller company, collaborated with German occupants. Received many licenses, including one for a horse tram popularly called *kohn-hellerka,* first used in the ghetto in June 1941. They also acted as intermediaries in bringing Jews from the Łódź ghetto to the Warsaw ghetto.

166 The words in square brackets are deliberately crossed out, but legible. Reference to the division of activities in the Warsaw ghetto territory among the Jewish Self-Help workers.

167 Dobrzyń nad Drwęcą (Rypin County). See: *Territories Annexed to the Third Reich,* Docs. 106, 107.

their gold, money and diamonds, no expulsions would take place. The Jews brought baskets full of gold, silver and precious stones to the municipality office. This was all collected in and the expulsions were carried out without further delay. The Jews were given 10 minutes to leave town. Not a single cart was given to them. Old people, small children, pregnant women who were due to give birth that day: they were all ordered to leave their homes and were unable to take anything with them. Even those who set off with a pack on their back threw it away [56] later because they had no strength to carry it. The woman's husband, Josef Khaim Ruda, had taken a case of belongings with him. He dragged it for 10 kilometres, then threw it down by the side of the road, completely unable to carry it any further on his old man shoulders. These are old people in their sixties. Mrs Ruda – a woman of great dignity – told me that on the way terrible things took place, things inconceivable to us. As she puts it, they walked into the 'forest of death'. Children were dying, women gave birth in the fields, old people were falling down dead. The first night, the Ruda family of three stayed with a Polish peasant who showed a great deal of humanity. 60 Jewish families found temporary refuge in his barn. He milked the cows at night – something which is very harmful for them – and warmed up milk for the refugees. At no point did he take any money. The homeless Jews spread over other towns like Płońsk, and some also reached as far as Warsaw. Mrs Ruda says that almost the entire community of Dobrzyń lost their lives, that only a few individuals survived the hunger and the cold. The Rudas were one of the wealthier families in the town. They left behind a house, their own house, and 3 shops, also a garden. They had substantial wealth. They have 3 daughters in Palestine. Today they are dying of hunger: 25 zlotys is a drop of joy in their sad lives. Now she will be able to buy her husband a piece of bread.

And Dobrzyń is only a small link in the enormous chain of disaster that has befallen Polish Jewry. In fact, the whole of European Jewry. But the destruction of Polish Jewry will be the crowning glory in Hitler's crusade against the Jewish people.

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[57] It is well known that whole families are dying out. Even a year and a half ago, there were two- or three-room flats that were standing empty because the

occupants had all died. Every administrator[168] in the ghetto has a lot to say about this subject. But he loss of certain families chokes still us with sadness, even though we have become so hardened and insensitive to human tears and the shedding of blood. Here I wish to recount two cases in which entire families were lost.

In Warsaw there was a family by the name of Erenberg. The family had 4 members: father, mother, one son and one daughter. Mrs Erenberg was a distant relative of the banker Szereszewski. Because of this, the husband worked in Szereszewski's bank[169] as a janitor and was able to earn a living. Although himself without education, he had sent his children to middle-school and both graduated with their diploma. The girl went to the Yehudia school and the son to Laor.[170]

From the onset of the war the family began to go short of food. The father left Warsaw in [19]40 and died somewhere in a village of hunger and disease. Later, the mother died in Warsaw, also from hunger. The son and the daughter, the secondary school graduates, were reduced to begging. By chance I met them yesterday. The girl is already in the process of dying. Her days are numbered. Likewise, her brother exists at the lowest level of human survival. He too will not last much longer, unless the war ends.

I had a cousin, an athletically built man. He had served in the artillery in the Russian army and went through the world war. He had [58] an only son, who was 18 years old, also a giant. The boy got himself out of the ghetto and set off to look for work in the Lublin area. On the way he was recognised and sent to prison in Lublin. The father took his son's fate to heart so much that he fell ill and died 7 months ago. His son died 3 months ago in the Lublin prison, of dysentery. 2 weeks ago his mother died as well.

These are just 2 examples. In this way thousands and thousands of Jewish families are cut down.

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168 Reference to apartment house administrators who had to report every change in a given building's residence to special plenipotentiaries of the *Komissarische Verwaltung sichergestellter Grundstücke*.

169 Established in 1864, one of the largest pre-war banks in Poland, at Żelaznej Bramy Square 1; it was managed by Rafał Szereszowski, senator and city council member.

170 Yehudia school – see: Introduction; Laor (Hebrew: towards light) – private Male Middle and High School with Polish language of instruction, established in 1924 – first on Nowolipki Street 29, then from 1927 on Nalewki Street 2a. In the Warsaw ghetto it organised clandestine classes.

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I have a cousin in the Jewish police and he told me about a murder that the Germans committed last Thursday, 28 May, at half past nine in the evening at Pawia Street 64. That evening he was on his way home. As he went up to his entrance at Pawia Street 49 a car drew up, stopped in front of number 64 and 3 Germans and an older, grey-haired Jew got out. The Germans put 3 shots into the Jew's head, killing him instantly. They caught sight of my cousin some distance off, called him over and instructed him to remove the dead body. The car had driven out of the Pawiak. In the dead man's hat was found a slip of paper with *Zwolniony z więzienia*[171] written on it.

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Along with the rumours that Gancwajch has been detained and shot, there are others that claim that he has already established himself far from here in Switzerland.

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[59] The caretaker of Mylna Street 11 gave some details of the terrible murder that the Germans committed against the Wilner family last Friday night. Wilner, old and sick, was lying in bed. He was 69 years old. They stripped him naked, set him down in a chair and threw him from the second floor down on to the courtyard, then shot at him, finishing him off. They shot the son inside. They led the son-in-law down into the courtyard and shot him dead there. The tenant, a cousin of the Wilners, was taken to the street and shot not far from the entrance.

All the occupants of Mylna Street 11 were left prostrated and broken on Saturday and Sunday after the tragic events that Friday night. The reason for the murders is not clear. People are saying that they gave over a business on Królewska Street to a Volksdeutscher and that he was paying them a certain amount of money. Recently he had stopped the payments. Because the Wilners were making insistent demands for the money he apparently took his revenge and set the Germans on them.

171 (Polish, in Latin characters) Released from prison.

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Following the round-up for the labour camps a very large queue has formed at the corner of Leszno and Żelazna Streets at the Collegium[172] building, where the office of employment has its premises in the ghetto. Everyone is having their papers put in order. Yesterday, Sunday, scuffles broke out in the queue. A gendarme fired twice. One Jew was killed and a second wounded.

[60]

Tuesday, 2 June 1942

The frenzied filming continues unabated. On Sunday afternoon the Germans filmed scenes in the street market on Ciepła Street. While I was watching they paired up two Jews: one who was carrying a pack of old newspapers on his shoulders, and a second, an old man with a grey beard. They were to stay together and slowly leave the bazaar. The two Jews were trembling and were frightened to death.

Yesterday on Żelazna Street near Chłodna Street elegantly dressed women were seized and dragged into cars. Rumours went round that women were being seized to be put to work. It is more precise to say that they were taken off to be used in film-making.

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Word has it that the Germans are planning to set up guard posts of Jewish policemen along the ghetto walls, with a policeman situated at every 50 metres. Further, that the Jewish police would be made responsible for dealing with smuggling and be liable to the death penalty.[173] This is said to have persuaded a lot of Jewish policemen to request to be released from duty.

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Lately letters have been arriving from Paris with hidden political content of a clearly optimistic character. This raises our spirits, encourages us and

172 The building of the 'Collegium' High School Society on Leszno Street 84 was incorporated into the ghetto in April 1941. It was the location of the Labour Department and Statistical Department of the *Judenrat*. People were detained in the 'Collegium' building before being sent to forced labour camps.

173 See ARG I 445/25 (Ring. I/503/1). The ordinance was never implemented.

is simply intoxicating. A family of my acquaintance received a card from a brother in Paris, a medical doctor. The first few sentences of the card read in translation into Yiddish roughly as follows (the card was written in Polish): 'I cannot write any news to you about the war, [61] because in this war, as in all wars, unexpected and miraculous things[174] have been happening lately. This and this (here are two names of Jewish doctors from Warsaw who had set up practice in Paris), who had not been able to work up to now, are able once again to practice their profession.'

Dr Sz.[175] told me that he had read a letter from Paris that stated explicitly that very important things would soon be happening, and that we would shortly be receiving guests; that is, in Dr Sz.'s interpretation, the English and the Americans.

Today I was shown a card from Paris, dated 23 May 1942, from which I have excerpted the following sentences that seem to me to be of some interest. The card is written in a Germanised Yiddish, of course, and in Latin letters. It reads as follows: 'Paris, 23 May 1942. Dear Yosef, I received your card and was sad to read that you have been ill. As for me, I am in good health and feel very, very well. I am not suffering any more from my persistent complaint (this means that he had been afraid he would be sent to a labour camp, but he has no further worries on that score), but I have no resources and I am powerless to help you. However I am in the best of moods; since the business with Pepi (means America) and Lea (means England) and also Rivke (means Russia) is getting very interesting. Mr Chazen – obviously this is a reference to the 'Führer' – [62] has lost his beautiful tenor voice and doesn't sing at all any more. Otherwise I don't have anything to tell you.'

Could this be just coincidence and just the same old rumours? Or is there a basis in fact? Our frequent and bitter disappointments notwithstanding, we hope and believe that the day of justice and of the triumph of the human being in his struggle with the Nazi beast must and soon will come. And perhaps it really will be soon?

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174 The last phrase added in parentheses in Polish, in Latin characters: *Niespodzianki i cuda.*

175 Perhaps Dr Zygmunt Steinkalk; see footnote 324, pt. 1.

The lawlessness of the tax officials against the Jews of the ghetto has become pure and unadulterated banditry. I heard that Jews are being dragged off the streets into the shops, searched, and all the money they have on then taken.

In my building a poor barber lives on the floor above mine. He lost his barber shop in the events of September 1939. Since then he has been working a little in his flat. Acquaintances, former customers, come up to have their hair cut. Sadly, he is extremely hard up, and in great distress. Today a tax official arrived and demanded 60 zlotys tax on the flat. As the barber had no money to pay him, the official began to search the flat and all those present at the time. One customer who happened to be there had 2,500 zlotys in his pocket. The official took the whole 2,500. With great difficulty and much effort, shouting and pleading, he was eventually prevailed on to take just 200 zlotys as a bribe and to give back the rest.

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[63] It transpires that the German and Italian offensive in Africa, which they were so triumphantly celebrating, was cut short at the outset. It began on 26 May. Today, 2 June, they are already writing about English counter-attacks while there is a deafening silence over their victories. It looks as though they have had a setback.[176] That would be very cheering news. Also the latest air-attack on Cologne[177] makes the pulse beat faster. If the greatest of the German cities will have nights such as Lübeck, Rostock and Cologne have had – then the war will soon be over.

The English really are phlegmatic. Their hand is slow to strike back, but strike back it does. Their promise made in spring 1941 to reduce the German cities to rubble is being carried out slowly, but it is indeed being carried out. The Germans are already talking about the 'catastrophe' of Lübeck[178] (in one of the recent issues of *Reich*) and Rostock.[179] Now they will be talking

176 The battle of Gazala, fought during the Western African Campaign in Libya from 26 May to 21 June 1942, culminating in the victory of the Axis countries.

177 I.e. the largest Allied air raid on Cologne on the night of 30–31 May 1942.

178 Lübeck was the first German city to be the target of significant Allied air raids, the first of which came on 28 March 1942.

179 The intense air raids on Rostock took place on 24–27 April 1942.

of the catastrophe of Cologne, and let as hope that there will soon be talk of Germany's catastrophe.

Then we will see our deliverance and salvation.

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Half past eight in the evening. Just now my neighbour R. came home and told me that at the corner of Pańska and Bagno Streets a gendarme had shot – from the wall he was standing on – and killed two Jews, a young boy and an older man. They were involved in smuggling. Last week two Jews were killed on Bagno Street: 'Man earns his bread at the risk of his life.'[180] Each piece of bread that we buy on the open market is soaked with Jewish blood.

[64]

Wednesday, 3 June 1942

The letters that arrive from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia testify to a certain revolutionary ferment throughout the whole Reich. For instance from Berlin we hear that proclamations with the following content are pasted up in the street: 'We demand peace, we demand the return of our husbands and sons.' The letters from Czechoslovakia also have this strongly revolutionary character.

Someone has written that the shooting of the greatest of all '*Gauner*' (Heydrich)[181] marks the beginning of Czech awakenings. All these letters pulsate with the belief in a swift end to this worldwide slaughter. Is it possible that the whole of oppressed Europe is mistaken? The heart longs so deeply for salvation. We go to sleep with this dream and we wake with this dream. Is it possible that the most passionate yearning of 95 per cent of all inhabitants of the globe should go unfulfilled and the evil power of a band of degenerates and savage murderers should triumph? Reason and the heart tell us that humankind, embodied in the peoples of the United States, England and Soviet Russia will be victorious and not the wild animals of the Hitler and Mussolini lands.

180 In the original in Hebrew, from Lamentations 5:9.

181 (German) scoundrel, villain; Reinhard Heydrich (1904–1942), director of the Gestapo, head of the *Sicherheitsdienst* (Security Service) and the chief of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, *RSHA* (Reich Main Security Office), Protector of Bohemia and Moravia. Assassinated in Prague on 4 June 1942.

The desire is so strong in us to see the day of redemption, the triumph of righteousness, but at the same time there is a worm of doubt and despair gnawing at the heart. Every day we receive such terrible news from the provinces. The old Talmudic aphorism has come true: 'There is no day in which the curse is not greater than the day before.'[182]

[65] Every day a new misfortune, a new pogrom, a new expulsion that heralds a new mass murder. Last week I was told that the Jews of Kraków are to be forcibly resettled. l didn't believe this tragic news and so didn't write it down. Today I was told that Dr W.[183] rang from Kraków and gave the news that 2,000 Jews have already been deported and it is not even known where they are to be taken. From our bitter experience we must conclude that they are being secretly murdered. The circle around Warsaw has been drawn even tighter. Will they leave Warsaw alone and be content with smaller massacres and pogroms? It gives me a feeling of deep unease to ask such questions: what makes us better than the Jews of Wilno or Kraków? Why are they dying and we have the hope of staying alive? Why? Why? We have also heard the terrible news of massacres and expulsions in Hrubieszów, Tyszowce[184] and a whole series of other communities in the area of Lublin. A woman by the name of Wermus returned from Sosnowica, near Parczew.[185] She said that a lot of Jews in these areas were murdered by electrocution. She puts the number at 2,500. In the set of buildings in which I live there is Mrs Raduszyńska. Her husband was in Tłuszcz[186] during the final expulsion of Jews and was shot dead there. She says that 110 Jews died. Today two lorries arrived in the ghetto packed with Jews from Łódź. They got here with Kohn-Heller's help or by virtue of coming from well-to-do families. To bring a Jew from

182 In the original in Hebrew, from BT Sota 49a, reference to Deuteronomy 28:67.

183 Michał Weichert (1890–1967), lawyer, connoisseur of theatre. During the war, he was the chairman of the Jewish Social Self-Help in Kraków. During and then after the war he was accused of collaboration with the Germans. Acquitted, died in Israel.

184 Tyszowce (Tomaszów County). See: *Accounts from the General Government,* Docs. 21, 54.

185 Sosnowica (Włodawa County). In January 1942, 550 Jews lived there. In November 1942 they were sent to the Włodawa ghetto, and from there to killing centres in Treblinka and Sobibór. The mention of executions using electric current is unfounded. Hanka Wermus letter; see: *ibidem,* Doc. 31.

186 Tłuszcz (Warsaw County). On 27 May 1942 several dozen people were murdered in the local ghetto; the remaining Jews were resettled to the Warsaw ghetto via Radzymin; see: *ibidem,* Docs. 162 and 180.

Łódź costs 5,000–6,000 zlotys. Their belongings were sent off to the customs authorities so that the correct amount of duty will be charged since they are from – the other side of the border – Łódź, Reich. Doesn't that sound curious?

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[66] Part of the trading between Jews and Christians takes place in the courthouse on Leszno Street. The janitors give over their private flats for this purpose. According to estimates I have been given, they make hundreds of zlotys a day. A few days ago all Jews found in the courthouse were arrested and taken to the Aryan side, where they were checked to see what grounds they had for being in the building. The courthouse is also a meeting place for Christian women and their Jewish husbands who are in the ghetto, and also vice versa, between Christian men and their Jewish wives who have stayed in the ghetto. Someone who has been witness to these reunions described them to me. In these meetings there is an overflowing of human tragedy and suffering. A Christian woman arrives and kisses her Jewish husband. She brings him a small parcel of food. They talk for a few minutes, move away to one side, kiss again and separate. He back to the ghetto and she to the 'Aryan' part of Warsaw.

Will future generations believe that this is how everyday life was in 1942?

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Something is happening in this kingdom of darkness, this kingdom of the devil – something is stirring here. A young man who works for the Germans at a so-called *placówka* saw with his own eyes street slogans on Puławska Street saying the following: *Mai, 1942. Nieder mit dem Faschismus! Es lebe die internationale Solidarität!*[187] As clear as day!

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[67] Over the course of the last few days the following strange incident took place. A Jew from Germany who is living in the synagogue building

187 (German, in Latin characters) Down with fascism! Long live international solidarity!

on Tłomackie Street[188] was passing through the ghetto gate on Nalewki Street. In the last couple of days there has been an agent there who searches everything and everybody who walks or drives through the gate. The agent also searched the case of the German Jew and insulted him in some way and gave him a bit of a shove. The Jew – and perhaps he was only one-quarter Jewish, a Protestant – struck the agent back without hesitation. The gendarme did not intervene. The Jews think that this is because he is angry at the agent, who is disturbing him in his smuggling activities. The German Jew was led away by the Jewish police into the Jewish side.

Thursday, 4 June 1942

A few days ago notices of regulations from our 'chairman' Czerniaków were posted in the ghetto concerning among other things the fact that Jews are not allowed to play, indeed not even to listen to, the musical works of non-Jewish musicians and composers. Jews are not allowed to perform dramas by non-Jewish authors and no foreign-language books are allowed in the libraries. Of course it is obvious that these decrees were issued on the orders of Germans.

The Saturday concerts that take place each week in the Femina Theatre have been forbidden for the next few months since the works of Beethoven, Mozart and others were performed there. That was the sin, and [68] the punishment followed quickly.[189]

It is hard to know what is more amazing: the boorish, blunt, appalling injustice or the bottomless depths of Nazi stupidity and Teutonic[190] idiocy. Whatever the cause may be, a feeling of our superiority is awakened in us. If the struggle against us becomes so all-embracing then we must draw the conclusion that we are the salt of the earth, or as Yehuda Halevi has put it – the heart of all nations, the heart of the world.

Whether one wants to or not, one falls into mystical, messianic, towianistic[191] thoughts.

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188 See footnote 90, pt. 1.

189 See: *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

190 *Yekisher* (from *yeke*) in the original.

191 Reference to a religious and philosophical doctrine created by Andrzej Towiański (1799–1878), a mystic and religious reformer. One of its tenets was redemption of the world through the martyrdom of the Polish nation.

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This morning brought fresh Jewish victims connected to smuggling. At 7 o'clock in the morning, 2 gendarmes drove up outside my window and made a horrendous scene, warning that if the gap in the wall wasn't bricked off by 12 o'clock, they would shoot 30 Jews, 10 from each of the 3 nearest buildings. At the same time a Jew who had been shot and badly wounded was found at Świętojerska Street 32, a completely innocent occupant of the building who had happened to be leaving the entranceway. At the same time on Bagno Street – that fatal street – gendarmes shot 4 Jews and arrested 15.

A rich harvest for a single morning.

But even after all this, the gap in the wall outside my window has not been bricked up and the smuggling is still going on. 'The world goes on as usual.'[192] And we live on and do not go insane.

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[69] Today I witnessed the following event. A Jew was passing along Nalewki Street next to the ghetto gate. The gendarme called him over. The Jew stood to attention. The gendarme told him to stretch out his right arm, took out his bayonet and cut off the Zion armband,[193] all because it was dirty. How much health and well-being must this Jew have lost while this drama played out.

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Letters and news of any kind have ceased altogether to reach us from the towns and townlets of the Reich such as Włocławek, Gostynin, Aleksandrów Kujawski and others. This means that all these places where Jewish communities had existed for 700 or 800 years are now *judenrein*. What happened to these Jews is not known. Once again we must make the appalling and most probably correct assumption that they have been murdered.[194] We no longer have any strength to react as we should to the never-ending misfortunes.

192 In the original in Hebrew, perhaps a paraphrase from BT, Bava Batra 67a.

193 I.e. a Star of David armband.

194 See: *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Third Reich*, Introduction.

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The families of those taken in the last round-up for the labour camps are terribly distressed and anxious. They have no idea what happened to their sons, brothers and fathers. On Tuesday sealed train wagons were still standing on the tracks in Warsaw. The Welfare Department of the *kehillah* delivered bread and honey, but can people survive week after week in closed freight cars? Do they have facilities to attend to their natural human needs? What do they do with them? Where are they taken? It is said that there were already deaths in the cars on Tuesday. But the cars were not opened to empty out the bodies. What does the word 'terrible' mean in the face of this?

[70]

Friday, 5 June 1942

Last night on the ghetto pavement the Nazis' murderous hands claimed a fresh victim. At half past twelve a Jew was driven to Dzielna Street 18, probably from the Pawiak Prison, and shot there. On Szczęśliwa Street a Jew was shot dead yesterday morning. He was a smuggler.

The cup of Jewish blood is still not full.

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One of the most remarkable incidental phenomena seen in the present war is the clinging to life, the almost complete cessation of suicides. People are dying in vast numbers of hunger or of the typhus epidemic, and are being tortured and murdered by the Germans in vast numbers, but people do not try to escape from life. In fact just the contrary: people are bound to life in body and soul and want to survive the war at any price. The tension of this epoch-making conflict is so great that everybody, young and old, great and small, wants to live to see the outcome of this giant struggle, and the new world order. Old men have only one wish: to live to see the end and to survive Hitler.

I know an old Jew, grey with age, about 80 years old. This old man was hit by a terrible misfortune last winter: he had an only son aged 52, who died of typhus. He had no other children. His son was the only consolation and light of his life. His wife was long dead. He hadn't remarried and had lived together with his son. A few days ago I visited the old man. As I was saying goodbye to him (he is still in complete command of his faculties), he burst

into tears and said to me: [71] I want to live to see the end of the war and then live for just another half hour longer.

We may well ask: what has such an old man to live for? But he does have something: he too wants to live for 'just half an hour' after the last shot is fired and this is the passionate desire of all Jews.

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Today's edition of the German newspaper in Warsaw cheered me up immensely. The chief executioner and Grand Inquisitor of Czechia – Heydrich – is dead. The shot fired by the two heroes was not in vain. It might be that the shooting of Heydrich and his death will be a signal and rallying cry for general European turmoil and an uprising against the German tyrant. If only! In fact the general tone of the German press in the last few days has been more modest, more restrained. It does not speak with such confidence of its own victory; on the contrary, indirectly, it talks of an Allied victory. Thus today the German newspaper in Warsaw has a story about important conferences between United States, England and Russia on the future boundaries of Europe after their victory and on Germany's fate after its defeat. The motif of Germany's fall and the Allies' victory is finding a quiet but perceptible echo in the press. It seems that the latest air strikes on Cologne, Duisburg, Essen, Bremen[195] and elsewhere have opened the eyes of the Germans who are drunk with their own victories and are beginning to see their own unavoidable and tragic demise. The game is getting very interesting. It will be even more interesting to see how November 1918 will be replayed.[196] May we only live to see it with our own eyes.

195 Allied air raids on Duisburg on 5 and 6 April 1942, on Essen in March 1942 and on Bremen on 8 and 9 April 1942.

196 On 11 November 1918 Germany signed a truce with the Triple Entente, thus ending World War I.

6 *June 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Abraham Lewin, [diary from 6 to 12 June 1942]*

[1]

Saturday evening, 6 June 1942

In these tragic times, whenever several Jews gather together and each recounts just a part of what he has heard and seen, it becomes a mountain or a swollen sea of misfortune and Jewish blood. Jewish blood pure and simple.

We gather every *Shabbes*, a group of Jewish community activists, to discuss our diaries and writings.[197] We want our sufferings, these birth-pangs of the Messiah, to be impressed upon the memories of future generations and on the memory of the whole world. We meet every *Shabbes*, and we talk over our duties in this matter and in doing this we are unable to refrain from recounting to each other everything they are doing to us, these old-new Amalekites. These stories always fill me with deep gloom, and my head begins to ache, as if a heavy lead weight were pressing down on me. This is what it was like today too. They talked and talked and I felt a chillness and utter despondency.

They recounted the following:

For the smallest of sins, literally for something completely trivial the Jews of Lida[198] are punished with what the Jews call the 'smallest' German punishment, that is, death. And the punishment on these occasions is collective. Firstly they shoot all the Jews of the house where the 'offender' lived. Recently they have become more 'liberal' and have shot only the sinner's family. Thus there was a case where a girl lost her armband and it was found next to her in the street: she was executed along with her whole family. This is just one tragedy, one of very many that have happened in Lida. The elderly and distinguished surgeon Dr S.,[199] who came back from Lida where he spent a month, was our informant.

197 Reference to weekly meetings of the Oyneg Shabes group.

198 Lida (now Grodno province, Belarus). The Lida ghetto was sealed in July 1941; in May 1942 its inmates were executed by shooting.

199 *123/117 Dr. Aharon Solovietchik, head of the surgical department in the Jewish hospital in Warsaw. Perhaps identical with Andrzej Orko Sołowiejczyk, surgeon; see: Marta Ciesielska, *Lekarze getta warszawskiego*, Warszawa 2017, p. 360.

[2] In Pabianice[200] the old people – those 60 years and over – were shot, and before they were taken to be executed the chief executioner, the officer, ordered the Jews to sing 'Hatikva'[201] and then 'Tehezakna'.[202] Then he taught them a Jewish folk song in German called 'Mozes'. He sang the song over and over and only after they had managed to repeat and to sing it were they taken out to be killed.

Some of the Jews of Ciechanów have been transferred to the nearby village of Nowe Miasto,[203] where the Jews are living in appalling conditions, as if in a camp in strict solitary confinement. The Germans warned that if anyone tries to return to the town they would shoot 5 Jews for everyone who flees back. Two weeks ago a young girl ran away from Nowe Miasto, a relative of one of the *Judenrat,* its deputy-chairman. The girl was shot, along with the member of the *Judenrat* and three other Jews. This took place just two weeks ago.

Our tradition of *kiddush Hashem* from the times of the Crusades, the Chmielnicki massacres and the period of the Middle Ages in general is being revived, times when Jews went to their deaths in a state of intense religious devotion and joy, as in the words of Bialik: 'Go out and meet your death with joy.'[204] I have heard that in Zduńska Wola on the day before Shavuot 10 Jews were hanged, among them the rabbi of the town. The rabbi turned to the Jews and appealed to them to rejoice, since they had been granted the privilege of representing the whole Jewish people and of dying a martyr's death for the Jewish faith.[205]

The Jewish community in Kraków is indeed being liquidated. Many of the Jews have already been deported. I have heard that the members

200 Pabianice (Łask County). See also *Kiddush Hashem,* pp. 325–333.

201 (Hebrew) 'The Hope', lyrics by Naftali Hertz Imber; the Zionist song, now the national anthem of the State of Israel.

202 (Hebrew) Strengthen [Our Hands], lyrics by H. N. Bialik; an emblematic song of the Zionist movement.

203 Nowe Miasto (Płońsk County). On 1 November 1941, a ghetto was established there; in addition to the local residents, 1,200 Jews from Ciechanów and about 750 from Drobin were resettled there. See: *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Reich*, Doc. 126.

204 In the original in Hebrew, an excerpt from Bialik's poem 'Im yesh et nafsheha lada'at' [If you really want to know].

205 See *Kiddush Hashem*, pp. 268–270.

of the *Judenrat* have been shot and the number of murdered has reached 57. The remaining ghetto has been turned into a giant labour camp.[206]

In Włodawa they killed the rebbe from Radzyń. One young man tried to save him and said that he was the rebbe. But the Germans saw through the 'deception', caught the rebbe and killed him and the young man as well.[207]

[3] Telegrams and letters reach Warsaw from various small towns in the provinces, with SOS messages: 'Save us! Help us!' What can the Jews of Warsaw do for their relations, when they themselves are confined in the ghetto and their souls and their lives are hanging in the balance? Those who have financial resources at their disposal send Christians to save the surviving members of their families or use other means. There is a Warsaw Jew from Smocza Street 18 who sent his family to a small town in the Lublin area to make it easier for them to pass the war. The family consisted of the mother, daughter and son. The father stayed in Warsaw. The son was sent to a labour camp in Zamość[208] and is thus for the time being still alive. The mother and daughter were sent 'to an unknown destination'. The father hired a Christian to look for his wife and daughter. The efforts were in vain, and no trace of them could be found. The despairing father is determined to save his son. He set up a charge of theft against the son, who was then taken to Warsaw to stand trial. They will have him brought here in the next few days and in this way they hope to be able to hide him in the ghetto.

The two projects, the fictitious case and the sending of the Christian to find the mother and daughter cost 3,000 zlotys each – in total therefore 6,000 zlotys.

I have been told that there are Jews who have Aryan-like features who travel around the small towns where the Jewish communities have been destroyed and rescue the few remaining isolated small children who are found living with merciful Christians or elsewhere. My sister met one of these Jews

206 For more details about the first deportation from the Kraków Ghetto, between 29 May and 8 June 1942; see: *Accounts from the General Government*, Doc. 10.

207 Reference to Shmuel Shloyme Leiner (1909–1942), the fifth tzaddik of the local Hasidic dynasty. See: Yitzkhak Katzenelson, 'Dos lid vegn Radziner' [Poem on the rebbe of Radzyń], ARG II 395 (Ring. II/350).

208 Police and SS forced labour camp in an agriculture school in Zamość; operational between June 1940 and spring 1943. Its prisoners adapted the camp to serve as military barracks and constructed military buildings.

and spoke with him. To judge by his looks and his Polish accent it would be hard to guess that he was a Jew. He goes on assignments [4] on behalf of families of the locality and risks his life to save the life of isolated Jewish children. May these heroes be blessed who risk their lives to save these cherished, innocent Jewish children who are free of all wrong. (These Jews travel with Aryan papers on them of course.)

Is it any wonder that after listening to such stories for hours on end my head is heavy as lead and my eyes are dim? I feel the desire to bury my face in my pillow and to weep and weep endless tears for the tragic fate of my people, for the destruction of the frail Jewish sheep being choked and devoured by the wild and savage German leopard.

'Outcast lamb of Israel', who will give us a second Ezekiel who will sing words of comfort and summon up a second 'valley of bones'?[209]

Sunday, 7 June 1942

Last night the German murderers in uniform claimed further victims, a Jewish man and a Jewish woman. At around one o'clock at night a car drew up at the corner of Karmelicka and Nowolipie Streets, and a Jew aged about 35 and two German officers got out. They told the Jew to start walking and then gunned him down. The Jew didn't die immediately and they shot him again and then again until he was dead. Then they rang the bell of Nowolipie Street 22 and ordered the doorman to take the body into the entranceway. Early the next morning it was taken away. Who the Jew was is not known. According to one source he was called Rozen and was from Elektoralna Street 24.

[5] The Jewish woman was taken to Nowolipie Street and shot. It is presumed she was brought over from the Aryan side and then murdered. Something similar happened a few weeks ago when two Jewish women who had stayed outside the ghetto walls were shot in Meiselsa Street.

This week the Germans arrested Zachariasz' only daughter who is aged 18. They have been looking for him quite a while, along with Gancwajch, Szternfeld and Zelman. She is in the Pawiak.

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209 In the original in Hebrew, from Ezekiel 37:1–14. Ezekiel was one of the Latter Prophets of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.

The question frequently surfaces whether a thaw and an easing in the entrenched Polish antisemitism has arrived. As with most questions, there are different opinions and polar opposite views. Many Jews consider that the influence of the war and the terrible blows that the country and all its inhabitants – Jews and Poles – have absorbed from the hand of the Germans has greatly changed relations between Poles and Jews, and the majority of Poles have been gripped by philo-Semitic feelings. Those who hold this opinion base their point of view on a considerable number of incidents that illustrate how from the very first months of the war the Poles showed, and continue to show, pity and kindness to Jews who were destitute, especially towards begging children. I have heard many stories of Jews who fled Warsaw on that momentous day, 6 September 1939[210] and were given shelter, hospitality and food by Polish peasants who did not ask for any payment for their help. It is also known that our children who go begging and appear in tens and hundreds in the Christian streets are given generous amounts of bread and potatoes [6] and from this they manage to feed themselves and their families in the ghetto. This is what those who take a bright view think.

Against this those who take a dark view argue that in the matter of antisemitism the Poles have received an instructive lesson from the Germans and that hatred of Jews in its active form – that is, with the ghetto and the expropriation of property – has penetrated deeply into their bones. These pessimists find support for their view in the different pronouncements of Poles on the Jewish question. In conversation many Poles have expressed the opinion that after the Germans had been driven out a grave problem would emerge, that of the confiscated Jewish property. They have not the slightest desire to give up Jewish property that the Germans put into their hands. Jews who take this dark view are also fearful of the transition period when the Germans collapse and retreat. They suspect that the Poles – the masses – will carry out pogroms against us in the ghetto.

I personally incline to the first view. I see Polish-Jewish relations in a bright light. I think that this war will wash this earth of ours clean of much filth and savagery. From East and West will blow towards us winds

210 On the night of 6–7 September, the head of propaganda of the Polish High Command, Lieutenant Colonel Roman Umiastowski, appealed through the radio to all men capable of carrying weapons to leave Warsaw and travel east.

of freedom and love of humanity. Poland after the war will also adhere to ideals for which the Russians, the English, the Americans, the Free French and the Polish legions have been fighting. There will be no refuge here for antisemitism, at least not for public, aggressive antisemitism. They will be ashamed to deal in it. I believe that the Polish people too has been purified by the terrible fire that has swept the face of the earth. Let us not forget: [7] the Poles are in second place in the table of tragic losses among the nations, just behind the Jews. They have given, after us, the greatest number of victims to the Gestapo, and this does not take into account the destruction of the country. All this will of necessity leave deep traces in the people and lead to a loathing of the hatred of other races and peoples, which is the source of National Socialism and antisemitism. Thus I dream of the coming of a time when Jews and Poles will live together in harmony.

This is lent a certain foundation by the good relations prevailing between the groups of Polish and Jewish smugglers. Of course the main thing in business, in the eyes of both sides, is profit. Nonetheless when we consider how these ordinary Poles are capable of acts of humane generosity and great self-sacrifice towards the Jews – we can see that the matter requires further investigation and the reaching of certain conclusions.

I want to record two true stories of this nature: next to the *meta* near to where I live operates a smuggler by the name of Artur. It is said of him that he is an educated person. Anyone who has been in the army knows that the ordinary people do not like the educated ones and the lot of the latter in the army was not a pleasant one. For all that, when Artur was arrested on the Aryan side the Polish smugglers raised 5,000 zlotys and got him released. And here is the second: a neighbour of mine climbs or crosses over to the Aryan side and stays overnight there with a Christian woman, a former neighbour of hers, who comes from the poorest section of society and is involved with smuggling. A number of days ago this woman was arrested on the other side of the wall. Her former neighbour with whom she was staying paid 800 zlotys and got her released. I believe that these small events are also of importance and that they encapsulate within them a deeper meaning.[211]

211 See also Peretz Opoczyński's 'Goyim in geto' [Gentiles in the ghetto], in: *In Those Nightmarish Days: The Ghetto Reportage of Peretz Opoczynski and Josef Zelkowicz*, ed. and with

[8] Today at one o'clock midday an 18-year-old Polish boy was shot at the ghetto wall next to Przejazd Street 9. He was about to climb over to the Jewish side on some smuggling errand. A gendarme approached, saw him, and as quick as lightning fired once. The boy fell to the ground dead on the Jewish side. At 3 o'clock he was still lying there. Jewish and Polish blood is spilled, it mingles together and, crying to the heavens, it demands revenge!

Tuesday, 9 June 1942

Yesterday there was great nervousness and agitation in the ghetto on account of the political and strategic situation. Widely optimistic exchanges could be heard everywhere: there is chaos in Germany; it is on the verge of revolution. Everyone was waiting in suspense for news of shock events that were to herald the end of the present regime and a radical change in the situation. There were stories of acts of sabotage carried out by paratroops in the area around Lublin, and other fanciful reports, the product of delusions and longings.

To our great distress the surprise did not materialise or rather h a s n o t y e t h a p p e n e d, and that for which we have been yearning and longing so intensely has not transpired. We continue to choke in the pestilential atmosphere of the Nazi occupation. Instead of events prefiguring our salvation, one can feel it in the air this morning that there was another massacre in the night, on the familiar model of 18 April:[212] people were shot down in the streets like dogs. I could sense this on the street where I live because there was no smuggling going on, [9] as there normally is every morning. Silence reigned, few Jews were passing along the street and even they looked to be hurrying and were anxious and tense. It turned out later that these signs were not deceptive. I am told that last night and this morning claimed 17 Jewish victims. I managed to identify some of them, who they were and what their names were. At Pańska Street 10–12 lives the former director of the insurance company Europa, Goldman, and his son-in-law, a film director, Henryk Szaro (Szapiro).[213] It is said that they both returned six weeks ago from Wilno.

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introduction by Samuel D. Kassow, transl. and co-ed. by David Suchoff, New Haven & London 2015.

212 See the entry for 12 May.

213 Henryk Szaro (Szapiro) (1900–1942), film director, one of the most important silent movie creators. On the night of 8–9 June 1942 the Gestapo murdered about 60 people

Further, the Leman brothers were murdered, former owners of the Apollo cinema at Marszałkowska Street 6. It appears that the Leman family had also just come back from Wilno. Then a woman Opatowska was murdered at Ogrodowa Street 7, a Jew who was a porter at Świętojerska Street 28 and was involved in smuggling, and a whole series of other Jews from among the smugglers. Day after day, night after night Jewish blood flows like water in the ghetto. When will we see the end of those lawlessness? When?

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To the starvation, typhus, tuberculosis and other illnesses that are springing up in the ghetto has been added a further illness known as Volhynia fever.[214] The victim suffers from a fever for several months. The fever does not stabilise, it rises and falls. The illness is very dangerous by all accounts because it attacks the lungs in particular. I know a boy who fell sick with this disease, but I also heard that it can attack adults as well. I suppose that it must have come here from Volhynia.

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[10] Is it possible to see the degree of inequality and tension that existence levels in the ghetto have reached now from the variety of midday meals on offer and the prices that are paid for them? Before the war an average meal cost 1 zloty or 1.20. A better meal of a few courses would cost 1.50. An excellent meal, for example at Gertner (Leszno Street 2) would cost 2 zlotys. A meal like that was difficult to finish and would last one person a whole day. Bread was served without extra charge and without limit.

What is the position as regards the midday meal in the ghetto? A great percentage of the inhabitants of the ghetto eat no such meal at all. They go hungry or make do with some small amount of food: a slice of bread, carrot or turnip. Then there comes a long series of levels. The lowest level

in the ghetto. The group included people involved in smuggling, as well as social and political activists.

214 Trench fever (five-day fever, Volhynia fever) – an infectious disease transmitted by body lice; it causes fever which relapses every five days.

of consumers, numbering several thousand (3,400), take advantage of what are known as *zupki*[215] in the community kitchens and pay 90 groszes for a plate of soup which of course is not enough to satisfy them for even a short time. Then about 1,000 Jews eat at the kitchens at Leszno Street 29 and Nowolipie Street 30 (for officials), who pay 1.25 zloty for a fuller and more substantial plate of soup. Further there are the kitchens which are termed 'self-supporting'. These are for activists and officials (Leszno Street 14, Orla Street 6, Zamenhofa Street 13, Nalewki Street 32 and Przejazd Street 9) and there the price of a midday meal is 2.25 zlotys, consisting of a plate of soup with vegetables, or 3.50 with a tiny piece of meat. Then there are the private kitchens and once again we can see a long list of different prices and menus. In a private kitchen you can get a midday meal for 4 zlotys consisting of a plate of soup, a minuscule piece of meat and a few vegetables. Then prices go *crescendo*: 4.50, 5, 6.50, 10, 14, 17 zlotys. At Szulc's Restaurant [11] on the corner of Karmelicka and Nowolipie Streets a meal costs 14–14.50 zlotys, and as it was described to me, it's pretty impressive: a very large serving of fatty soup, a large portion of meat with vegetables and compote. This is reminiscent of meals before the war. There are restaurants where the midday meal is even more expensive, 17–18 zlotys and even 20. Only smugglers, racketeers, important activists, members of the police and other rich people to whom the times have been good can afford to eat there. In the Moyshele restaurant at Nowolipie Street 1 a portion of meat costs 18 zlotys. There the customers are mainly smugglers. Such are the conditions in the ghetto on the meal front. A very small percentage of housewives cook midday meals at home as they did in better days.

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According to stories in the German newspapers (*Reich*, *Novoye Slovo*[216] – the newspaper of the Russian White Guard in Berlin), a committee of Russian Jews[217] has recently been set up in Moscow. According to the *Novoye Slovo*

215 (Polish) literally, little soups; they were not sufficient to stop hunger.

216 *Novoye Slovo* – a newspaper in Russian, purporting Nazi propaganda, published in Berlin between 1933 and 1945.

217 Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee – organisation formed in the USSR to gather support for the war against Germany. The first session took place on 28 May 1942.

Jewish writers, Kushnirov[218] and others have made a strong appeal to world Jewry to come to the aid of the Soviet Union in the struggle against Fascism and Hitlerism. To my eyes the thing looks puzzling: they are returning to the impure and heretical notion of the Jewish people. It may be that Moscow officially supports this. At any rate permission was granted for this appear and note was taken of it[219].

The old adage is confirmed: *Jak bida, to do Żyda*[220] even though we find ourselves in such a deep pit. Should we see in this a spark of hope and an indication of revival and reawakening?

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In the last issue of *Reich* I read a number of articles that demonstrate that [12] conditions in Germany are deteriorating continually and the internal crisis is deepening. It is hard to say when things will come to a head and when the regime will break its neck, but there are signs of a deepening crisis in Hitler's state.

(1) Once again the newspapers sizes are being reduced. *Reich*, which used to comprise 24 pages, is reduced to 12 pages. The food ration cards have been reduced in the same way.

(2) All dining cars in German trains have been cancelled.

(3) Old clothes and textiles are being collected. The explanation for this is that stocks of textile have been exhausted and a shortage is expected of clothes and of shoes, even for the army.

(4) The appeal of the *Gauleiter* of Mecklenburg to all those from Rostock who are temporarily in Pomerania to return to Rostock, since shelters have been prepared for them, demonstrates that the last air attacks of the English have certainly destroyed whole cities.[221] These air attacks, if they are carried

218 Aron Kushnirov (earlier: Kushnirovich) (1890–1949), Russian poet and playwright, writing in Yiddish.

219 On Jews reading German newspapers in the Warsaw ghetto see: Ferenc Maria, *„Każdy pyta, co z nami będzie". Mieszkańcy getta warszawskiego wobec wiadomości o wojnie i Zagładzie*, Warszawa 2021, pp. 129–143.

220 (Polish) 'When in need, go to the Jew'; popular saying.

221 Allied air raids on Rostock took place on 24–27 April 1942.

out systematically and with greater intensity, are capable of bringing the war to a swift end.

Wednesday, 10 June 1942

Last night, all the occupants of the building where I live and of the nearby buildings witnesses terrible scenes and the whole night passed in the shadow of a horrific event. Yesterday, at 9.20 in the evening, while we were eating supper, we suddenly heard loud echoes of continuous shooting outside the window. The shooting went on for a long time. When silence fell, we saw a man, dressed in civilian clothes, rifle in his hand and sack under his arm. [13] In front of my window a young man lay dead, his head and stomach torn open. It turned out that two German gendarmes arrived in disguise (apparently one of them was the degenerate sadist Frankenstein,[222] who has earned himself a reputation through his butcheries here), their rifles hidden in sacks. As they arrived they spotted a young Christian, who was trying to climb over the wall, and a Jewish woman who was accompanying him to see if he got over safely. The Germans opened fire on them instantly and they were killed. The Jewish woman was 27 years old and her name was Limon. Before the war the Limons had a fruit store in Przejazd Street. Lately the Limon couple has made their living through smuggling. The Christian who was killed was supplying them with goods.

It turns out that at the same time acts of terror were being carried out in various locations in the ghetto as part of the war against smuggling. At Świętojerska Street 30 gendarmes fired automatic weapons at 2 Jews. I have been told that 5 Jews were shot in Waliców Street. Yesterday's Tuesday was awash with the murder of Jews. On Smocza Street 2 boys were shot by *junaks* while they were observing the confiscation of a store of potatoes and vegetables from the courtyard at Smocza Street 7; at the corner of Wielka and Pańska Streets a Jew was shot by the gendarmes. On Pańska Street 2 Jews were murdered; on Prosta Street one Jew. It appears that a large number of Jews were killed in the *inn*[223] courtyard of Grzybowska Street 32. The residents

222 Probably a policeman named Otto Helmer (1908–?), of the 61st Police Reserve Batallion from Dortmund. Its officers served in the Warsaw ghetto from February to September 1942. He was identified by Jan Issing, in Issing's doctoral dissertation at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg.

223 Unclear, it might refer to an inn (there were no inns in the ghetto) or perhaps was a traditional name of a place, hence italics.

at the corner of Żelazna and Nowolipie Streets [14] heard loud shots between 11 and 1 in the night under the beam of searchlights. There were also searches carried out with dogs. I don't know the exact number of victims. Different numbers are given: 18, 28, 46 and even over 60. The office at the cemetery probably knows the exact number.

Today at half past twelve midday a young Jew aged 30 by the name of Rozenstrauch was shot at Nowolipie Street 7 (or Miła Street 8). He owned a small metalwork and wasn't doing badly. Out of friendship he rented part of his basement flat for a small mill.[224] Two gendarmes who were passing spotted traces of seeds scattered around. They went down, took him from behind the door and shot him summarily in the back of the neck. He left behind a wife and a child of four. Again a night of blood and death was visited upon the ghetto.

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A certain community activist, Mr M., who maintains regular contact with the German Jews who are living in the synagogue building on Tłomackie Street,[225] informed me that he had himself read a letter yesterday that had arrived the same day from Berlin, whose contents – which are almost too good to be true – were as follows: the author of the letter announced that a large air raid was carried out on Berlin.[226] After the air raid, riots broke out in the streets and in the course of these 15 SS-men and SA-men were killed. On that day a state of emergency was announced through loudspeakers in Berlin. In Moabit,[227] movement in the streets was only permitted until 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and in other parts of the city until 7. Sadly there is no confirmation of these sensational reports from any other source whatsoever.

224 Apparently functioning without permission.

225 More precisely, they were living in the Main Judaic Library building adjacent to the synagogue. From 20 March 1942 both buldings were excluded from the ghetto.

226 Prior to the aerial Battle of Berlin at the turn of 1943 and 1944, the most intense Allied air raids on Berlin were conducted in the summer and autumn of 1941. There were no raids in 1942 that matched Lewin's description.

227 Before World War II, a workers' district of Berlin; well-known for a nineteenth-century prison.

[15]

Thursday, 11 June 1942

It appears that there were no fresh victims last night. A night that passes in the ghetto without blood-letting sounds like something so unusual that it is necessary to take special note of it. We are so accustomed to the unremitting terror that if an hour passes with a pause we feel as if we are mistaken, that it is not natural for nothing to happen. It was the same during those terrible days of September 1939: whenever there was a break in the bombardment of Warsaw from the air and in the heavy artillery fire, we couldn't believe that there was silence. We strained our ears, listened and heard . . . for cannons and falling bombs.

When will the war end? How much longer will it last?

This question, one of decisive import for us, which signifies for us to be or not to be, gnaws away at everyone's minds and impels us to concentrate all our intellectual and emotional strength to find an answer to it. It is clear to every Jew that if the war finishes soon, there is still a prospect and hope of remaining alive, but if the war drags on, them our hopes of surviving it are almost nil.

I tried posing this question to various Jews. Naturally the answers were all different. Many thought that the war would be over soon. But there are Jews who hope that the war will be finished by the end of July. They told me about a fortune-teller who foretold the disappearance of the ghetto walls from Warsaw in the course [16] of June, that is, this month. There are those who put the end back to the later autumn months, but think that the whole nightmare will be over by winter. Set against these are those who hold more realistic opinions, since they are preparing themselves for the fact that the end is a long, long way off. They think that the earliest possible date for the end of the war is the summer or autumn of next year. This means that the war has to go on for at least another year.

I should record that the 'lengtheners' of the war form a decisive majority. Even though Jews are in general optimists, when we come to consider the final conclusion of the war, the proportion of 'lengtheners' to 'shorteners' is of the order of 5 to1 or it may be even 10 to 1.

If this poll had any influence at all on events, these would be fatal for the Jews.

I personally think that the decisive point will fall before winter and the Germans, the German people, will not dare and will not have the strength

to continue their campaign for a fourth winter. Their nerve will not hold. That is how I see it.

Recently a community worker received a letter from Zurich which contains the following sentence: 'You can't imagine how close the end of the war is.'

May we only be granted the chance to see who is right in their estimates.

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It is reported that at four this afternoon [17] 2 Jews were shot dead and one wounded on Przebieg Street at the corner of Bonifraterska. The murderers were Germans dressed as civilians. The Jews who died were involved with smuggling people and goods through a gap in the bridge that is in that alleyway.

It seems we are not ever to be granted that a night and a day will pass in peace.

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On Wednesday, after the two had fallen victim on Tuesday evening, the smuggling on Nowolipie and Przejazd Streets was halted, almost as if people were in mourning for the memory of those from the smuggling groups who died. Today, regardless of the appalling campaign of terror against the smugglers, and despite the large number of victims who have fallen in the last few days, the smuggling picked up again at full throttle as if nothing had happened. This shows that under the present conditions smuggling is life's imperative, and that life is stronger than death. In these sad days death and life walk side by side and death is trying to destroy life. But ultimately life must subjugate death and leave the struggle as victor.

Friday, 12 June 1942

Blood, blood, blood.

This morning at 5 o'clock at Niska Street 78, next to the *meta*, 6 Jews were shot. The murder was carried out by Germans disguised in tattered clothes with Zion armbands and pipes in their mouths. It is said that the murders are being committed by a special unit called the execution unit for surveillance of the walls.

[18] Yesterday after 9 in the evening 2 Jews were shot in a similar fashion in Ceglana Street at the corner of Waliców Street, after 7 Jews had already been killed this week. The smugglers have attained the stature of heroes in my eyes, and the day will come when everyone will surely sing of them to celebrate their great heroism.

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I was talking today with a woman from Tłuszcz,[228] where all the Jews were expelled 2 weeks ago, 750 people in all. The murders that were committed in the course of this expulsion cry out to the heavens. The number of murdered exceeds 60, shot without cause, for any trifling matter. The two Raduszyński brothers, shoemakers, young men, were shot. One of them for taking down the top of his machine and hiding it. And the second because he wanted to slip a small package to a woman who was sitting on a cart. Three young women aged 18–19 were shot, one because she tried to sit on a cart, not understanding that her place was among those on foot. An old man of 85, Płatkowski(?),[229] whose mind was still clear, was shot. The rabbi of Tłuszcz escaped to Jadów,[230] where he was killed by the Germans through horrific torture. They beat him to death. Before the expulsion 12 Jews had already been shot in Tłuszcz. They had been found outside the ghetto. These Jews were executed on the spot without inquiry or investigation. In other incidents, Poles brought about the death of Jews by pointing the finger at them: *Jude*. In fact, overall [19] the woman was critical of the behaviour of the Poles towards the Jews: it was generally bad. This state of affairs is puzzling, considering that the position of the Poles is not much better than that of the Jews. They too are afraid to walk in the street. Many have had their shops and their goods confiscated.

All the property of the Jews from Tłuszcz has been looted by the Germans. Even the parcels that many took with them during the expulsion were lost or thrown away on the road. The Jews made their way on foot to Radzymin, accompanied by gendarmes, soldiers on horseback, policemen on bicycles, and

228 See footnote 240, pt. 2.

229 Question mark in the original.

230 Jadów (Radzymin County).

various Germans from other units. The Jews reached Warsaw barefoot and naked, having lost everything.

The woman I was speaking with was a simple butcher by the name of Zimerman. Speaking of the expulsion from Tłuszcz, she said: 'There is no way to put into words what happened to us.' I thought over what the woman had said and concluded that she is right. There can be no words, no images, no embellishments – just cold hard facts. The day will come when these facts will shake the world and they will be transformed into an impassioned appeal, to 'Remember!' against hatred and shame and against the degenerate murderers: 'As for us – tortured and murdered though we are innocent of any crime – the world will be duty-bound to show love and compassion for our suffering.'

One of the most impressive books in world literature that engraves itself deeply on the reader's memory and has a simplicity and directness, a profound tragedy which is quite stunning, is, in my opinion, and I am quite convinced of this, the book *History of the Jewish War against the Romans* by Josephus Flavius.[231] Anyone who has read this book (I read it in the classic translation into Hebrew by Dr Simchoni)[232] [20] will never forget, I believe, the terrible and bloody events that took place in Jerusalem, Samaria, Galilee, Transjordan, and Syria, in the days of the fierce struggle between the rebellious mob imbued with extreme zealotry – who in their blind patriotism said to themselves: freedom or death – and the savage Roman imperialists. Who can forget the bare facts of the slaughter on both sides, both what the Greeks inflicted on the Jews in the places where they had the upper hand, and vice versa, what the Jews did to the Greeks where the Jews were the majority.

I can recall the stories told by Flavius. If we compare them with the slaughters committed by the Germans in our times, then I come to the conclusion that the Germans' deeds today are more bloody, more vicious and more shocking than those of the Greeks and Romans 2,000 years ago.

We must not forget that then there was a struggle; but today unarmed and innocent people are being brutally killed. And what is more – since

231 Reference to Josephus Flavius's (37–c. 94) *The Jewish War*, published in Greek before 79.

232 Jacob Naftali Hertz Simchoni (1884–1926), historian, translated Josephus Flavius' works into Hebrew. However, the title quoted by Lewin is taken from the first Polish translation of 1906.

then, nearly 19 centuries have passed, and it is 153 years since the French Revolution and the Declaration of Human Rights. Can we conclude from this that humanity has been regressing for more than 2,000 years and has become more savage instead of progressing and becoming more humane, imbued with greater idealism?

If we are talking about the Germans, there is no doubt that they have regressed dramatically and returned to the moral level of their barbarian forefathers, the inhabitants of the dense forests of central Germany in the day of the Roman emperors.

7 *June 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Abraham Lewin, [diary from 13 to 15 June 1942]*

[1]

Saturday, 13 June 1942

In the occupation rag of a Polish newspaper, *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*,[233] which appears in Warsaw, a satirical column is printed daily, entitled *Laterna magica*.[234] Yesterday in that section appeared an announcement with the following contents (given here in its essentials): From the 7th of this month all French and Belgian Jews are to wear a yellow armband with the word *Juif*[235] (in occupied France and in Belgian Wallonia) and *Jood*[236] (in the Flemish part of Belgium). It turned out that in Paris [. . .] were not mobilised, since they expected serious conflicts [. . .] several coffee houses, of which the members [. . .] demanded that Jews [. . .]. Jews hardly show themselves [. . .]. It ends with the following remark, word-for-word: 'It's a pity that Blum is still alive, as otherwise he would have had the opportunity to turn over in his grave.'[237]

233 (Polish, *New Warsaw Courrier*) German information and propaganda daily published in Polish from October 1939 until August 1944 in Warsaw, then until January 1945 in Łódź by the GG authorities. It was called a *gadzinówka* (reptile press) and condemned by the Polish Underground State.

234 (Latin) magic lantern.

235 (French, in Latin characters) Jew.

236 (Flemish, in Latin characters) Jew.

237 Léon Blum (1872–1950), French socialist politician, Prime Minister of France in 1936–1937, 1938 and 1946–1947.

In any case, what the Jews from Paris, Antwerp and other French and Belgian places felt about this announcement we can well imagine. In fact we experienced this at first hand on 1 December 1939, when we had to put on what the Jews call the band of shame. We have experienced this in the flesh. But so vile, base and degenerate are the Hitlerite thugs that they are even prepared to put on paper, in relation to a Jew who was a political opponent, one who after all occupied for a certain period the premier's seat [2] in France, such [twisted] and tasteless words.

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The previous Wednesday, at 12 at night, the Germans brought 2 Polish tram workers to the corner of Karmelicka and Nowolipie Streets, near the shot-up building, and shot them dead on the spot. The Jewish police received the order to bury them at the Jewish cemetery. I was unable to find out any additional details about this [. . .]. 2 more martyrs, 2 more murders in an endless chain of these [. . .] crimes.

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This week there are rumours circulating that Prof. Bałaban[238] had been shot by the Germans. Fortunately they turned out [. . .]. But this characterises the atmosphere of panic in which we live. Anything can happen, there is no crime that be located in the sphere of impossibility. There are absolutely no moral boundaries for the bandits of the Third Reich.

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Of the hundreds of young people who two weeks ago were seized from labour camps and locked into sealed wagons there is no news whatsoever. Nothing is known of their fate. All that is known is that they were deported from the Gdański railway station. What happened to them subsequently remains

238 Majer (Meir) Bałaban (1877–1942), Warsaw University professor, eminent researcher of the history of Jews in Poland, in the Warsaw ghetto served as head of the Register Department of the *Judenrat*. He died in the ghetto of a heart attack, in December 1942.

a secret. Their families are living in a heightened state of agitation and despair. Knowing what has been done to Jews in different locales in the [General] Government, they imagine, quite rightly, the most terrifying things, and are quite simply afraid [3] that their near ones might have been murdered.

3 of those supposedly were able to get out of the wagons by paying a large bribe.

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A thought that often tortures us: is it possible that the entire democratic world, which is our only hope and ray of light in the profound gloom, can remain untouched by the racist plague and poison of National Socialism? Is it possible that the wildest, bestial antisemitism that the Germans have spread to all the countries of Europe might take root in the so-called democratic societies, which, between you and me, have never been completely free of this sickness, this leprous condition? And, if God forbid, this antisemitic poison has penetrated the countries that are right now fighting against Hitler, then what is left for us and what is there left for us to hope for? 'What is to become of us?'[239]

Such thoughts and mordant doubts often assail me. It may be that these have been triggered by Hitler's most recent speeches, in which he predicted that once the Jews will have disappeared, all peoples will live together in peace and love, like blood brothers and sisters. That is to say: over the graves of the Jewish people all other peoples will make peace between themselves, and the Jewish dream that 'this will be at the end of days'[240] will be realised. An evil thought has been tormenting me: what if Satan and the *sitra achra*[241] triumph? What if we are to be the scapegoat and expiation for the entire sinful world? Is this really in the realm of the impossible? Could we ever have accepted, even in our imagination, [4] that even the smallest fraction of the things that are happening now could happen in our times?

239 In the original in Hebrew, a quotation from an unknown source.

240 In the original in Hebrew, from Isaiah 2:2. A reference to the coming of the Messiah.

241 (Hebrew) literally, other side; all powers opposing God and salvation.

For that reason I was cheered by a small announcement that I came across quite by chance in Friday's *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the 12th of this month. The announcement went as follows:

'A Negro President of the Oxford Union.

Berne 11/6. According to press reports from London, the Negro Cameron Tudor[242] was elected as the new president of the Oxford Union for the next term of office. He is the first Negro to take up this position. The Oxford Union, which has been headed by ministers such as Lord Asquith, Lord Birkenhead and Sir John Simon,[243] as president, is a student association that to some extent can be characterised as the social antechamber of future British parliamentarians. There they ['imitate'] most strictly the customs and usages of the Commons and the House of Lords. Great debates are held there. Not long ago the minister for India, Amery,[244] made a speech before this exclusive society. Given the importance role this association plays in the political life of England, one can predict a great political career for the new president.'

This announcement gladdened me but also reassured me. It demonstrates that English society is now, even more so than before the war, unsullied and free of racial prejudices and of Nazi filth. If a Negro could be elected president of the most elite aristocratic student association, there cannot and should not be any place in such a society for the pathogen of antisemitism. It means that our terror and doubts are unjustified. Thank God for that, one worry fewer.

[5]

Sunday, 14 June 1942

Each day when I waken from sleep, my first thought is: what is happening in the world? Perhaps the miracle has already happened? Perhaps the long awaited has come to pass? Perhaps H. or G.[245] is already dead,

242 James Cameron Tudor (1919–1995), politician and social activist from Barbados, founder of the Democratic Labour Party.

243 Herbert Asquith (1852–1928), UK prime minister on behalf of the Liberal Party in 1908–1916; Frederick Smith (1872–1930), British politician, member of the Conservative Party, Lord Chancellor from 1919–1922; John Simon (1873–1954), British politician, member of the Liberal Party, Lord Chancellor from 1940 to 1945.

244 Leopold Amery (1873–1955), British politician, member of the Conservative Party, the Secretary of State for India and Burma during World War II.

245 Most probably: Hitler or Göring; the second could be also Goebbels.

and the world will awaken to a new and glorious existence? My second thought is turned towards the Jews, in particular the Jews of Warsaw. I ask myself: did the night pass peacefully? Have there been new victims? New murders? When I go down to the street and run into an acquaintance, my first question, even before I manage to say good morning, is: What's been happening? How did the night pass? Are there victims? How many? This morning I also asked this question to the first acquaintance I ran into and received this tragic response: there are 7 dead, 7 Jewish porters were shot dead. The details of the tragedy are as follows (according to what I was told): on Krochmalna Street a large quantity of food items was found in the possession of a Christian. According to a second version, the Christian brought a sack with the goods to be taken through the *meta*. He was detained and under threats and blows was forced to give up the name of the person for whom the goods were destined and where he lived. They went to the address that had been given and arrested 7 Jewish porters, led them to number Grzybowska Street 38, and shot them dead.

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The extermination operation against the Jews in its most bestial and terrifying form continues at full throttle and is being extended to new communities which up to now had considered themselves fortunate oases. Day after day new tidings of Job arrive from different towns and [6] settlements. Before the Shabbat we received terribly tragic news from Hrubieszów,[246] Tarnów,[247] and Biała Podlaska.[248] These names represent only a small portion of the places where Jewish life – bare Jewish life; we are not talking here of worldly possessions – is being torn up by the roots, where entire communities are being destroyed using the most inconceivable torments and nightmarish forms

246 In early June 1942, 3,400 Jews from Hrubieszów were taken to the Sobibór killing centre, and 2,000 sent to a labour camp in Budzyń. See: *Accounts from the General Government*, Docs. 32, 34–36.

247 Between 11 and 19 June 1942 the first *Aktion* took place in Tarnów. Approximately 10,000 Jews were executed by shooting, 12,000 were deported to the Bełżec killing centre. See: *ibidem*, Doc. 14.

248 On 6 June 1942, approximately 3,000 Jews from Biała Podlaska were deported to the Sobibór killing centre. See *ibidem*, Doc. 27.

of death: men, women, and infants, old people, men, women without distinction between adults and children.

Jews who live in safety overseas know nothing and cannot imagine the kind of misfortunes and sufferings of hell that pour down relentlessly upon our heads. Coming generations will be completely unable to grasp and depict for themselves the terrible enormity of our tragedy – unless a new Jeremiah[249] and a second Bialik should arise, and they should be endowed with seven times the visionary and poetic creative power of their predecessors. What is yet to come? Will *she'erit hapletah* of us Jews survive?

It is hard to think things through to their conclusion, and it is hard to find the words in speech or writing. But – our hopes are most feeble, our predictions are gloomy. There are signs showing that the Germans intend to press on with their savage actions and to realise Hitler's pronouncements about exterminating Jews. Goebbels reiterated this in his recent article in *Reich* on 14 June ('The war in the air and the war of nerves').[250] He further extended the extermination programme even to Jews living outside Europe. Petty German satraps are repeating this message openly and in brutal fashion here and now. On the banks of the Vistula in Warsaw, at the so-called small vessel dock, 10 Warsaw Jews are working. The commanding officer told the manager [7] of the port that he did not need to make a big deal out of this. If the Jews did not perform to his satisfaction, he could simply have them shot and he would assign him 10 others. He literally declared that an extermination operation was in progress against Jews, and Jewish life was utterly devoid of significance. A *halutzah*, Sh., works for Germans in Rembertów.[251] She had to wash the floor. The officer was delighted with her work: so clean, and done so meticulously. He honoured her with an invitation to meal. He asked her what people were saying in the ghetto about the war. She gave the reply that Jews give in such circumstances: she didn't know. The officer explained things as follows: tell your brothers in the ghetto that the war will come to end

249 Jeremiah (7th century BCE), one of the most important biblical prophets.

250 Josef Goebbels, 'Der Luft und Nervenkrieg', *Das Reich*, 14 June 1942; see: "Twilight Days: missing pages from Avraham Lewin's Warsaw Ghetto diary, May–July 1942", ed. Havi ben-Sasson, Lea Preis (*Yad Vashem Studies* Vol. 33, 2005, p. 29, footnote 52). Joseph Goebbels (1897–1945) was one of Hitler's closest collaborators, Reich Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda and a member of Hitler's cabinet.

251 Rembertów (Warsaw County).

at the moment when the whole ghetto is in flames, when there are machine guns at every street corner, and one wades ankle-deep in Jewish blood.

This is how Germans talk. Using raw and unadorned language. This is how they think and this is what they will do. What can we hope for? Who or what will save us? 'From where will our help come?'[252] It seems now that only a miracle can deliver us. Will the miracle come? Will it happen?

Monday, 15 June 1942

Today I had a long conversation with a woman who lived for 3 years, from the summer of 1939, in the small town of Rohatyn[253] in eastern Galicia, 70 kilometres from Stanisławów. She only returned here a month ago. The greater part of her account concerned the time of the German occupation and its crowning [horrors], namely the great, [8] terrible pogrom which they carried out on the unforgettable 20 March 1942. My account today will be dedicated to the town of Rohatyn and a description of the Slaughter in Rohatyn.

Rohatyn has a population, or more accurately, had a population before the war, of approximately 10,000 inhabitants, among them about 3,000 Jews, that is, 30 per cent of the general population. The majority was made up of Ukrainians. Under Soviet rule there were about 6,000 Jews in Rohatyn, as 3,000 refugees fled there. The situation of the Jews at that time was particularly good. Jews occupied the leading positions. The Ukrainians were fearful, and toadied up to the Jews. The Poles maintained good relations with the Jews, but more so out of fear than out of sentiment and their natural inclinations. The Ukrainians were longing for the Germans and burning with impatience for them to appear. They welcomed Hitler's troops with fervour and jubilation. They were convinced that the establishment of a great Ukrainian state was imminent. Recently they have been thoroughly disabused of this. In particular the peasantry is enraged and full of hatred towards the Germans, because under cover of the term *quota* they have seized everything that the peasant owns.

The Germans entered Rohatyn on 6 July 1941. On Saturday, 16 July, the Jews of Rohatyn got to experience their first taste of German rule and the barbaric collaboration of their boot-polishers, the Ukrainians. On that

252 In the original in Hebrew, from Psalm 121, changed from singular to plural.

253 Rohatyn (now Ivano-Frankivsk province, Ukraine). See: ARG I 988a, b (Ring. I/559).

Saturday early in the morning Ukrainian policemen went to each Jewish home and ordered them to pack their food supplies and be in the synagogue within 10 minutes. This order applied to all Jews, [9] young and old, women and men. Outside, the Ukrainians organised the Jews into rows in the middle of the street and required them to run from their homes to the synagogue. If any Jews fell slightly behind pace, the Ukrainians beat them with murderous blows. It happened several time that a child's pram tipped over, along with the child. At the synagogue all the food supplies were taken from the women who were left in the synagogue courtyard. After half an hour they let the women go. In the meantime the Ukrainians looted whatever they could in their homes. The men were driven into the synagogue. The Jews were fearful that the synagogue would be set alight together with the Jews inside. In Przemyślany,[254] the Germans burned down the synagogue together with 6 Jews: a rabbi and his sons, a rabbinical judge, and the synagogue warden. In Rohatyn they did not burn down the synagogue, but merely tortured. They ordered the Jews to kneel and hold their hands above their heads. The Jews had to stay in this position from 12 to 5 in the afternoon. The rabbi was tied to the platform in such a way that he could not move his head, nor make any type of movement. In this state he was obliged to recite the prayers. From the men they took all the valuables which they had on them: watches, rings, money and the like. At 5 they were all let go. Just a few had been severely beaten. Although the events of 16 July did not qualify as a pleasant experience, the Jews breathed more easily, on the assumption that following this they had bought themselves out of the Nazi evil. Indeed, the town became relatively calm. Just unpleasant incidents from time to time. In Rohatyn there had been a monastery; the Russians had turned it into a people's club, and the Germans made it into a military hospital. One night the military doctors detained several Jews as hostages and demanded [10] that by the next morning they bring a particular quantity of soap, coffee, and other items. They threatened that if by the next morning the items had not been delivered, the hostages would be shot. That night people went around locating all the demanded items. The detained Jews were set free. Another time the Ukrainian militia

254 Przemyślany (now Lviv province, Ukraine). On 4 July 1941 Germans burnt alive a group of Jews from Przemyślany in the local synagogue.

detained the rabbi, shaved off his beard, and led him around the town. This was not yet the worst of it.

On 1 September a ghetto was set up. The ghetto was an open one. On 15 August the *Kreishauptmann*[255] ordered that by 1 September, 2,000 Jews had to leave the town. The *Judenrat* decided that the Jews who had fled to Rohatyn as refugees were the ones who had to leave. 2,000 Jews moved out to the surrounding settlements: Bolszowce, Bukaczowce, Żydaczów, and Chodorów.[256] 200 Jews left of their own free will and returned to their previous homes, also to Warsaw. Of the 6,000 Jews who left, just 3,800 were to be settled in the ghetto. The living space was a tight squeeze, but it was bearable. Certain Jews, four landlords and a dentist, received special permission from the *Landrat* to continue to live outside the ghetto. Even before the ghetto was established, the Germans imposed a levy of 2 million zlotys on the Jews of Rohatyn. This sum was divided into 3 instalments. The Jews paid the first 2. The final one was forgiven them.

From time to time the Germans extorted various goods and foodstuffs from the *Judenrat*. So on 8 August they demanded a certain number of geese and also other items. [11] On another occasion they once again detained 10 prominent Jews as hostages and demanded a certain quantity of leather, soap, tea, and other items. The 10 Jews were held in detention for 14 days. Whatever it was possible to gather was handed over to the Germans and the hostages were released.

Weeks and months passed in this way. People made their peace with the unpleasant incidents, because they instinctively felt that, compared to what was happening in other towns, these were only small things, trifles. The Jews of Rohatyn understood very well what had happened in Stanisławów, no more than 70 kilometres away. After the two pogroms in Stanisławów, of the 20,000 original number of Jews, around 5,000 remained in the *kehillah*, that is to say, 15,000 or three-quarters of all the Jews in Stanisławów have been murdered.[257]

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255 (German) county commissioner.

256 Bolszowce, Bukaczowce (Rohatyn County, now Ivano-Frankivsk province, Ukraine), Żydaczów (now Lviv province, Ukraine), Chodorów (Bóbrka County, now Lviv province, Ukraine).

257 When the ghetto in Stanisławów (now Ivano-Frankivsk) was closed in December 1941, it had 30,000 Jewish residents. See: *Accounts from the Borderlands*, Doc. 40.

On 9 March 1942 the *Judenrat* received instructions to provide 3 shifts of workers, with 60 workers in each shift, for digging pits. The work went on day and night. The pits were dug 2 kilometres outside the town, practically in the town itself. The pits were 4 metres deep, 9 metres long, and about 3 metres wide. The pretext was that these ditches were necessary to supply defensive ramps against enemy attacks from the air. The *Landrat* came to inspect the work. He concluded that the Jews were working too slowly. He decreed that the diggers should work half naked. At the same time he ordered soup to be prepared for the workers and that they should be given bread. Two pits of this kind were dug.

The digging of these pits was a source of great anxiety for the Jews. They were terrified, [12] having in their minds the examples of other towns, where there were massacres and the Jews themselves had to prepare their own graves in this fashion. An explanation was demanded from the *Judenrat*. Sadly, the *Judenrat* offered constant reassurances to the Jewish population, as they, so it seems, were dazzled by the official guarantees from the Germans. The members of the *Judenrat* kept up the same refrain: just think, we have relationships with the authorities, with the gendarmerie, among others. Everyone assures us that there is no reason to be afraid, so why are you so agitated? Jews, you can be calm. On 15 March a woman arrived from the small town of Bukaczowce and warned the Jews of Rohatyn that the pits were intended to be their graves. She advised them to go into hiding. But the *Judenrat* kept offering reassurances. As an aside I should note that my informant expressed a very negative opinion of the Rohatyn *Judenrat*. This is what she called them: a pack of thieves.

In this matter, however, one cannot accuse the *Judenrat* of ill will, only of complacency. Because of its complacency and irresponsibility, it added to the number of victims by many, many hundreds, and three-fifths of its own members were murdered on the tragic day of the pogrom. The most terrible, the darkest day in the history of the Rohatytn Jewish community came on bloody Friday, 20 March, in the year of 1942.

At this point I will try to recount the course of the pogrom in the first person, just as the women recounted it to me. I believe the account will be more immediate, more graphic, in sharper relief. (This is not as dictated word-for-word. I am just refreshing my memory, to the extent that I can recall.)

'I went out at 7.40 in the morning, as I did every day, to buy pastry. On that day [13] I also needed to buy more – for the Shabbat. I was living with my brother, a dentist, whose home was on the marketplace, that is to say outside the ghetto. The bakery was located in a small side-street in the ghetto, but very close by. On my way there I met a gendarme from the Rohatyn gendarmerie division. This time he fixed me with an awful piercing, penetrating gaze. I was seized by a powerful foreboding. It shocked me. Later I worked out that in that moment he was thinking: once 10 minutes are up, this woman (who is still young and pretty) will no longer be alive. On my way home I sought out an acquaintance of mine, a mother of several small children. I told her about my encounter with the gendarme. She didn't want to let me go home without drinking a cup of coffee. I left my friend's home and went to the marketplace in the direction of our flat. Coming into the marketplace I observed 8 vehicles; several limousines, and the last 2 were trucks. I saw these letters on them: SS. I became even more panicked and terrified. I was now afraid to go home directly across the marketplace. I stole my way through the side-streets and paths and reached our home. From our window we could observe what was happening in the marketplace. I alerted my brother to the vehicles and my dark sense of foreboding. Our family numbered 6 people, adults and children. We had long since prepared for ourselves a small room where we stored wood, and prepared a hiding place for whatever misfortune we might face. We had set it up in such a way that from the inside one could hang a padlock outside and lock it. To a degree this concealed the presence of a person in the small room itself. We decided to shut ourselves into the room. We immediately concealed ourselves in the hiding place. [14] In the small room there was also a small window from which we could observe what was happening in the marketplace. What unfolded before my eyes I will never forget as long as I live. I have only one wish: to survive to take revenge on the Germans and Ukrainians. From all sides they began to roust groups of Jews of different ages and both sexes. Everyone was driven from their home in the state they were in when the Germans entered. In my mind's eye I can still see the first group, which included a small boy who was barefoot and naked, in his shirt. The Jews were all gathered together, sorted into groups, and ordered to lie down with arms and legs stretched out, face down on the ground. It was still quite cold, and the marketplace was covered in ice, snow, and mud. The SS troops (the pogrom was carried out by an

SS division, with the Stanisławów Gestapo chief, Krüger,[258] a notorious murderer and degenerate, who made a reputation for himself when, during the pogrom in Stanisławów, he sat in the cemetery, drank liquor, and with his own hand shot Jews without interruption – taking the lead), walking – one must understand this literally – across the backs of the Jews lying on the ground, and if anyone attempted to raise their head they received terrible blows all over their body from a heavy stick, also to the head. They began to load up the two trucks with the Jews who had been rounded up. About 25 people were put into each truck. The two trucks drove off at the same time. Each time they took away 50 people. In the beginning we didn't know what was being done with the Jews and where they were being taken. We became aware that 6 or 7 minutes after the vehicles left for the first time we heard the sound of shots. This was repeated in each instance, with the same precise timing. By then [15] we had absolutely no doubt as to the fate of the Jews who were being taken away.

My account of what happened at the pits is given on the basis of witness-statements from the few – in total 6 people remained alive – surviving Jews. The pits were located on a hill, so it was necessary to climb at a gallop up to the pits. Old people, the weak, and all those who held back were shot at the side of the hill. It became completely covered in dead bodies. Whoever reached the top of the hill had all their jewellery taken away: rings, watches, money, overcoats and other valuables. The Germans picked out three Jews from among those seized, whose task consisted in searching for and removing jewellery and other valuables from all the men and women who had been brought there. Then 7 people were lined up on the edge of the grave-pit, they were not standing facing the pit, but half turned away, with their arms pointing down to the grave. Behind them an SS man took up a position and fired until they had all collapsed and rolled down to the pit. The shots were fired using dum-dum bullets,[259] with the result that the martyrs were horribly mutilated. The Jews who were going to their death were told that they should hand over any foreign currency that they had in their possession. Some asked if they could buy themselves free with foreign currency

258 Hans Krüger (1909–1988), Obersturmführer, Sipo and SD chief in Stanisławów.

259 Type of bullets that expand on impact and produce larger wounds. Their use in time of war had been banned since 1868. The information about the use of this ammunition in Stanisławów has not been confirmed.

or gold. They received a negative answer. Then the Jews refused to hand anything over or to identify where they had hidden gold or dollars. Large amounts of foreign currency ended up going down into the grave along with the owners, – the murderers only shot the adults and the youngsters. They felt it would be a shame to waste bullets on children. They seized small infants by the arms, legs, and spun them round and threw them down into the pit. These are the actual facts of what happened.

This systematic and bloody work, unrecorded in history – at least in this form – continued for precisely 8 hours, from 8 in the morning until 4 in the afternoon, a full [16] working day. Exactly at 4 the murderers broke off their work and entered the largest Ukrainian restaurant, Roksolana, where they had a meal, drank, and ate copious amounts, then drove away. The harvest was over. This we saw with our eyes. Bloody corpses were also lying in the marketplace; those who had tried to flee and had been fired on, died on the spot. This bloody and systematic pogrom organised by the Germans claimed 2,500 victims from the Rohatyn Jews. Only 1,300 Jewish souls survived out of 3,600. Eight hundred – 800 – small children aged up to 10 years were killed. The flower of youth has been lost to the world. The young people aged below 18 – male but especially female – were almost all murdered; of the girls only a few were left alive. A total of 500 young people died; including children, totaling 1,300. The disproportionate number of victims were women and children, because "women and children will not be harmed", or so they thought. They had expected a degree of chivalry towards women and children on the part of the German murderers. They were bitterly disappointed, and therein lies the explanation for the huge number of murdered children, female youth, and women. My acquaintance at whose home I had drunk coffee that morning, told me later how her family, with the exception of a 70-year-old women, was able to escape death. She looked out and spotted the degenerate criminal Krueger. He also spotted her. She was extremely frightened. She went into the room where the children were still in bed. She let out a scream: children, follow me to the hideout! First she went up the stairs which lead to the attic. The children, half undressed, followed her. From the attic they all went down into a cellar. In the cellar they had already dug out a large, [17] sufficiently deep hole. This was the hideout and it was there that the family hid out with the children. As they were climbing the stairs to the attic Krueger knocked and ordered: open up! He would certainly have forced open the door

and the whole family would have been doomed. To their good fortune he noticed that an elderly Jew was running from a neighbouring house and trying to save himself by fleeing. He set off chasing after the fleeing man and shot him dead. Having dealt with the old man he returned to the apartment of my acquaintance, broke open the door, and found the sick 70-year-old woman lying in bed. He killed her with two shots and then began to look for the other members of the family. He was sure there must be someone in the building. After all, he had seen the landlady through the window. They couldn't have been able to get out of there. He went up the attic and fired some shots, calculating that the children would take fright and start to cry. The children held out, stayed sitting in hiding for many hours, and did not betray the hiding place. In the course of that day the Germans and Ukrainians were in the building 10 times but did not find the hideout.

Not everyone who was shot and thrown down into the grave was dead. Many were merely wounded, lightly or severely. A considerable number lived on for many, many hours. Even early on the morning of the Shabbat, that is, the following day, the graves 'rose up and spoke' (these are the actual words used by the narrator). By this she meant that on the Shabbat there were most likely people still alive, moving, and attempting to get themselves out from under the mass of the dead, unfortunately without success. In addition from the pits could be heard sighing, groaning and weeping from the Jews in their death agony. One could also hear the sound of talking coming from the grave-pits. On the morning of the Shabbat there was a doctor standing by the grave and he heard a woman say: *Doktór mnie nie poznaje!*[260] The Germans promised an 18-year-old youth, a splendid, accomplished young man by the name of Alter, [18] that they would allow him to live if he would identify places where the surviving Jews were lying so that they could be finished off. In fear for his life and driven by the unconscious instinctive to live – after all, he was just an 18-year-old young man – he did the Germans' bidding and led them to the dying and also to the surviving Jews, and they received an extra serving of bullets. His father and mother were murdered in front of him. However, the bandits failed to keep their word: the last to be executed was this youthful and captivating fellow. Only 3 women were able to escape from the grave. They were: a woman named

260 (Polish, in Latin characters) The doctor does not recognise me!

Barban, the mother of two children, who also survived. ᶜOne boy worked in the workshop of a Christian, the daughter fled [. . .]. She was fortunate.ᶜ[261] The woman was the sixth in a row at the edge of the pit. She was less seriously wounded. Her husband, a lawyer in Rohatyn, was lying next to her in the grave, suffering his final moments. Before he died he spoke to her: 'Move away from me. I don't want to see you die.' He remained in the pit. At 5 in the afternoon she dug herself out from under the pile of bodies. She was a terrifying sight: soaked in blood from head to toe. The Ukrainian policeman made no attempt to stop her fleeing. She found her way to a family she knew which belonged to the Polish intelligentsia and who lived not far from the ghetto. There she was washed, her wounds bandaged, and then she was put to bed. For several weeks she remained in a state of deep shock. She survived. The second woman who managed to escape from piles of dead was a Miss Lazar. She also survived. The third who crawled out was a young refugee from Essen, Germany, a Miss Spiegel. She later died of the gangrene that had infected her wounds.

Of the men who were seized and stood next to the pits only 3 (three) were saved from death. These were the men who had been tasked with searching the victims and taking [19] their valuables from them. Their names were: Krayzler, Shnitzer, Tsuker. Before the very eyes of one of them (Zucker) they shot his wife and his one and only 10-year-old son. The child screamed and wailed: *Tatusiu, nie oddaj mnie. Nie chcę umrzeć!*[262] The father was powerless to save his cherished only son. At the end the Germans wanted to shoot those three Jews. They were able to buy their lives with the promise that they had hidden a lot of gold and would hand it over. On the way back to the marketplace these Jews were able to disappear, by extricating themselves and running away.

6 members of the *Judenrat* were killed. The *Landrat* picked out 4 members from the crowd at the marketplace and spared their lives. Most likely he was indebted to them for certain favours. There were also 11 doctors at the marketplace ready for the slaughter. At the last moment the *Landrat* separated them from the crowd and had them placed to one side. They survived.

The Germans fired shots into all the cellars and other hiding places where Jews were concealed. They shot anyone who made the slightest attempt

261 Note at the bottom of the page, inserted as indicated by the author.

262 (Polish, in Latin characters) Daddy, don't give me away, I don't want to die!

to escape. The next day in the ghetto they collected 6 carts filled with corpses. They also shot dead all the sick people in their homes. The Ukrainians pointed out the hiding places of the Jews.

For the Germans, slaughtering Jews became a task which they carried out with complete precision and German thoroughness. When it came to the final load which they dispatched around 4 o'clock, there was one Jew missing, the fiftieth. In the marketplace, on the side [20] which belonged to the ghetto, there lived a female dentist, Mrs Szumer-Teitelbaum. Her attitude towards the Germans when they would carry out inspections was always strong and firm, almost defiant. On that terrible Friday she had absolutely no intention of hiding away. She was unyielding. Her husband hid himself. She put on her white smock, paced up and down in her consulting room, saying: "Nothing can threaten me here. 'They' can't do anything to me. I am physician, a dentist." 'They' however stormed into her office, since they were one Jew short of the full complement, dragged her across the marketplace together with her 4-year-old daughter Martusia, on the way beating her in an appallingly brutal manner, then they pushed the mother and daughter onto the truck. The woman's head was split open. When the final batch was driven to the burial mound, the proud Mrs Teitelbaum was no longer able to climb up to the grave, so badly had she been beaten. The bandits shot her on the incline at the base of the hill. Her daughter, Martusia, the young girl of 4 years, was not shot. She was clinging to her mother who was holding tightly onto her daughter. She froze to death. That day, 20 March 1942, it was very cold, freezing.

A certain Jew who had no idea what was happening that day arrived from a village with a jar of milk. The Germans placed the jar on top of his head and beat him until he expired from the blows.

An unknown woman who arrived in Rohatyn a day earlier was shot at the base of the hill. The bullets only struck her arm. She feigned death and in order to hide and conceal herself, she lay on one corpse and covered herself with another. In this way she lay there from 11 to 4 in the afternoon, until'[263]

263 The document abruptly ends here.

8

June–July 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Abraham Lewin, [diary from 27 June [?] to 10 July 1942]

[2][264] [. . .] the German people and not the Nazi-clique – live in fear and in turmoil. It's possible that the pogroms of the Jews will be the dynamite that would tear the German people apart from within. It is extremely sad that we, together with our children, grandparents and great-grandparents, must be the messiah for humanity, that our blood must soak the soil of Germany, and purify it for rebirth, but I want to hope and believe that the main value and effect of the British propaganda will be above all to arouse and to agitate the conscience of the German people itself. Perhaps the cry of the world on our behalf will serve as the trigger for the upheaval in Germany that should and must come.

Surely I must reckon with the fact that these hopes I have expressed are perhaps no more than illusions, that they are dictated by my idealistic view of the world and even to a certain extent by my naïvete, though in this epoch and at my age it is difficult to maintain the pure, pristine, human honesty, which 'smart and experienced' people label naïvete, but as the refrain of Tchernichovsky goes:

Laugh, laugh at all the dreams,
That I dream and tell about
For I still believe in mankind,
And in his spirit, so strong and brave.[265]

In spite of all the shocking events and bitter disappointments, I still believe in humanity and even in . . . the Germans (is not Thomas Mann[266] enough?). In the final analysis, if we can still have hope and live in expectation of a brighter future, this can only come from humanity's consciousness and from an understanding that it is a fundamental, self-evident and

264 Beginning of the text missing. In the original, this page is numbered '3)', as is the next one.

265 In the original in Hebrew, excerpts from the poem 'Ani maamin', 'I Believe.' Shaul Tchernichovsky (1875–1943), Hebrew poet, born in Ukraine; moved to Palestine in 1931.

266 Thomas Mann (1875–1955), German writer, awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1929.

natural truth that the greatest sanctity in the world belongs to life, above all else: human life, and that human blood is inviolable under all circumstances. This new consciousness must and will come to pass. A new humanity will awaken, to which the German people will also belong.

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These are all visions and dreams of the future. For now, the blond Nazi beast is carrying on his bloody work in the ghetto. Today I heard an account of the killing of three Jews who were murdered in broad daylight, in the sunshine of a summer's day. Already no stranger to us, the murderer Frankenstein (the Jews' comfort from believing that he had been sent to the front proved unfounded) shot dead around 1 o'clock in the afternoon today a 23-year-old Jew who was driving a rickshaw at the corner of Gęsia and Okopowa Streets. He had asked him why he was there. The young man answered that he had brought a passenger there [3] and was about to leave. The murderer took out his revolver and with two shots left the Jew – a strong, handsome young man – dead on the street. Today the caretaker at Elektoralna 6 was murdered, as well as his acquaintance who just happened to be visiting. The spectre of blood never leaves the ghetto even for a single day. When will this all end, and will it be granted to us to see its end?

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Last Saturday at the Wileński railway station in Praga[267] a tragic incident occurred which cost the lives of several victims and is a matter of most profound regret, for any number of reasons.

I don't know the details for certain. I only heard that an altercation broke out between a group of Jewish labourers who were working there and the chief foreman, a Pole (others say he was a *Volksdeutscher*). The Pole supposedly insulted one of the Jewish workers in the harshest terms, to which the Jew responded with a spade or an iron bar, killing the Pole. At this a bloody fight erupted between the Poles, whose number quickly grew, and the Jews, which resulted in 2 Jews being killed and about 20 wounded. Finally the Germans gave

267 District of Warsaw, on the right bank of the Vistula River.

protection to the Jewish workers and escorted them back home to the ghetto. We must mourn the loss of three human lives as well as deeply regretting this episode. Incidents such as this are oil poured on the Hitlerites' fire and are deeply gratifying to them. They are very happy to see outbursts of hatred between Jews and Poles. It makes their task of subjugating and definitively destroying the country easier, according to the longstanding principle: *Divide et impera*.[268] It is our obligation; we must strive for a peaceful and amicable co-existence with the Poles. We have to remember that we have one common enemy, the Nazi Germans, and only with our combined strength will it be possible, when the time comes, to expel him from the soil of Poland. Incidents such as these, besides squandering the victims' lives, are most harmful from a political standpoint, for us and also for the Poles.

May such incidents never happen again!

Today this episode had a further tragic repercussion. A clerk of the *kehillah*, Dessen, was going to work. On the way to Żelazna Street, he was attacked by a Polish policeman who beat him severely with a rubber truncheon. The policeman declared openly that this was revenge for the Pole who was killed by Jews. [4] All the while he was shouting that what was being done to the Jews was too little, and so on. This is bloody proof of how destructive such incidents are.

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After a relatively long pause the Germans have today again seized Jews for labouring jobs on Leszno at the corner with Żelazna Street.

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Tonight there was a raid by several Germans, including two officers, on the building where I live. They entered the ghetto through a hole that has been dug in the ghetto wall near Przejazd Street by means of which smuggling takes place. They broke into apartments, beat up women, and searched for contraband, though in reality this was looting. In the end they found a substantial stash of rubber goods, which they confiscated and carried out,

268 (Latin, in Latin characters) Disunite and rule.

likewise through the hole. They also fired on Jews who were running to hide. Fortunately the shots missed them. The general feeling is that this was a private initiative, simply put, a robbery. It is further proof of the moral decline and degenerate state to which the German Hitlerite army has sunk.

Tuesday, 30 June, 1942

This morning the bodies of 8 murdered Jews were collected on the streets of the Warsaw ghetto. Several bodies were lying on Lubeckiego Street. The victims had been brought to that location and shot there. Who they were is not known. According to one version they were supposedly agents of the Gestapo. One of the men who was shot was called Miler and he ran a tea house at Zamenhofa Street 41.

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Each person carries within a reflection of the sky – we look up at it the whole day long and half the night, but we remember it only through its appearance at particular moments. Bialik carried within him the image of the Ukrainian sky as he had seen it in the years of his childhood (see his *Saphiah*)[269] and considered it the most beautiful sky in the world, even more beautiful than the Italian sky and others.

I don't find that one sky is more special than any other. I carry within me the images of the sky that I saw at different periods of my life and in different countries. In this way to this day the image of the sky I saw [5] in my childhood years from the heder[270] (in Muranów, Warsaw) lives on within me, from one rainy day, it seems to me, on Lag ba-Omer.[271] The sky was grey-blue, covered in heavy black clouds which sped across the sky at a tremendous speed. The hurrying pace of the clouds made a strong impression on me, as though for first time I became aware that clouds could hurry and chase *hendum-pendum*[272] across the sky.

269 Published in English in 1939 in New York under the title *Aftergrowth*.

270 (Hebrew) literally, room, chamber; traditional Jewish school for boys over 3 years old (from late 19th century also for girls).

271 (Hebrew) a minor festival on which the rules of abstinence in force during the other 48 days of the period between Passover and Shavuot are relaxed; a traditional day for outings from schools.

272 (Yiddish) idiomatic, at break-neck speed; hell-for-leather.

That sky with the speeding, driving clouds has remained in my memory my whole life. At that time I was a boy aged 7 or 8.

I likewise remember the sky that I saw from the balcony of a street in the eastern part of Berlin in the early evening hours. The sky was covered in a marvellous tapestry of light and delicate clouds which gave rise to a mysterious and beautiful mosaic made up of various geometric forms. I sat there a long time, looked up at the sky, and thought: how beautiful and entrancing the sky can be, even in Berlin! This was in the summer of 1923. I carry that Berlin sky within me to this day.

I also remember the sky from Eretz Israel as it was on a certain afternoon in February 1924. I was walking along the highway near the Mikveh Israel.[273] A light rain had just been falling, as it commonly does in Eretz Israel, but it soon cleared up and a rainbow appeared, a long, long rainbow. The broad sky of Eretz Israel together with that many-coloured rainbow have become deeply etched into my memory. It seemed to me that such a brilliant rainbow was to be seen in no other corner of the world. That sky of Eretz Israel and the rainbow dwell in my soul to this day.

I also remember the sky in Italy, in Rome. I reached Rome from Genoa after midnight during summertime. Early the next morning I leapt out of bed in my hotel room and rushed to the window to see outside, above all to see the sky. I was dazzled and bewitched: such a blue, such a dark, luminous blue is, presumably, not to be seen in any other corner of the world. The sky of Rome has also been preserved in my memory.

All these sky reminiscences came to mind as I was looking around at people in the ghetto. Nothing here looks as it once did, before the war. The streets are not the same: they are dirty and run down. The buildings – many are destroyed, in ruins. The people – not at all the same. No Christians are to be seen, with the exception of a few tax officials and collection agents for the gas and electricity companies. The Jews look like shadows and not like people. Sometimes one runs into a man or a woman one has not seen in a long time and one gets a shock: they are simply hard to recognise now. [6] It's not the same person. Just a shadow of the former self. In short: everything in the ghetto has changed. Only one thing has remained unsullied. That is:

273 (Hebrew) Hope of [People] Israel, a village in the Tel Aviv district. In 1870 the first Jewish agricultural school in Palestine was established there.

the deep blue sky. Only the sky is beyond the reach of the all-powerful dictator. A few heavy bombers can climb up there with the fearful whine of their engines, but they are insignificant compared with the great, deep, free sky. So I do indeed often look up to the sky and learn that the sky of the ghetto is also beautiful and entrancing, no uglier than the sky in Rome or elsewhere. This is a comforting both for the eyes and for one's morale. For where should we turn our eyes, where around us swirls only annihilation, ruins, and naked cold death? Just one thing is missing from our ghetto sky: it has no horizon. The ghetto is so small and surrounded by walls and ruined buildings. There is no open space where the eye can roam over a broad field of vision and see a broad expanse of sky with a horizon. We see the sky only the way a prisoner sees it from his cell. This is sad and depressing enough.

Only at the cemetery on Gęsia Street can we find spread before us a more open piece of land and a broader sky. But there is one problem, namely that the cemetery is located outside the ghetto and 'normally' one should first have 'closed one's eyes' before being able to enter freely. But in that case it is all the same: a narrower or broader sky, with or without a horizon.

Hitler has taken everything away from us: space, air, bread, even the sky.

Wednesday, 1 July, 1942

Today we again experienced a day full of nightmares, filled with the dread of death. The night between Tuesday and Wednesday brought a large death toll, that is, people shot dead by the Gestapo murderers. It is difficult to tell the number. Maximum and minimum figures are given. The maximum is 14. I found out about a few of the shootings. At Nowolipki Street 30, whose gateway also serves to enter Dzielna Street 25 (located opposite the Pawiak prison, and people do not go there), a Jewish woman, the caretaker, was shot when she opened the gate. Then the murderers entered the caretaker's apartment at Dzielna Street 25 and shot him and his wife. Actually, many assume that they came just for the caretaker at Dzielna Street 25. He was [7] supposedly engaged in smuggling. Just incidentally they happened to shoot the female caretaker at Nowolipki Street 30. Of course they didn't want to leave a witness to their crime. Then at Nowolipki Street 36 they shot a Jewish porter and a Christian woman who was living with him. An altercation and a scuffle apparently broke out there between the Gestapo men and the victims. The porter was reported as having a firearm. Others say that he or the Christian woman grabbed a revolver from one

of the Germans. The porter was shot in bed. He left behind three small children. Two well-dressed men were taken to Karmelicka Street 1 and shot dead. A woman was brought to Karmelicka Street 6 and shot dead. Several people were shot dead on Smocza Street. The majority of the victims, it turns out, came from the circle of porters who were involved in some rather shady business. They worked together with the Gestapo, revealing goods kept by Jews, and extorting 'ransom money'. Now the word is that they are being liquidated by the Gestapo itself, because new people are said to be arriving and they don't want to leave any witnesses of their machinations and unsavoury business dealings. That is one version. Others are saying that the porters are divided into two factions that are feuding among themselves and that each is betraying the other. The recent murders are supposedly a result of both sides informing on each other.

Whatever the case, we are living in an unceasing stinking miasma of death and blood.

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In addition to the news of the murders, which one person tells to the next in fear and trembling, because he does not know whether he is next in line, we are informed that it is a certain fact that yesterday the Gestapo ordered the Cemetery Department[274] of the *gmina* to prepare a common grave pit for 200 bodies. This news came as a terrible shock to everyone in the ghetto. For whom is the mass grave to be prepared? A woman who is supposedly well informed explained to me that the grave is being prepared for the 230 Jewish detainees who a few days ago had been taken from the Jewish prison on Gęsia Street in order to be shot. Among these unfortunates there was said to be an 80-year-old man. We won't have to wait long to find out the truth and for whom the grave is destined. [8] In fact, today brought an abundance of frightening news. Someone told me the following as 'certain' news: it is reported that a German was found murdered, and the Germans were saying that the Jews had murdered him and were demanding 100 Jews to be shot.

274 The Cemetery Department, also known as the Department of Cemeteries or the Department of Cemetery and Funeral Affairs, oversaw the cemetery at Okopowa Street. See: *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

Apparently official announcements would be appearing regarding this matter. The same person also told me: a tunnel had supposedly been discovered under Gestapo headquarters on Aleja Szucha. The Germans believe that this was for an attempted raid by the Poles together with the Jews on the Gestapo archives. In short, one provocation after the other.

And, in the face of what may come, the apprehension and terror grow. Another dreadful piece of news: a Jewish girl, who arrived today from Otwock, is said to have reported that yesterday the Germans shot 400 – four hundred – Jews in Otwock.[275] Everything is believable. With 'them', anything is possible.

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We are starting to experience in the most direct way the impact of the Gypsies' presence in the ghetto. In recent months the bread ration has been cut from 2,5 kilos to 2 kilos a month. On the other hand, the labourers and officials were given an extra 4 kilos of bread per month. This month the officials are not receiving their additional allocation of 4 kilos. This bread is supposedly designated for the Gypsies.

The result will be that the Jews will go even more hungry, while the Gypsies will not get enough to eat. It is reported that a delegation of Gypsies approached CENTOS (a children's welfare organisation) and requested that their children be taken care of and offered protection.

Apparently the Gypsy delegation received a gratifying answer.

The CENTOS management acted correctly and in a humane fashion.

Thursday, 2 July 1942

It is hard to pick up my pen. A heavy weight is pressing on my soul. Hard to breathe, to keep going, in such a nightmarish atmosphere.

It looks as though the Germans have embarked on an extermination operation in the Warsaw ghetto. They have begun to carry out mass murders. 'Everyone' is saying today that yesterday the Germans shot 110 Jews, 100 inmates of the Jewish prison, as well as 10 policemen who were arrested last week. According to another source, [9] the number of executed inmates was 120, together with 10 policemen. Of these, 6 were those whose arrest was demanded by the Germans and 4 who were arrested at random, because those

275 No confirmation was found.

demanded did not give themselves up. It was further reported that the dead were transported to the cemetery at Gęsia Street and buried there in the prepared grave. A further source, someone who has a position at the cemetery, told me that the grave is still open, has not been filled up, and has just the 13 victims from the previous night – 6 Jews, and 7 Christians – who have been buried there. The Jews who were shot – according to him it was 130 – have been buried in a mass grave in Babice[276] near Warsaw. He said that on Tuesday the Germans had demanded 20 gravediggers. They were taken to Babice, where they dug a large grave. Each of them received 15 kilos of potatoes for their work.

A further report has it that the day before yesterday the expulsion of 70,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto was imminent. For the time being, the *gmina* has succeeded in getting the decree repealed [?], at a price of one million zlotys. Jews also say that a special SS division has come to Warsaw, in order to take charge of the ghetto, because Auerswald, our commissioner, is too liberal.

Such is the news for today. If we were to add to this the truly melancholy news from Sevastopol[277] about the new offensive begun by the Germans on the southern and central Russian front, and about their thrust into Egypt – they are said to be already nearly at the gates of Alexandria – when one sums up our situation here in this place, together with the overall world situation a deep gloom grips us and we struggle to breathe.

We can feel the panting of death beating its wings over our heads. Will the survivors be saved? Will the *she'erit hapletah*[278] of us be spared?

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Although we ourselves are in mortal danger, we are trembling with fear in this moment over the fate of Eretz Israel. The war is approaching its

276 On 2 July 1942 in Babice (Warsaw County), 100 Jews selected at random from among the Gęsiówka prisoners, and 10 members of the Jewish police, accused of objecting to German orders, like smuggling or staying outside the ghetto without permission were executed by shooting. Among the murdered were 10 women, two of them pregnant. See: *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

277 Sevastopol – city in the Crimean Peninsula, captured by Axis forces on 4 July 1942.

278 (Hebrew) ironic reference to Leviticus 2:44–45; after WWII, often: the Holocaust survivors.

borders.[279] The Jewish settlement numbering half a million and the pioneering work of 60 years face the greatest danger. If I were a believer I would pray: 'God, at least please save Eretz Israel!'

[10]

Friday, 3 July 1942

Yesterday afternoon announcements were posted everywhere in the name of the ghetto Commissioner Auerswald, with the following content: 'Given that recently there have been cases of Jews failing to follow the orders of the German police and even resisting the police by force, and because the Jewish order police have failed to carry out their duties as required and were culpable of trying to bribe German officials and of other outrages – in reprisal 100 Jews out of those who had been held in detention for several months were shot today, as well as 10 Jewish order police men. If further cases of opposition to the German police should recur in the future, such acts of reprisal will be repeated.'

This is the substance of what was on the posters – as retained in my memory. Like all Auerswald's regulations and announcements, they are published in German and Polish.

In this way the rumours that were circulating in the ghetto were confirmed. This is the first time that the Germans have carried out a mass murder such as this in the ghetto and, at the same time, announced it in such naked, extremely cynical, language. They do not state where and when cases of resisting the German police by force occurred. As far as we know, there were no such cases – unless certain Jews, porters, tried to resist the German murderers when they came to shoot them. This was what was recounted about a porter at Nowolipki Street 30 and 36; and a certain porter supposedly knocked from the hand of the German policeman the revolver with which he was to be executed and made his escape.

Jews have just one right – as a Nazi minister once put it – in Germany: to die. Today they have solely the right to allow themselves to be slaughtered like lambs. Should a Jew attempt to save himself from death – when he has nothing left to lose – by defending himself against his murderers, then 100 innocent Jews pay with their lives.

279 A reference to another Axis offensive in Northern Africa, launched in late May 1942.

It is hard to find in history another such repugnant, unconscionably criminal poster, intended to serve as cover for the vile, despicable [11] and bloody act of murdering 110 innocent lives.

Among those killed were apparently 10, according to others sources 20, women. Among them was a stunningly beautiful 20-year-old young woman, who was known to every agent on the other side of the wall. She had broken her arm and was in hospital. Even among the Germans there were those who wanted to save her. It was to no avail. She was ordered out of the hospital and murdered. Where the 110 executed Jews were buried is not known for sure. Many say it was in Babice, and according to others, it was in Bródno.[280]

Their only crime consisted in the fact that they had crossed over to the 'other' side in order to smuggle back a few kilos of potatoes so as to save themselves and their families from starvation.

I had a sleepless night. I tossed and turned in fear and anxiety: there will be a ring at the door and they will have come for me as well.

Yesterday in broad daylight Jewish and Polish blood was shed on the streets of Warsaw. At the gate on Leszno Street at the corner of Żelazna Street, the famous murderer Frankenstein shot dead a young Jewish janitor, as well as a Christian. It is possible that this involved the attempted transfer of a package from one side to the other. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon at Orla Street 4 a Christian was murdered. A small limousine drew up and 3 men got out: a uniformed German, a second in civilian clothes, and another aged about 40, very elegantly dressed, in white gloves, who was smoking a cigarette. They went into the entrance and up the stairs to halfway between the floors. The officer told the man to sit in the window, then shot at him, killing him on the spot. He went down to the street, found a Jewish policeman, and ordered that within 15 minutes the dead body should be removed and the blood stains wiped clean. After 10 minutes a Jewish hearse-wagon carried away the dead man.

The passivity with which Christians and Jews alike allow themselves to be shot is quite remarkable. Why did such a strong 40-year-old Pole not throw himself at the German and fight tooth and nail? He wouldn't have saved himself from death, but he might perhaps have been able to strangle

280 At the Jewish cemetery in the north-eastern part of Warsaw, on the right bank of the Vistula River.

the German or at least injure him. After all, someone in his position no longer had anything to lose. The Germans would then have to look for other ways to kill their victims. [12] So they wouldn't be able to commit murder on the streets in broad daylight with such effortless 'elegance' and sadistic gratification. Why such submissiveness and passivity? It turns out that when one senses the wings of death beating above one's head one loses courage and becomes completely resigned and indifferent.

Today on Karmelicka Street I saw a small limousine passing by. A Gestapo officer sat in the backseat, and next to him a deathly pale young man, probably a Pole, not wearing a cap. He was glancing nervously this way and that (they were heading into the Pawiak prison). Probably the young man figured that he was seeing the street, people, buildings, and the sky for the last time. And so the question arose in me: why didn't that young man attack the German? Perhaps his desperation would have lent him additional strength and he would have been able to overcome the German? At least the cost of his life would have been paid with the life of a German Gestapo officer. Why such a general paralysis? Truly 'led like lambs to the slaughter'.[281] Yesterday, with its apparitions and tidings of Job, is fixed in our memory as one of the darkest days in the ghetto, to be designated as 'Black Thursday'.

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In those normal pre-war times on summer days when people went lightly dressed one could see at a glance that there were a relatively large number of pregnant Jewish women. At every turn one could see women in the final months of pregnancy, a state so vividly characterised by the Hebrew saying: 'The belly is between her teeth'.[282]

Nowadays, in these times when on every street in the ghetto there are several undertakers and the hearse-carts circulate without pause – literally without pause – around the island of death we call the ghetto, one sees almost no pregnant Jewish women. In the ghetto one either dies or is murdered. One is not born. The statistics of deaths and births are terrifying. One can quite easily work out when the last Jew in the ghetto will die, even if the Germans

281 In the original in Hebrew, from Isaiah 53:7.

282 In the original in Hebrew, from *Mishna*, Rosh Hashana 2:8.

do not use the method they used in Chełmno,[283] Wilno,[284] Słonim,[285] and other places, if the war [13] and the occupation, God forbid, continue for a number of years.

But as the universal saying goes: 'There is no rule without an exception.'[286] As one walks through the ghetto and looks closely at the passers-by one can sometimes notice that a Jewish woman is expecting. Today I saw two such women. This made a great, I dare say, a colossal impression on me. If a Jewish woman, in today's dark and ruthless times, can summon up this degree of courage and commit to bringing into the world a new Jewish being and to raising it – that is an act of great heroism and fortitude. If I had even the slightest lyrical talent for writing poetry, I would write a passionate ode to the pregnant woman or to the young Jewish mother in the ghetto. They deserve to have a memorial raised to them in one of the few squares in the ghetto – provided naturally that we live to see the demise of Nazi infamy and the arrival of better times. At least symbolically these national heroines are refusing to allow the light of Jews and Jewry to be entirely extinguished.

I would like to suggest that all children born in the ghetto should be given a symbolic name: boys: Menachem[287] and the girls: Geule.[288] May these newborn souls who come to this tormented and tortured Jewish community be a glimmer of consolation for it.

Sunday, 5 July, 1942

Today we had the first summer day of the year. The sun was shining in such a mild way. The sky was such a limpid blue, with not a cloud to be seen. How hard it is on such a glorious day to bear the fetid air of the ghetto! Even more so, when everywhere hover the wings of the angel of death.

283 Chełmno nad Nerem (Kulmhof); the killing centre operated between 8 December 1941 and 7 April 1943, and later, in June and July 1944. More than 300,000 people were murdered there, the majority of them Jews, but also Poles, Romanies, and Russian POWs. The first accounts from Chełmno arrived in Warsaw in February 1942. See: Ferenc, *Każdy pyta*, pp. 322–344.

284 Wilno was captured by the Germans on 24 June 1941. On 9 July 1941, *Einsatzkommando* 9 along with *Ordnungspolizei* and Lithuanian units began carrying out mass executions in Ponary, 11 kilometres from the city. By the end of 1941, some 34,000 Jews had been murdered there. See: *Accounts from the Borderlands*, Docs. 21–29.

285 See: *ibidem*, Docs. 14–16.

286 In the original, both in Hebrew and Yiddish; popular saying.

287 (Hebrew) consoler.

288 (Hebrew) salvation.

At midday last Friday the Germans brought over a well-built and nicely dressed middle-aged man from the Aryan side, took him to Nalewki Street 10 and shot him 5 times. The man did not die straight away; the torment of his death agony went on for an hour. It turned out that the murdered man was a Jew who was most likely living on the Aryan side.

[14] Regarding the well-known Warsaw lawyer Rotfeld (from eastern Galicia), a few days ago the following sad incident took place: at half past eight in the evening he crossed over from Waliców Street to Krochmalna Street, i.e. from the so-called 'small' ghetto to the 'large' one. At the corner of Waliców and Krochmalna a German officer shouted to him, asking in a furious tone: *Dreckiger Jude, warum hast du mich nicht begrusst? Du wirst gleich niedergeknallt!*[289]

The officer told him to hand over everything he had on him and to put his head into a hole in the wire fence that divides that corner of the ghetto from the Aryan side. The lawyer, a man of advanced years, did not try to justify himself, nor did he beg for mercy. He obediently carried out all the orders of the officer. With his head held between the wires he felt how the officer was moving the revolver and scratching him. At that moment a Jewish policeman approached the officer and asked him to spare the Jew's life, because he knew him to be a decent person, and if he had not behaved as he was supposed to, it was because he was not [. . .] and was not fully aware. The officer turned to a second German in uniform standing next to him, asking: *Hans, was soll ich mit dem Juden machen?*[290] The other man replied: *Lass ihn, aber mit einem Souvenir.*[291] The souvenir that the officer gave him with the revolver was such that the lawyer Rotfeld did not regain consciousness until a few hours later in the consulting room of the surgeon, Dr Rosenblatt.

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It is reported that an appalling terror is raging on the Aryan side as well. Arrests, shootings, the rounding up of people in the street for work in Germany. These are daily occurrences. In Kraków in the famous *Rynek* ('market square'),

289 (German) 'You dirty Jew, why did you not greet me? You will be shot right away!'

290 (German) Hans, what should I do with this Jew?

291 (German) Let him go, but leave him a souvenir.

they hanged 8 Poles (they are still hanging there or were hanging for several days), and 200 of the most prominent citizens were arrested following an act of sabotage against a train loaded with provisions.[292]

In Warsaw, a bomb exploded in the building on Koszykowa Street at the corner of Aleje Ujazdowskie,[293] [15] which was occupied by a department of the German authorities. The building was said to have been partially demolished, and several Germans were apparently killed.

I heard that yesterday, Saturday, all the Polish traders were driven out of the Hala Mirowska.[294] They were given just half an hour. Furthermore, all the Poles are apparently to be expelled from the Żoliborz district.[295]

It is difficult to believe that such appalling terror can last for long. If it is true that bayonets cannot rule indefinitely, then it is also true for terror and the gallows. The world will not let itself be terrorised forever.

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What the Jews in the street, the 'common folk', believe about the outcome of the war and the disagreeable role that Britain is playing in it, is reflected in a new joke which I heard recently. In my view it is worth telling. It is really, really symptomatic.

So it's 1945. Hitler gives a speech in Berlin. He addresses all the National Socialists, saying: *Gennosen,*[296] we have lost the war. It cost us 15 million lives. What does that leave us with? Only National Socialism.' Stalin speaks in Moscow, saying: 'Comrades, we have been defeated in the war. Our losses are 25 million people. What does that leave us with? Only communism.'

292 On 26 June 1942, seven Poles were hanged in Kraków near the Kraków-Płaszów train station in retaliation for an underground operation in which they derailed a military train.

293 On 24/25 June 1942 a bomb planted by the Home Army exploded in the building on Aleje Ujazdowskie 9, which had been renovated to become the *Kriminalpolizei* headquarters.

294 (Polish) a complex of two buildings in the Mirów square, erected at the turn of the twentieth century; it was the city-owned, largest trade institution in Warsaw, with approximately 900 retail shops.

295 The district located north of Warsaw city centre; inhabited mostly by intelligentsia and middle-class.

296 (German) comrades.

Churchill speaks in London. He addresses the British people, saying: 'Citizens, we have finally won the war. It costs us 60 thousand (60,000) lives, but as God is my witness: I did not send them. They themselves wanted to go.'

At present the Jews in the ghetto harbour deep resentment against the British. Why is it that they keep running away? Why do they suffer defeat after defeat, dragging out the war for such a long time? The cause of the war's long duration and Britain's failures is said to be that Britain is protective of its people and doesn't want them to suffer casualties. It wants to win the war using foreign blood. – It is difficult, very very difficult, to be an Anglophile at the present time.

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[16] A few days ago, I had a longish conversation with a young Jewish woman who came here a few weeks ago from Dęblin, or Irena, where about two months ago there was a pogrom in the form of deportation in an 'unknown direction' and which devoured about 2,500 Jewish souls.[297]

The family of the girl with whom I talked consisted of the girl herself, her older sister and her 54-year-old father who had a stomach ailment and was lying in bed most of the time. Her place of birth and the family's settled place of residence was Puławy on the Vistula. There the family ran a store at the steamboat station. Life was not too bad for them. As early as 1939, as soon as the Germans occupied Poland, the Jews were driven out of Puławy.[298] The family moved to Irena, the small town situated next to the Dęblin railway station. Very many of the Jews of Puławy also moved there. In the course of the expulsion the family lost their 22-year-old son and brother. He was so horrifically beaten by the Germans that he died from the blows (their mother had died before the war). In Dęblin, the family had lived in their own house and made a living selling household goods. The girl I was talking to, who was about 20 years old, had worked for the Germans on the railway doing dirty manual work, unloading coal and other hard labour with a shovel. Every day she got up early in the morning at 5 o'clock and went to her work place, which

297 Irena (Puławy County), settlement on the outskirts of Dęblin, today within the town limits. No confirmation of this deportation was found.

298 The expulsion of Jews from Puławy took place on 28 December 1939.

was located about 11 kilometres from the town. The work began at 7. It lasted until 5 in the evening, with a break at midday. They used to get home around 7 in the evening. This was the work she did for a period, even during the winter. For the work she was paid 49 groszes an hour which amounted to about 4 zlotys a day, because there was also a deduction for health insurance. In addition to their wages, the female workers, of whom there was a group of 11 working there, received an allowance every two weeks consisting of bread, fat, sugar, and other provisions, value at 60–70 zlotys. Although the work was difficult, in particular the need to walk 22 kilometres in all kinds of weather, they all worked hard and the Germans were satisfied with them. Her older sister had to stay at home, to look after the household and care for their sick father.

On that ill-starred Wednesday (the calamity happened on a certain Wednesday – which day of the month she couldn't remember, most probably in the early days of May) she went to work as she did every day and worked all day, without any sense of foreboding. On the way home they ran into a Pole who called out to them: [17] '*Panienki, wielkie nieszczęście stało się w waszym miasteczku.*'[299] At first they paid no great attention to his words. They thought that this was a 'joke' of an antisemite. It was not until another Christian gave them the same news that they realised that something had happened in the town.

When the young woman arrived in the town she was unable to locate her father and sister. In fact, the whole town had been emptied out. Only those who had been at work were left, or those who were in the town but had work cards. They apparently numbered about 1,500. The Jewish population, taken together with the refugees from Puławy, had recently amounted to 4,000. Thus, 2,500 Jewish lives were obliterated. (These numbers are not absolute. My informant is a simple girl, a child of the people, no intellectual, but most articulate and logical in her thinking. My view therefore is that though the numbers are not fully precise they are close to being accurate).

She learned what actually had happened in the town from those who had remained behind by virtue of their work cards. At 7 in the morning a large number of SS troops surrounded the town and drove out everyone who was in the Jewish homes, the young and the old – men and women – with

299 (Polish, in Latin characters) Young ladies, a terrible calamity has happened in your town; translation into Yiddish follows in parentheses.

the exception of those who showed their work cards. People were not permitted to take anything with them. They separated children from their parents and packed everyone into train wagons, children separately, women separately, men separately. In the process, such appalling scenes were played out that the girl was unable to describe them to me in detail. From what she said I got the sense that she experienced such a painful, unhealed wound to which she could not return. I did not have the heart to compel her or to ask questions that might awaken in her images of that terrible day. More hardened souls need to do this, in the first instance, those who were present there and saw it with their own eyes. The Germans shot dead the old, the sick and the helpless on the spot or at the station. Her 54-year-old father was also shot at the station. The sister was taken away with the mass of people sealed into the train wagons. 'Where were they being taken?' I asked and received the answer: 'To Sobibór.'[300] My interlocutor had not yet come to terms with the fact that there are no living Jews being held in Sobibór, they are just being killed. She doesn't want to think in this way as the fact is difficult to face. It is hard, terribly hard to accept that she also lost her sister. She says: 'Who knows, perhaps she is alive somewhere', although there has been no news at all from her, [18] nor from any of the expelled Jews of Dęblin. In the course of her account she told me as an aside a quite typical story: a certain woman from Dęblin who had lost her husband and 2 sons made contact with a Gestapo agent and made a deal with him that for 6,000 zlotys he would bring her family members to her. He assured her that if she failed to pay him the 6,000 directly the moment he arrived with the 3 people, he would shoot her and them as well. The woman agreed. The agent drove off and came back empty-handed. He explained that he had been unable to find the people he was looking for in Sobibór. He was told that they had been transported to Pinsk.[301] One must assume that this was merely a pretext and that they are no longer among the living. For his trouble and his travel expenses he extorted 1,000 zlotys from the unfortunate wife and mother. What happened

300 Sobibór killing centre (German: *SS-Sonderkommando Sobibor*) operated from 1942 to 1943 in the forest next to the village of Sobibór. The construction began in March 1942, and the first transports were brought in May 1942. In total, between 170,000 and 250,000 Jews were murdered there.

301 Pińsk (now Brest province, Belarus).

in Dęblin was repeated in the surrounding Jewish villages and small towns, such as Baranów, Michów, Ryki.[302] In place of the deported Jews, Czech and Slovak Jews were brought in. They took over the homes of the deportees. The Jews who have been brought in are working for the Germans. They are under detention, i.e. they stay in the labour camp for the whole week, and only on every other Sunday are they allowed to go home, to the town. As for the Poles in the towns I have mentioned, nothing bad has happened to them lately. They live freely and can move around at will. According to my informant (*'vox populi, vox Dei'*),[303] their attitude to the Jews has improved and become more friendly one. One can feel compassion and a sense of shared suffering on the part of the Polish population.

The young woman with whom I was talking said that after her father and sister were taken away, she felt alone as a stake in the world. She was all alone in the small house and there was no one to speak to, not at home nor in the town. It was terrifying. Then there was also talk that the county commissioner ordered that all the women in the town were to be held in barracks at the nearest airfield, that is, all the women who were working – and these were the only ones who had remained in the town – would be taken to a locked labour camp. It was at this point that she began to look for a way out of the Dęblin cage. From her entire family in Poland only an older sister was left, in the Warsaw ghetto (one brother had travelled in war-time from Wilno to America by way of Japan. She had received a letter from him telling her that he had joined the army). With the help of her sister she obtained a permit for 1,000 zlotys and was able to travel here legally. She works as a shop assistant in a pharmacy for 5 zlotys [19] a day. Her eyes look out at the world with boundless despair and hopelessness. Those who have lost their closest kin, parents, siblings, and children, cannot, it would seem, have any expectations for tomorrow, especially those who lived through a pogrom and expulsion along with slaughter, such as took place in Dęblin. Before the pogrom, the Jews of Dęblin lived in a closed ghetto. When the ghetto was surrounded, no one was able to save themselves by hiding with Christians, or by fleeing.

302 Baranów (Puławy County); Michów (Lubartów County). Jews from both villages as well as from the small town of Ryki were murdered in Sobibór in May and June 1942.

303 (Latin, in Latin characters) The voice of the people is the voice of God.

It is immensely painful and difficult to listen to accounts of such events and to look into the faces of the direct victims of Nazi barbarism.

Tuesday, 7 July 1942

There is a succession of such beautiful, clear, blue days, without the smallest cloud in the sky. But these days are also as heavy as lead and are devoid of hope. Each one of us asks himself: what will become of us and what will become of Europe and the entire world? In Egypt the German advance has been temporarily halted – on the way to Alexandria. But in Russia they are moving forward, and are positioned along on a broad front on the Don. Now they are attacking towards the south. What will happen now? Will they – these 20th-century Huns – devastate Russia and subjugate all of Europe? From the Atlantic to the Urals and from the Arctic Ocean to the Caspian Sea? What will happen to humanity and to us Jews? It is so terrible to contemplate this. All the promises and prophecies of democratic states remain to this day mere fanciful talk and empty threats. Are they truly powerless to undertake any substantial action? And the main issue: will the Germans allow the *she'erit hapletah* to live in the ghetto? Some kind of action is being prepared against our women. The labour department has begun to distribute work-cards to women in employment. Up to now they have left Jewish women in peace. What is the purpose of this? It is being said that the labour department requires 20,000 Jewish women for farm work. The grabbing of people on the streets, with the help of the Jewish police, is proceeding systematically. Last night people were seized from their beds and this morning there were round-ups on the streets. New victims for the German Moloch, and new extortion opportunities for the Jewish police.

Despite numerous losses and deaths in recent weeks the smuggling continues. True, it is not to the same extent as previously. The hole in the wall at the corner of Nowolipie and Przejazd Streets was sealed up, but smuggling is done over the 2.5-meter-high wall. All in all we are facing a dark and gloomy scene in which we are choked and suffocated to the point of desperation, to the point of madness.

When will the morning star heralding a new dawn appear, the salvation of the world which we await with such fervour and longing?

[20]

Wednesday, 8 July 1942

Help is not coming at all. We are running short of air and of patience. The news – political and strategic – is sad, depressing, and dispiriting. The Germans have crossed the Don and occupied Voronezh,[304] a city of 150,000 and an important centre of Russian industry, the heart and soul of Russia. The barbarian invasion pushes ever-deeper into the country and is occupying increasingly wide swathes of territory. What will become of *Matushka Rassiya*?[305] Will it be trampled under the boots of the marauding Axis bands?

Meanwhile things are quiet in the ghetto. After the mass slaughter of last week the murders have stopped for now, though I was told today that last night on Krochmalna Street a family of three was apparently shot dead: husband, wife, and child. The husband had been a porter and was involved in smuggling.

But the relative calm is also unnerving. The heart is not at peace. Are 'they' not planning a new decree against us? A new catastrophe? After so many experiences filled with tragedy the thought is inescapable.

There continue to be round-ups on the street for the labour camps. Last night many Jews were grabbed in their beds. More and more new victims, mainly youth.

Concerning the 100 Jewish detainees who were shot, it is reported that in the prison they asked for volunteers to go to the labour camp at Okęcie near Warsaw.

As for the 100 prisoners who were shot, they say that in prison they recruited volunteers to the labour camp at Okęcie near Warsaw. Very many detainees came forward. They selected the healthiest and the best-looking among them. Among those who were shot was one man who was sentenced to just 5 days for offering resistance to the police. The detainees had no idea that they were being led to their death. They were convinced that they were being transported to a labour camp.

By contrast, the 10 policemen did indeed know where they were being taken: they were told quite openly that they had to pay with their lives for

304 Voronezh – city in Russia, administrative centre of the province, 450 km south of Moscow. German troops captured Voronezh on 24 July 1942.

305 (Russian) Mother Russia.

the actions of the entire Jewish police. It is said that they remained heroically steadfast until the end. I was told that one of them, before being led away to his death, handed his colleague a gold watch with the request to pass it on to his wife and young son. He asked the colleague to tell his wife to explain to the child how his father died, and that when he grew up he should take revenge for his life being prematurely cut short. Then he broke down in tears.

Quite amazing: Jews still have a sense of humour and are thinking up jokes. For sure, it is gallows humour or tears falling on open wounds that bleed in pain, [21] but it is humour nonetheless. Jews, it turns out, need to laugh. Even if it is to 'laugh through tears'[306] – they have to laugh. Perhaps it is all for our good. One forgets just a little, and drives away the gnawing despair and the black, pitch-black, outlook with a witticism, a joke, a jest. Perhaps one should say: this too is for the best. Today I heard two examples of this gallows-humour. First: the Germans have given the firm of Kohn and Heller a licence to bring Jews from Eretz Israel (this is an allusion to the transporting of Jews from the Łódź ghetto to the Warsaw ghetto for a fee of 5–6 thousand zlotys). Second: the German government ordered half a million armbands for the Warsaw ghetto . . . for Jews from Palestine.

May the Jews never lack for bread and for air, just as they never will lack a sense of humour. This is also a blessing from heaven.

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More and more often one encounters on the streets of the ghetto large trucks piled high, loaded with heavy hob-nailed boots and old German military coats and other manufactured products and raw materials.

Work is proceeding full steam ahead. On behalf of the bloody occupier, Jewish tailors are sewing on a vast scale and without respite, producing military coats, warm trousers lined with fur, hats filled with pelt. This is all being prepared for winter, so that the German morale will not freeze on the Russian front. The production is carried out in 'shops', that is, factories, which are managed by Germans with only Jews working there, filling the orders

306 In the original literally: 'lizard's laugh'; a Jewish saying.

of the German government. People are saying that the value of the production has increased from 2 million zlotys per month at the beginning of the year to 12 million zlotys last month.

It could be that if the Warsaw ghetto has up to now been spared the total massacres of the kind that happened in Wilno and Lwów, and up to now has gotten away with smaller-scale killings (the maximum was 110 on one occasion), this has been thanks to the intensive, full-throttle work of Jews in the workshops of the ghetto. It might be that this acts to deter the local German authorities from enacting a radical solution for the Jewish question in the ghetto. I was told that a particular German owner of one workshop, last week, when the wings of the angel of death were beating over the ghetto, said to his Jewish workers: *Habt kein Angst. Die, welche arbeiten für uns Deutsche, werden die Letzten erschossen*.[307] It is perhaps in virtue of this that we are still alive and that the bread of a very substantial number of ghetto inhabitants comes from this source. Yet there is the painful awareness that we are working for and providing for our greatest and bitterest enemy, that we are nursing in our bosom the snake that is biting us and injecting into our body its deadly venom. This too must count as one of the not insignificant tragedies of the ghetto.

[22]

Friday, 10 July 1942

Yesterday in the forenoon hours, at 10.30, I was making my way along Nowolipie Street between Karmelicka and Zamenhofa Streets. I was twice approached by Jewish *khapers*,[308] members of the *Ordnungsdienst*, who wanted to take me to a labour camp, even though I certainly don't look like a young man. It was thanks to the fact that I produced my papers and thereby established my age that I was able to evade their clutches.

My heart sank and I was overcome by a feeling of gloom. Not because of danger to me. I knew that under current conditions there is no direct threat to me on the part of the Jewish *khapers*. What came to my mind was

307 (German) Don't be afraid. Those of you working for us, Germans, will be the last ones to be shot.

308 (Yiddish, literally) catchers, Jews who were responsible for bringing in, from among their communities, the required number of recruits to the tsarist army; a reference to the reign of Tsar Nicholas I.

our past, in the times of Nicholas I, when Jews were also abducted, and the knowledge that this dark chapter of the seizing of Jews by Jewish abductors could, in the middle of the 20th century, be repeated with such ruthless brutality; this thought was profoundly oppressive and demoralising. I met my Jewish friend Sh.,[309] an ordinary sort of person, who before the war was a 'writer' who wrote poetry and literary reviews in which he showed great aptitude and taste for belles-lettres. For his achievements, Jewish literature, in my opinion, owes him a great debt of gratitude from the point of view of language, euphony, and rendering of the inner essence and subtle nuances of Bialik's best poems.

This friend of mine, Sh., is having a difficult time. It is enough to take a look at his features and his grey head of hair. But even so he is one of the optimists. And I am fond of him for it. In these days of German victories, when strongholds such as Sevastopol collapse and large cities and industrial centres such as Voronezh fall, it is easy to wave away with hand, a gesture of resignation and declare oneself a pessimist.

In the third summer of the war it requires conviction and faith, faith that is grounded only in faith (to repeat: faith) that humanity will defeat the beast, to be able to declare firmly and clearly: I am an optimist and believe in a positive outcome to this terrible war. I pulled my friend Sh. aside and poured out before him something of my downcast mood. Once again he displayed his rock-solid optimism, and comforted me with the ancient biblical verse: 'Therefore shall their calamity come suddenly'[310] and with the ancient Talmudic saying: 'According to the suffering so will be the reward.'[311]

I took leave from my friend Sh., full of gratitude and somewhat strengthened in spirit. May those Jews be blessed who believe and hope that we will live to see the destruction of the Hitlerite phantom, and the sun of freedom shining over all enslaved peoples, together with the Jews.

To my friend Sh., my heartfelt congratulations. It is my wish that you may live to see the day of that sunrise.

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309 According to "Twilight Days", p. 56, footnote 95, it was Israel Sztern (Shtern) (?–1942?), poet and essayist, YIKOR activist in the ghetto.

310 In the original in Hebrew, from Proverbs 6:15.

311 In the original in Hebrew, from Pirkei Avot 5:23.

[23] Yesterday at Orla Street 6 there was once again the murder of a Christian, who had been brought over from the other side. Exactly a week ago, on Thursday, 2 July, there had been a similar case, as I noted. It's hard to understand what motivates them, whether they are murderers who kill for pleasure, or by profession, to bring Christians over here to the ghetto and to murder them on the ghetto pavement. Why are they doing this?

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On Wednesday evening a group of Jews from Biała Podlaska[312] were brought into the ghetto. They were taken to the *kehillah* building Grzybowska Street 26 and left on the street. I don't know any details yet. The only thing I heard was that they were kept in sealed wagons for 3 days. While crossing through the ghetto entrance, they were forced to kneel for half an hour. As for their number – we hear different estimates: 600–800. They were all hungry, thirsty, tired, broken. Jews who live on that street threw down bread to them and provided them with water. As for the refugees themselves, people are saying that they seem not be from Biała proper but from small neighbouring settlements and had been resettled there.

The refugees spent the whole night on the street.

The path of thorns that European Jewry is following to Golgotha has no end, under the reign of that devourer of human beings, Hitler.

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At the same time that 800 or 600 hundred broken Jews were brought into the ghetto, the humble violin of a Jewish musician was also broken.

On Zamenhofa Street, opposite the post office, a poor Jew would stand every day, playing the violin to collect a few zlotys for a crust of bread.

On Wednesday evening at half-past eight the car drove by that fills Jews with terror merely by appearing. Its passengers had already murdered many Jews on their way. That evening, they had already shot and wounded one woman on Karmelicka Street. When they arrived at Zamenhofa Street,

312 The section refers to people resettled from Biała Rawska (Rawa Mazowiecka County) or from Rawa itself; see *Czerniakow's diary*, entries for 8 and 9 July 1942.

it emptied in a second: the Jews disappeared into various holes. The car drove past and turned around. The Jew who had remained standing there with his violin was blocking their way so that they could not drive past. One minute later the violin was smashed into 4 pieces. Only then did they – the bandits – drive off. A group of people gathered around the Jew with his broken violin. He was standing there and weeping. 'How can I make a living?' he lamented. In breaking his violin, they also broke his life and the life of his family.

[24] Yesterday evening as I went past the ghetto gate on Nalewki Street at the corner of Świętojerska Street I witnessed a scene which cut me to the quick.

Right next to the gate on the 'other', Aryan, side, stood a long line of Jewish boys and girls of various ages and heights, younger and older, short and tall. All in poor clothing. All with emaciated, exhausted faces from hard physical labour. This was a group of Jewish labourers who were returning home to the ghetto after a full day's labour at their work site. Each had a small sack of potatoes or other food stuffs that they bought on the other side at lower prices. 4 gendarmes were standing at the gate, one of them high ranking. Each youngster went up to the gendarmes in turn and opened up for them to see the small sack or package that they were carrying. Then came the verdict: punishment or grace, either being taken into the small guard room, which meant that the whole sack would be confiscated, or set free to pass into the ghetto. For a while I observed the passing of judgements, this kind of court martial, and ascertained that out of each 4 or 5 labourers only one got through safely with their small portion of food. It was a sight to see, the exhausted, yet so endearing faces of these young people of ours who toil so hard, in order [25] to grasp and feel the complete inhumanity and barbarism of these present-day Huns. They know full well that for a whole day of hard labour one receives only about 3 zlotys. That's no kind of wage. The Jewish worker tries to make up the equivalent in the form of a small amount of food to bring into the ghetto. Then come the overfed barbarians who take away the produce the worker has bought, at the cost of at least 50–60 zlotys, often more. They suck from the youth all his physical strength and then condemn him and his family to death by starvation.

When one watches a scene like this there is rage in one's heart and all one's nerves and muscles strain together in that one desire, expressed by the word: revenge!

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In the corner in which I live,[313] which has an honourable place in the smuggling trade, a 'trust' or a partnership association has been set up comprised of all the smugglers who until now have been conducting their business at the Mylna–Przejazd–Nowolipki smuggling point. There are 21 involved. Up to now each smuggler has had an Aryan who provided him with supplies. But these suppliers have not always met their obligations in a conscientious way. They used to supply low-quality goods or goods that were underweight. Each smuggler individually [26] was exposed to losses. All of this led to the smugglers organising themselves into a business enterprise with centralised executive bodies. Each individual put in a certain amount of capital, and a management committee and a treasurer were chosen. All trading transactions are carried out exclusively via the committee; that is to say, they have been centralised. The smugglers think that this will work to their benefit and that their interests will be better protected. Following the setting up of this new organisation I have noticed that the amount of smuggling through the wall has fallen substantially. By contrast the 'united smugglers' are bringing wagons loaded with goods through the Tłomackie-Leszno gate. It turns out that this concentration of large amounts of capital has given them the opportunity to broaden the base of their commercial transactions and set themselves up on a more solid and reliable foundation. No outsider, that is, someone who does not live in that locale, has any right of access to the association or to the wall. If an outsider comes and attempts to smuggle something across the wall he will be attacked and beaten bloody. More than one bloody fight has broken out on this terrain.

This is how the Jewish corporations, monopolies and trusts appear in Warsaw ghetto today.

[27] Hitler concluded his speech on the day of the outbreak of the war, 1 September 1939, with a passionate appeal to the German people with an outpouring of words: 'My dear, beloved German people!' In these words, was expressed so much praise, so much flattery, and his adulation, for the most precious and uniquely valuable German people. In all of Goebbels's articles, which are written with such finesse, guile, and cunning, the leitmotif

313 See footnote 2, pt. 1.

is the absolute superiority and perfection of the German people. No shadow of self-criticism, of any negative national characteristics, that would need to be resisted. The high point of adulation – chauvinistic frenzy. For all that the Jewish people has an understanding of itself as people which has been 'chosen' there has never been any lack, it seems to me, of that disposition for self-criticism, in a search to identify its own faults and less desirable aspects. As the ancient folk-literature, the Midrash, so perfectly captures our national character as a 'impetuous nation who said: we will do, before: we will listen'[314] (hurried people who will say 'already done' even before hearing what is being asked of it). Jewish folk-sayings are full of self-mockery, of each Jew individually and of the people as a whole. How much mockery and derision are there in the popular saying: 'A Jew is good for going to the synagogue with'.

[28] Is not the work of Mendele,[315] from A to Z, a grand satire, a self-destructive criticism of each Jew individually and of the whole Jewish people collectively? The same goes for Sholem-Aleichem?[316]

To my mind this is a positive national trait. There is no harm done when one can also recognise one's own ugly deformity. This leads to self-criticism and tendencies for self-improvement. It is an obstacle to chauvinism.

But in the ghetto this characteristic of ours has been taken to such an extreme, to such a level of hyper self-condemnation that one must take a stand against it and make an attempt to protect the unfortunate Jewish people. We in the ghetto are victims of the most barbaric regime that history has ever known. The entire ghetto is a sick body covered in wounds. All kinds of tragic phenomena are revealed before our eyes. [. . .] the seizing of Jews by the Jews themselves. The corruption and so forth. What horror, what moral degeneration. The Jew in the street says: 'Look what evil the Jews themselves are doing! What a vile and wicked people the Jews are!'

This Thursday I was walking through the courtyard between Nalewki Street 17 and Zamenhofa 14. Suddenly, people came running. The gate to Nalewki was slammed shut. Shots were heard. What was happening? It turns

314 In the original in Hebrew/Aramaic, from BT *Ketubot* p. 112 and Exodus 24:7; followed by interpretation in Yiddish in parenthesis.

315 Mendele Moykher Sforim (pen name of Sholem Yakov Abramowicz, 1836–1917), a pioneer of modern Yiddish and Hebrew literature.

316 Sholem Aleichem (pen name of Solomon Rabinovich) (1859–1916), classic Yiddish writer.

out that they were leading a group of captured Jews [29] through Nalewki from Tłomackie who are to be sent to a labour camp. Their relatives began to press forward towards them. Then the gendarme started shooting. So who is guilty here? [. . .] a Jewish woman in outrage is shouting: 'What a swinish[317] nation the Jews are! Why are they pushing like this?' [. . .] at every turn. It is time that the Jews understood that in every dark phenomenon [. . .] it is first and foremost our tormentors, our [. . .], the German bandits and murderers. Other nations in our position – and this must be strongly emphasised – would have fallen even deeper than we have [. . .] morally happened to the Russian emigration to [Istanbul], Berlin, Paris and everywhere?

Are we at an appropriate level? Are we in general fulfilling our [duties] at this present moment? No, not that either. More than ever, we should carry out self-criticism. We should return to 'searching our ways and examining our deeds'.[318] We commit many sins, and repentance should be the commandment of the hour, the highest commandment.

But this should be in moderation. Do not spit into your own well, and do not shame the whole Jewish people, who deserve compassion, not shame and disgrace.

9

July 1942–January 1943, Warsaw ghetto. Abraham Lewin, [diary from 20 [?] July 1942 to 16 January 1943]

[[1]][319]

[*Monday–Tuesday, 20–21 July*] A paper-shop at the corner of the New World [Street].[320]. . .
Young woman of P, Cecylia, [was] shot.
Nowolipie Street 14 – risen from the dead . . . From A.[?][321]

317 In parentheses, the same word written in Polish, in Latin characters.
318 In the original in Hebrew, from Lamentations 3:40 and BT *Berakhot* p. 5.
319 At this point Lewin switches from Yiddish to Hebrew. The numbers in double square brackets show the approximate division of the first 12 pages of the text.
320 Translation of the Polish name Nowy Świat; one of the main streets of Warsaw.
321 In *A Cup of Tears*, p. 135 it is interpreted: 'This I heard from A.'

Świętojerska Street 28, Monday, 5 in the afternoon.
8 in the evening, the gatekeeper at Nalewki Street 13.[322]
Tuesday, 5 in the morning, Niska Street 3, Smocza Street . . .
A shopkeeper who opened 5 R.[?] before five.
Policeman Ajzensztajn.[323]
Doctor Sztajn.[324]
The arrests in Z.Z.[325] and in the *kehillah*.
C[hło]dnaStreet 15 – more than ten.
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.
Shmuel of the 'conquerers'[326] – 15 years Rozen. Together with his father and uncle [were] shot yesterday before 10 o'clock at the entrance to the shop.

Wednesday, [22 July] erev Tisha B'Av

A day of turmoil, chaos and fear: news about the expulsion of Jews is running like lightning through the town. The Jewish part of Warsaw has suddenly died. The shops are closed, Jews are concerned and terrified. The Jewish streets are an appalling sight – the gloom is indescribable. There are dead bodies in several places. No one is counting them and no names are being given in this terrifying catastrophe. The resettlement is supposed to begin today from the 'points',[327] and from the prison. There is also talk

322 *144/137 The porter of this house was put to death because he would not reveal the supposed hiding place of a young man being pursued by a German gendarme.

323 *146/139 He was murdered on 21 July 1942, along with 20 or 30 other Jewish policemen who refused to participate in the round-up.

324 *147/140 It was Zygmunt (Zelman) Sztajnkalk (Steinkalk) (1872–1942), paediatrician. He was long-time president of the pre-war Summer Colonies for Children, member of the patronage board at the boarding house on Mylna Street 18; lived at Nowolipki 17; murdered on 21 July 1942 by two Gestapo officers when he was on his way to visit a patient. See also M. Ciesielska, *Lekarze getta warszawskiego*, p. 363.

325 The abbreviation lacking in the typescript; printed in *Mipinkaso* . . . p. 87.

326 Can be also translated: occupants.

327 Lewin makes the literal translation of the Polish term *punkty*, in the ghetto language, mostly the former prayer rooms that were used as shelters for deportees and refugees.

of an evacuation of the hospital.[328] Miserable children are taken on the carts. I am thinking about my aged mother – it would be better to put her to sleep than to hand her over to those murderers.

Ora – Sweden. Exaggerated news.[329]

Thursday [23 July] Tisha B'Av

Disaster after disaster, misfortune after misfortune. [People in?] the small ghetto have been turned out on to the streets.

Uri[330] arrived at half past seven.

[[2]] The people were driven out from Muranow[ska] Street 42–44 during the night.

Garbatka[331] – 300 women, 55 men.

Last Tuesday in the night.

Rain has been falling all day. Everything's weeping. The Jews are weeping. They are hoping for a miracle. The expulsion is continuing. Buildings are blockaded. Twarda Street 23. Terrible scenes. A woman with beautiful hair and a girl, 20 years old, pretty, they are weeping and tearing at their hair.

What would Tolstoy have said to this?

On Zamenhofa Street the Germans pulled Jew out of a tram and killed him on the spot (Muranowska Street).

Friday, 24 July, 6 in the morning

The turmoil is as it was during the days of the bombardment of Warsaw.[332] 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.

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328 Infectious diseases wards of the Czyste Jewish Hospital at Stawki Street 6/8. The hospital was ordered to evacuate by 24 July. The building was used to detain people before their deportation to Treblinka.

329 Sentence unclear. In BfG, p. 43 it is: 'Light – Sweden. Exaggerated news' (*or* means light in Hebrew, here confused with the name Ora). In *A Cup of Tears*, p. 136 it is over-interpreted: 'Ora brings exaggerated stories from Sweden [that the war is coming to an end].'

330 Uri Tombak, the author's nephew.

331 See the entry for 15 May.

332 In September 1939.

Another dark day. Rain is falling. The scenes at Nowolipie Street 25. 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 *kehillah* wearing white armbands are assisting them.

The death of Czerniaków yesterday at half past eight in the *kehillah*. As for the reasons: during the ceremony at Grzybowska Street, he said: *Szlag mnie i tak trafi, proszę pani*.[333]

The round-up was halted at three o'clock. How Jews saved themselves: fictitious marriages with policemen. Guta's[334] marriage to her husband's brother.

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. Pogroms and a killing the like of which has never been seen. Merenlender's visit. She and her father were taken the first day. In what kind of railway wagon are the prisoners kept? According to her they will not even last a night.

Many buildings have received orders to present themselves on their own. The manager of Świętojerska Street 30, Nacia gave herself up. People get attacks of hysteria. 11,000 people have been rounded up. 100 hostages. One of them let himself down on a rope, fell, and was badly wounded. Zakhajm[335] has been shot. Terrifying rumours about the night. Will there be a pogrom?

Schultz[336] is dismissing 100 Jews. His explanation for his action. The great hunger in the ghetto. Someone saves his sister and a four-year-old child,

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333 (Polish) I am damned, anyway, Madam. *163/157 refers to a party marking Abraham Gepner's birthday, some ten days before the deportation.

334 Guta, or Gucia, the author's younger sister. Initially, wives and children of *Jüdische Ordnungsdienst* members were exempt from deportation.

335 Jakub Zakhajm, the *Jüdische Ordnungsdienst* officer, shot and killed during the deportation for his refusal to carry out an order.

336 Fritz Schultz's furrier workshop was at Nowolipie Street 44 (so-called "big Schultz") and the Karl Georg Schultz's workshop at Leszno Street 78 ("little Schultz"); they specialised in ready-made clothes, employing several thousand Jewish workers, mainly tailors, furriers and shoemakers. In the spring of 1943, the workers were relocated to the forced labour camp in Trawniki, then killed there in the *Aktion Erntefest* in November 1943.

passing her off as his wife. The child does not give the secret away. [[3]] He cries out: 'Daddy!' I am trying to save my mother[337] with a paper from the Ż.S.[338]

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: *Meken shoyn durkhgeyen?*[339] Disaster: Gucia has been thrown out of her flat. 5 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*: A Jew is crying. He is struck. 'Why are you crying?' *Meine Mutter, meine Frau! – Frau – ja, Mutter, nicht.*[340] A smuggler who threw himself out from the fourth floor. I saw him on his sick-bed.

How did Czerniakow die?

10,000![341] The Wajcblum family. The looting of property. Last night there were a lot of suicides. 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. With each day the calamity worsens. Many give themselves up voluntarily. It is supposed that hunger forces them into it.

The new proclamation: nonproductive elements are being sent to the East. Vast numbers of dead among those being expelled. The German Jews are content to go. For them it is a long journey. The Ż.S. 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 Ż.S. Since Tuesday there has been no newspaper in the ghetto, except for the poor-in-content Jewish paper.[342]

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337 In the original, my father; apparently a copyist's mistake; Lewin's father died around 1910.

338 (Polish, in Latin characters, handwritten) abbreviation for *Żydowska Samopomoc [Społeczna]*, i.e. Jewish [Social] Self-help.

339 (Yiddish) Can one get through now?

340 (German) My mother, my wife! – Wife – yes, mother – no.

341 The Germans ordered Czerniaków to deliver 10,000 inmates of the Warsaw ghetto to the *Umschlagplatz* on 23 July. He committed suicide after having received that order.

342 I.e. *Gazeta Żydowska*. In the original, the title translated into Hebrew, *Iton ha-yehudi*. It was the only official newspaper for Jews in the General Government, published in Kraków in Polish between the summer of 1940 and the summer of 1942.

Sunday, 26 July

The *Aktion* continues. The buildings at Nowolipie Street 10–12 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 still slaughtering.'[343] The blockade of our courtyard. How it was carried out. Winnik's[344] story. 'G o o d n e w s' from Brześć.[345] The closing of the post office.[346] The seizing of an eight-year-old girl, prettily dressed. She screams: 'Mummy, mummy!'; L i b u s z y c k i,[347] L e j z e r o w i c z.[348] 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 that they can extort money. The terrible corruption of our police and their assistants. An outrage, an outrage!

[[4]] At Solna Street 6, there are 99 victims. Today 12,000 martyrs. The closing of the post office. A kilo of bread – 50 zlotys. Potatoes – 20. The violence of the police. Warszawski's[349] son, the *kehillah* clerk, was seized and ransomed for 250 zlotys. Czudner,[350] Kirzner's sister – seven souls. The breakup of families – Mendrowski, Pola. It hurts so much. 37,000 martyrs today. The *kehillah* and Ż.S. workers are also not safe. Only the 'shops' seem to be still safe.

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343 An excerpt from Bialik's poem 'In the City of Slaughter'; see footnote 134, pt. 1.

344 Israel Winnik (1899–1942), teacher, journalist for *Folks-Tsaytung*, Bund member and Oyneg Shabes associate, recorded and wrote testimonies, was active in Jewish Social Self-Help, especially in refugees' shelters.

345 A reference to rumours which spread in the ghetto, about alleged letters from people 'resettled to the east', including to Brześć (Lewin uses the Yiddish name Brisk). See: *Oyneg Shabes. People and Works*, Doc. 68.

346 See Peretz Opoczyński, *Hadoar hayehudi bevarsha vehagerush (umzidlung)* [Jewish post [office] in Warsaw and the destruction (resettlement)], ARG II 323 (Ring. II/215).

347 Aharon Libuszycki, writer and teacher from Łódź.

348 Moyshe Lejzerowicz (1888–1943?), a Revisionist Zionist, *Haynt* and *Hayntige nayes* journalist; collaborated with the 'Thirteen'.

349 Yakir Warszawski (1885–1942), short-story writer and journalist, Zionist activist; in the ghetto he worked in the Labour Department of the *Judenrat*. See also the entry for 30 November.

350 Majer (Meir) Czudner (1885–1942), Hebrew poet and teacher, cooperated with the Dror movement.

A new leadership[351] for the *kehillah*: Lichtenbaum[352] – chairman, the deputies – Wielikowski, Sztolcman,[353] Orlański.[354] The shot in Brustman's window. Lola Kapelusz, the wife of a lawyer from Łódź. She goes twice to the *Umschlagplatz* with her daughter to give herself up because they are starving and haven't eaten 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.

Monday, 27 July

The *Aktion* still continuing at full strength. People are being rounded up. Many victims on Smocza Street. People were dragged from the trams and shot. 100 murdered (old people and the sick) at the *Umschlagplatz*. Huge numbers of murdered at Ogrodowa Street 29. The remaining occupants were taken out, no notice was taken of their papers. The cause – a piece of glass fell onto the street when Germans were passing there. Shooting all day. Dead on Pawia and other streets.

The terrible hunger. Bread – 60 zlotys, potatoes – 20, meat – 80. There are round-ups in the street. The commandant from Lublin[355] is in Warsaw. How high will the numbers of 'resettled' 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.[356] Today the number of those deported will reach about 44,000. And according to Wielikowski there

351 The *Judenrat* presidium, elected after the death of Adam Czerniaków. See: *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

352 Marek Lichtenbaum (1876–1943), engineer; in the Warsaw ghetto, head of the Economic Department of the *Judenrat*, Adam Czerniaków's deputy; after Czerniaków's suicide he became head of the *Judenrat*.

353 Adolf Abram Sztolcman (1890–1943), engineer, *Judenrat* member, after 15 August 1942 head of its Economic Department; Gustaw (Gamzai) Wielikowski (1889–1943), lawyer, chairman of the Social Welfare Department and the Legal Department of the *Judenrat*, member of the presidium of Jewish Social Self-Help.

354 Actually Mieczysław Orlean, craftsmen movement activist, employee of the Manufacturing Department of the *Judenrat*. Probably Lewin confused his name with that of Shmul Orleański, a lawyer.

355 Odilo Globocnik (1904–1945), between November 1939 and September 1943 chief commander of SS and police in the Lublin district.

356 Districts of Warsaw on the right bank of the Vistula River.

is no prospect of an end to the *Aktion*. A break for 48 hours (so people are saying). Auerswald has returned. Perhaps things will get easier? Great numbers of suicides. The Cytrynins, mother and son embracing. The attitude of the Poles. Kalman weeping over the telephone. He calls for revenge. Neustadt has been murdered (?).[357]

Tuesday, 28 July

The *Aktion* continues relentlessly. There are many volunteers, two families from Nowolipie Street 8 left their flats and gave themselves up (5 and 10). The reason – terrible hunger. Bialer – executed because he didn't remove his hat. The incident with Kirzner. Up to yesterday 45,000. Wealthy Jews have left Warsaw. The Rozencwajgs[358] on a wagon. The seizure of Gutgeld.[359] Lazar:[360] taken off a tram. 3 victims 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[361] mother has been taken away. He works at Többens. Pessimism of my friend Kon. [They] want to leave 60,000 Jews in the town. The fate of those who work for Ż.S. Some say that their identity papers will only be recognised as valid for another two days. [[5]] This is what Szeryński[362] is said to have announced. 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

357 Question mark in the original. Leyb (Leon) Neustadt (1890–1943), director of AJDC in Warsaw; he was shot together with his wife Klara Segałowicz at the Pawiak prison where they were detained from 20 July 1942.

358 *198/187. It was the family of a poet and Hebrew teacher Yehiel Rozencwajg.

359 Perhaps Lewi Gutgeld, journalist and Zionist activist from Siedlce; in the Warsaw ghetto active in Jewish Self-Help; included by Ringelblum in the list of victims; see ARG II 261/4 (Ring. II/231).

360 Perhaps Fiszel Lazar; see *ibidem*.

361 Leyb Gruzalc (1919?–1943), commandant of the ŻOB combat unit during the Warsaw ghetto Uprising of April 1943, a member of the Bund.

362 Józef Szeryński (1893–1943), chief officer of the *Jüdische Ordnungsdienst*. Arrested in May 1942 for hiding his fur coat; released on 22 July 1942. In the summer of 1942, an attempt of the underground organisation at his assassination failed; he committed suicide in January 1943.

in our courtyard wanted to get rid of her old, sick mother: she handed her mother to the butchers. Jewish policewomen.[363] The huge numbers of people and sewing machines assembled in the courtyards of Nowolipie Street 44–46.

Wednesday, 29 July

The eighth day of the *Aktion*, continuing at full strength. At the corner of Karmelicka Street – a 'wagon'. People are thrown up on to it. In the courtyard of Nowolipki Street 29 the furniture of the occupants who were thrown out of the buildings is still standing there. An old Jew sleeps in the open air. Kon recounts: a girl who returned 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 Igla, daughter of M.Z.Z.,[364] walks with her mother. Places of execution: Piaseczno, Pustelnik, Bełżec.[365] 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 Street 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 the Oyneg Shabes. Its tragic character. We discuss the order of [. . .][366] and the transfer of the archive to America to the YIVO if we all die.[367]

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363 See footnote 122, pt. 1.

364 Reading of the name uncertain, the abbreviation has not been deciphered.

365 The information about executions in Piaseczno (17 km south of Warsaw) and Pustelnik (38 km east of Warsaw) is unclear; approximately 450,000 Jews and several thousand Romani were murdered in the Bełżec killing centre, which operated from March to December 1942.

366 Space left by a copyist; it is not clear why in Yiddish (and subsequently in *A Cup of Tears*) it is rendered as 'ownership rights', while the word 'order' suggests rather the issues of concealment of the materials.

367 According to Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?* Bloomington and Indianapolis 2007, p. 303, this is a reference to the meeting of 25 July. However, it strikingly reminds us of Wasser's account: 'I recall the dramatic meeting of "Oneg Shabbat" on July 18, 1942. In an atmosphere of general loss, faced with the destruction of the Jewish people, a debate was held on the preservation of the archive. The responsibility was assigned to the members of the executive, according to a prearranged succession, and it was determined in advance to whom the archive would be transferred when the War ended.' Hirsch Wasser, *The Ghetto Archives – the Enterprise of Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum*, in: *A Commemorative Symposium in Honour of Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum and His 'Oneg Shabbat' Underground Archives*, Jerusalem 1983, p. 43. Most probably it was discussed at both meetings.

The terrible news about the Germans' plans. It is being assumed that they intend to kill 250,000. So far, 53,000. The terrible pessimism of my friends G.[368] [and] K.[369] 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.[370] 'Shop-mania'. Will shops save people? The Germans thank 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? (As to a joke). So far 8 Jewish policemen have committed suicide. Conditions in the streets get worse every day. Many people with identity papers from the Ż.S. have been arrested. A bulldog that had been taught to attack only Jews with armbands (Vovek) at Warsaw-Praga.[371] A Jew was seized by him. [[6]] How do Jews hide? In couches, in beds, cellars, attics. The Rozencwajgs were set free for 500 zlotys. A memorandum has been handed to the authorities, offering a ransom in return for the halting of the expulsion. No reply has yet been received.

No Germans appear until 4 in the afternoon. The Jews do everything in an orderly fashion. Each day about 1 per cent, between 60–70 people, are killed. They throw loaves of bread into the wagons. Those at the front grab even 2 or 3 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.[372] came and apologised, justifying himself by saying he was not responsible for the death and giving his word as a German officer that those being deported are not being killed. At the employment office are lists of the *kehillah* and Ż.S. employees. For the moment they are being left alone. It is supposed that they will be checked. For now they are sorting out the workshops' people.

368 Eliasz (Eliyahu) Gutkowski.

369 Menakhem Mendel Kohn.

370 See: *Oyneg Shabes. People and Works*, Doc. 68.

371 Probably *Bahnbetriebswerk* (Railway workshop) by *Dworzec Wschodni* (Eastern Railway Station) in the Praga district of Warsaw.

372 Obersturmführer Walter Witossek (1901–1945), *Sicherheitspolizei* officer, commander of a police unit during the Great Deportation in the summer of 1942, oversaw executions during the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising in 1943.

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 Nowolipki Street [near] the Ż.S. 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.[373] 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 *Aktion* which continues 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 running of Jews looking for refuge. Opposite my window, in a new lane, 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.[374] Brandstaetter[375] was seized yesterday afternoon by the Germans. He was released at the *Umschlagplatz*. Dr Fuswerg's wife, Klima,[376] was seized. 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 Zamenhofa and Nowolipki Streets and abuses the passers-by. Terrifying rumours: the authorities have closed the Ż.S. Brandt[377] expresses his condolences to the Council on Cz.'s[378]

373 Perhaps a reference to Cafe Hirschfeld at the corner of Sienna and Sosnowa Streets; meeting place of wealthy smugglers and the ghetto demimonde.

374 The post office blockade in the Warsaw ghetto lasted from 23 July (the post office at Zamenhofa Street was closed on 24 July) to 29 July, when letters and parcels began to be delivered again in the ghetto. Letters and parcels sent from the ghetto were handed over to police.

375 Michał Brandstaetter (1882–1943), teacher from Łódź, writer, journalist. Left for Warsaw in November 1939; in the ghetto was active in the Jewish Social Self-Help. Shot by the SS on 15 January 1943.

376 Klima (Bluma) Fuswerg, teacher, Jewish Social Self-Help collaborator, director of the puppet theatre in the ghetto.

377 SS-Hauptsturmführer Karl Brandt of the IV B Division of the Security Police Office and SD, between October 1939 and April 1943, head of the Jewish Affairs department in the Warsaw Gestapo, one of the commanders of the *Grossaktion* in the Warsaw ghetto.

378 Adam Czerniaków.

death. Lefler[379] defends himself by saying he was not responsible for the death.

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 Toebbens's workshop[380] at Gęsia Street 6. Some of the *kehillah* clerks were also seized and deported. All the rooms were emptied. Those who hid themselves or refused to go were shot. All workers have been removed from the workshop of the second section of the Ż.S., which was in the process of being set up. At the corner of Karmelicka and Nowolipie Streets they used axes to break off 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 surpassed 60,000.

[[7]] The notice in the DAZ: they are broadcasting continually on London radio SOS to rescue the 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 Polish policeman brought a letter from a woman from Białystok 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 Ogro[do]wa Street 27–29. Many children were also taken from the Pnimia children's home.[381] Today many *kehillah* clerks were seized (including teachers) and from the Ż.S. The story of Pigowski.

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379 The information most probably pertains to SS-Sturmbannführer Hermann Höffle (1911–1961), the head of Operation Reinhard's Lublin branch, responsible for deportation from the Warsaw ghetto.

380 Walther Caspar Többens, an industrialist from Bremen, founder of plants (workshops) in the ghetto which manufactured goods for the Wehrmacht. Többens' workshops were located at Leszno Street 34 and Prosta Street 14, and employed several hundred people. During the *Grossaktion*, the number of workers increased significantly, as employment in the workshops was supposed to protect people from deportation. The workers were resettled to the labour camp in Poniatowa, where in November 1943 they were all murdered during the *Aktion Erntefest*.

381 *222/210 The deportation from this orphanage marked the beginning of systematic destruction of all the children's institutions in the ghetto.

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. At the corner of Mylna Street 11, the female director of Toebbens's workshop, Neufeld, stopped me and led me up to an officer. The Ż.S. identity 'cards have no value any more'. '*Odjazd*'[382] – ambiguous. I was terrified. They are driving out the old people from the old age home at Nowolipki Street 52. Those rounded up are divided up into: *arbeitsfähig*, *lebensfähig* and *transportunfähig*.[383] The last group is killed on the spot. About 2,000 people have been removed from the buildings at Ogrodowa Street 27, 29 and 31. Also from the boarding school at Ogro[do]wa Street 27. The clerk from the centre, Rozen, and his father were taken away. A certain young man, Frydland, who has been working for several months at a certain *'placówka'* has been seized and deported. Rabbi Nissenbaum's[384] wife was put onto the wagon. Mrs Mławer was shot and wounded. They removed the janitor and his family from CENTOS. Yesterday 1,500 reported voluntarily. Today by midday – 750. Among them members of the intelligentsia. There is talk that part of the 'squad' has already left for Radom. The remainder are leaving tomorrow. I have heard that they will be taking 500 Jewish policemen with them from here. At 4 o'clock they suddenly took those who had been rounded up out of the wagons and announced that the *Aktion* was being suspended. The joy and hope that this brought forth. At half past six the blockades started again. A woman called Mydlarska jumped up onto 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 W[al]ców and Grzybowska Streets. No attention was paid to identity papers. *Zayts gezunt! Zayts gezunt!*[385] a young Jew shouts from the wagon. The calamity of the dead souls. 120,000 fictitious food cards.

Saturday, 1 August 'Outside the sword bereaves, and inside there is terror.'[386] The 11th day of the *Aktion* that gets progressively more terrible and brutal. Germans are in the process of emptying whole buildings and one side of streets.

382 (Polish) Off with you! or neutrally: departure.

383 (German) fit for work; fit for living; not fit to be transported.

384 Yitzkhak Nissenbaum (1866–1942), rabbi, member of the Mizrachi Party; in the Warsaw ghetto member of the groups of political parties in the Jewish Social Self-Help.

385 (Yiddish) Farewell! Farewell!

386 From *Lamentations* 1:20; the last word, death, replaced with: terror.

They took about 5,000 people out of Nowolipie Street 20–22 and other buildings. The turmoil and terror are appalling. There is a general expulsion of all the occupants of Nowolipie Street between Karmelicka and Smocza Streets. [[8]] The awful sight: people carrying packages of pillows and bedclothes. No one thinks of moving furniture. Fajnkind says to his sister in-law: *Fershtekn zi zikh mit irem vundershenem kind!*[387] Into the cellar!' The *koszmar*[388] of this day surpasses that of all previous days. There is no escape and no refuge. The round-ups never cease, Sagan[389] and Chilinowicz,[390] Sztajn,[391] Zołotow, Karcewicz, Prync,[392] Opoczyński[393] have been seized. Mothers lose their children. A weak old man was carried onto the bus. The tragedies cannot be captured in words. The rabbi from Dzielna Street 17 has been seized and apparently shot. Children 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'. 50 customers, 10 staff were removed from the clerks' kitchen at Nowolipki Street 30. People who have hidden are shot. I spent the whole day at Nowolipki Street 25 and didn't go to eat, and so was saved.

Sunday, 2 August

I spent the night at my sister's, at Dzielna Street 17. The 12th day of the *Aktion*, which is becoming more and more intense. From yesterday, parents of policemen have been excluded from the category

387 (Yiddish) Hide yourself with your beautiful child!

388 (Polish) nightmare.

389 Shakhne Sagan (Zagan) (1892–1942), leader of the Left Poalei Tsiyon, writer, active in TSISHO; in the Warsaw ghetto he edited the underground periodicals of his party, was the YIKOR activist and one of the organisers of the Anti-Fascist Bloc and the Jewish Fighting Organisation.

390 Bentsyon Chilinowicz (1889–1942), journalist of the daily *Der Moment* (1918–1939); during the war he cooperated with the AJDC and ran a soup kitchen for journalists in the ghetto.

391 Edmund (Menakhem) Stein (1893–1943), historian, lecturer at the Institute of Judaic Studies, vice-chairman of the Union of Hebrew Writers and Journalists in Poland. In the Warsaw ghetto he worked in the *Judenrat*, participated in events organised by Zionist youth movements. Murdered at Majdanek in the *Aktion Erntefest*.

392 *237/222 Zołotow, Karcewicz and Prync were former teachers in the Yehudia school.

393 Perec (Peretz) Opoczyński (1892–1943), Yiddish and Hebrew poet and writer; in the Warsaw ghetto he wrote a diary and reports on ghetto life; he was a member of Oyneg Shabes. He perished together with wife and eight-year-old son Daniel in January 1943.

of those protected. 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 *Aktion* will continue. All those who are not employed in organisations 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.'[394] Today 3 people were taken away from the kitchen at Nowolipki Street 22. It looks like they have stopped recognising the identity papers of the J.H.K.[395] 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 with small babies [wrapped] in pillows. They were led by Jewish policemen. Yehoshua Segal has been seized. Among the tragedies: [Mrs] Karcewicz has been taken away; she left behind two children aged 4 and 7. Magidson. People murdered on Nowolipki Street. The *Aktion* continues. People are saying that there will be a break for 3 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 Mr L.'s[396] sawmill. 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 from small ghetto to the *Umschlag* yesterday about 2,000 were freed (they had various papers). [[9]] 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 who was found at TOZ was taken. At the cemetery 56 Jewish prisoners were killed. A few days ago more than 200 people were murdered on Nowolipie Street. Today the Germans have surrounded the streets:

394 See: *Oyneg Shabes. People and Works*, Doc. 68.

395 Abbreviation for *Jüdische Hilfskomitee*.

396 I.e. to OBW, run by the Landau brothers.

Gęsia, Smocza, Pawia, Lubeckiego, and have taken away all the occupants. Yesterday these were taken away: Kahanowicz,[397] Rusak,[398] and Yehoshua Segal's entire family.[399]

Tuesday, 4 August

The 14th day of the *Aktion* continues at full speed. Today the blockades were set up at 10 in the morning. The Germans work together with the Jewish police. The small ghetto was surrounded as well as Gęsia and Zamenhofa Streets. There are stories of terrible lootings and violence during the expulsions. They deport people and loot and pillage their possessions. Shops are also broken open and the goods carried off. Participating in this are Jewish police, ordinary Jewish neighbours and G[ermans]. It was reported that 14 Jews who had sought refuge at the cemetery were killed, those worked in the cemetery organisations. In addition, they killed 56 [people who were] sentenced to death. I heard they found a woman who had recently given birth and her three-day-old child on Szczęśliwa Street 3. They shot both the mother and the child dead – a true story. They are expelling occupants from buildings once again: from Nowolipki Street 45 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 Prosta Street 8 have been removed. A *junak* was crying: *Szkoda tych Żydków.*[400] At Nalewki Street 9 a sick woman was murdered. The *Aktion* will continue until 17 [August]. Segal's father has been taken away. How do they get the corpses out? Tosia Apfel[401] was taken and sent away. 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.[402] She is working as a farm labourer. She asks for

397 Mojżesz Kahanowicz (?–1942), attorney, active in the Zionist Organisation in Poland. In the ghetto, he worked in ŻTOS.

398 Probably Engineer Russak, listed among other perished activists by Emanuel Ringelblum; see ARG II 261/10 (Ring. II/231), p. [6].

399 *246/231 The diarist's relatives on his wife's side. Luba Lewin was the granddaughter of Warsaw rabbi Yehuda Segal.

400 (Polish) Pity these kikes.

401 *249/233 She was a former student at the Yehudia school.

402 Baranowicze (now Brest province, Belarus).

underwear. [Life is] cheap, 7 zlotys for white bread, 1.80 for potatoes. The letter came by post.[403]

Wednesday, 5 August

The *Aktion* continues unabated. We have no more strength to suffer. There are many murders. They kill the sick who can'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 their papers. Whoever falls into the hands of the Germans or the Jewish police is seized. The Jewish policemen took away Hillel Cajtlin.[404] He was released. Bałaban has been taken. At Dzielna Street 13 they killed Mrs Grin who was ill and some girl too. Yesterday the *Aktion* in Radom[405] began.

[[10]]

Thursday, 6 August

The 16th day of the *Aktion*, which is continuing. Yesterday they took away everyone from the offices of the Ż.S. who was there at the time, about 60 or 70 people. Some of them (Dr Bornsztajn,[406] Sztolcman, a girl) were freed. They are predicting a 'hot' day today. Once again there are theories that the *Aktion* will be suspended tomorrow because the annihilation squads are going to leave for Radom. What are the life conditions in Landau's sawmill? The expulsion of the occupants of Nowolipki Street 10, 23 and 25. Redoubled savagery and 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. During a blockade by the Germans the Jewish police storm into Zilberg's house. 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 rebbe from Radomsko was killed.[407] P-wer[408] saw orders with

403 The author thus implies that it was a false information, fabricated by Germans.

404 Hillel Cajtlin (Tseitlin) (1872–1942), writer and translator, author of religious works.

405 During the first *Aktion* in Radom on 5 August 1942, approximately 10,000 Jews were deported to Treblinka. During the second *Aktion*, on 16–17 August, a further 20,000 were deported.

406 *253/237 Dr Alfred Bornsztajn (Borenstein), economist and journalist; worked in the Jewish Department of the Polish Government Delegation in the underground.

407 *255/239 Shlomo Hanokh Rabinowitz, his wife Esther, their daughter and son-in-law, in their flat on Nowolipki Street 30.

408 In all likelihood Karol Popower, chief accountant of the Warsaw *Judenrat*.

regard to trains and their numbers that were sent to Treblinka. Starvation haunts the survivors more and more, a kilo of bread – 45 zlotys, a kilo of potatoes – 13 zlotys. Today they have already taken about 5,000 Jews from the small ghetto. Tosia Apfel was 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[409] at the head. 200 orphans. In the evening they drove out the people from the flats in the square bounded by Dzielna, Zamenhofa, 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. Is Mrs Szwajger[410] still there? Oy! Today G[ermans] and Ukrainians came to the sawmill of the L.[411] brothers and rounded up a large number of women with their children from among the factory workers, and other women. Wasser,[412] Smolar[413] with her child, [Mrs] Tintpulwer and others, many others. The workers turn on the intellectuals. A shocking experience. Many rabbis have been sent away. Mendel Alter from Kalisz,[414] and others. During the pogrom on Nowolipie Street about 360 people were killed. At number 30 more than 30 people were killed. Górny's[415] mother has been killed by the Germans, 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 a cucumber. Today a kilo of bread costs 55 zlotys. A new order has been issued that if people report voluntarily for deportation from 7 to 14 August, they will receive

409 Janusz Korczak (pen name of Henryk Goldszmidt, 1878/1879–1942), educator and writer, founder and director of the orphanage at Krochmalna Street 92.

410 Most probably Stefania (Batsheva) Szwajger (1890–1942), principal of the Yehudia school.

411 Landau. See footnote 9, pt. 2.

412 Bluma Wasser (nee Kirszenfeld) (1912–1990), teacher, the Oyneg Shabes copyist; wife of Hersh Wasser. E. Gutkowski intervened to release her and other people; see ARG II 292 (Ring. II/219/3).

413 Most probably the wife of Natan Smolar. See footnote 416, pt. 2.

414 Menahem Mendel Alter (1873–1942), from 1923 chairman of *Agudat harabanim bepolin* (Union of Rabbis in Poland); his library from Kalisz had some 7,000 volumes taken by Germans.

415 See Doc. 13.

a kilo of bread and half a kilo of jam.[416] [[11]] From this it can be deduced that the *Aktion* will continue for at least a week. Stupnicki[417] has been sent away. 3,000 Jews were brought from Otwock directly to the *Umschlag*. The number who have fallen victim is enormous. The furnace near Małkinia and Sokołów.[418] I hear that Erlich (*Kapote*)[419] has disappeared. The shooting and killing continue. During the blockade on Leszno Street 4 people were killed. Hirszhorn[420] has committed suicide. Many kill themselves. It is a miracle that there are people still alive.

Saturday, 8 August

The *Aktion* 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: from Wolność Street 12–14 (about 1,200), from Mylna Street 18 they took Koniński[421] with his wife and the children from the boarding school. They intend to eradicate the whole of Warsaw Jewry. I hear reports today that the Germans are blockading Żelazna and Sienna Streets. They are driving people out of all the buildings on Miła Street. We have lived through a shattering and terrifying day – Gęsia Street 30.[422] The numbness of the people. Górny loses his mother and sells meal tickets. Smolar[423] has lost his wife and daughter and tries to 'find' work so as to be involved in something, not to be superfluous. Tintpulwer – widowed – goes around in despair, a broken man. Terrifying reports from the town. On Lubeckiego Street – 64 victims, many victims on Miła Street. All the cows were taken away – about 120 – from the

416 See *Oyneg Shabes. People and Works*, Doc. 68.

417 Shaul Yitzkhak Stupnicki (?–1942), journalist, editor of the *Lubliner Tugblat* newspaper, activist in the Folkspartei; in the Warsaw ghetto, *Gazeta Żydowska* contributor; committed suicide during the *Grossaktion*.

418 A reference to the Treblinka killing centre.

419 Józef Ehrlich (*Josele Kapota*), *Jüdische Ordnungsdienst* member, a Gestapo collaborator.

420 Samuel (Shmuel) Hirszhorn (1876–1942), man of letters, columnist, editor of the *Nasz Przegląd* daily newspaper and other publications.

421 Aron Koniński (?–1942), educator, in the Warsaw ghetto director of the children's boarding house at Mylna Street 18; he went to death together with the children.

422 I.e. in the Landau's carpentry shop.

423 Natan (Nusn) Smolar (1901–1943), teacher; in the Warsaw ghetto, principal of the Borochov School at Nowolipki Street 68, Oyneg Shabes associate.

farm.[424] 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, Zamenhofa Streets and others. I was on my way home at half past eight. Hela comes towards me. Luba and Ora[425] are not there. 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 Dzielna Street 67.[426] What did Luba recount 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.'[427] 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 *Aktion* 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 by dozen, by hundreds. Today they are pulling endless wagons full of corpses – uncovered – through the streets. Everything that I have read about the pogroms in 1917–1918[428] pales in comparison to 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 simple folks don't even get that.

[[12]] 20 Ukrainians, Jewish policemen (a few dozen) and a small number of Germans lead a crowd of 3,000 Jews to the slaughter. One hears of isolated

424 See Karolina Wróbel-Bardzik, *Odwrócone* zoopolis. *Zwierzęta towarzyszące w getcie warszawskim* [Inverted *zoopolis*. Companion animals in the Warsaw ghetto], https://www.ejournals.eu/Przeglad-Kulturoznawczy/2019/Numer-4-42-2019/art/16335/ access 24.12.2021; and ARG I 615 (Ring. I/53).

425 Author's wife and daughter; see Introduction.

426 *274/258 It was an orphanage for young children; the entire staff, led by the headmistress Sarah Grober[?]-Janowska, went to the *Umschlagplatz* together with the children. See also ARG II 262/1 (Ring. II/232).

427 See Doc. 20.

428 A wave of antisemitic pogroms in Ukraine, mostly in the autumn of 1917 and spring of 1918.

cases of resistance. 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 some 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 *Aktion* in Radom is already over after a week and 3 days – with 7,000 victims. 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 right to life in the hope that they may be among the 10 survivors.

Monday, 10 August

Yesterday was horrific in the full sense of the word. The slaughter went on from early morning until 9 and half past nine at night. This was a pogrom with all the traits familiar from the tsarist pogroms of the years 1905–1906. 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 lances. 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 6 o'clock.[429] This is a further terrible calamity. First, for all those who have remained there. There is no possibility for them to take out a few of their possessions, clothes and bedding, because they face the danger of being seized while moving. And second, 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[430] family was seized. He was freed, his family not. It is reported that the *kehillah* is to be dismantled and a commissioner appointed. I have heard that Gancwajch, whom they wanted to kill

429 See footnote 434, pt. 1.

430 Daniel (Dawid) Guzik (1890–1946), the pre-war financial director of AJDC in Warsaw; during the war he provided financial support to Oyneg Shabes. He cooperated with Yitzkhak Giterman in the provision of aid to the Jewish population and to Ringelblum's group in the ghetto, and then the escapees from the ghetto; he perished in an aviation accident in Prague.

a few weeks ago, has climbed back into prominence. I was unable to go home. We all spent the night at Gęsia Street 30. It was a very difficult night. Until 2 at night we sat on chairs, from two to five – we lay on plywood boards. We were told that 2,500 *kehillah* employees and two councilors 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 Wołkowicz[431] has killed herself. The terrible hunger: bread – 88 zlotys, potatoes – 30 zlotys.[13][432] The appalling appearance of the Jewish street. The shops and flats stand open, the Jewish crowds have remained – looting. In a building on Leszno Street, where 150 souls used to live, there are now 30 left. Of these 8 were killed yesterday.

I have heard that in the course of the massacres yesterday the famous Warsaw singer Marysia Ajzensztadt,[433] the only daughter of her parents and a former pupil at the Yehudia School, was attacked and killed. I have heard that yesterday Kon's sister and her husband were killed. And she who had celebrated her recent marriage so exuberantly. A worker sat weeping, as Jewish policemen had come to his home and taken away his 16-year-old son. What horror!

Tuesday, 11 August

Things are deteriorating quickly. Appalling, horrendous. The brutal expulsion from the small ghetto.[434] Whole buildings have been emptied of their occupants and all their possessions left behind. Christian hooligans are already beginning to loot. Sienna Street 24, Śliska Street 28. Except for Jakub's[435] family, there is not even a single tenant remaining in the building; the janitor is also gone. Dr Tauber and his wife have been seized. Aunt Chava and Dora and Feyga have been seized and deported. The destruction of whole

431 Shmuel Wołkowicz, journalist, founder of *Głos Żydowski* (1906) and one of the editors of *Nasz Przegląd* (1923–1939).

432 Here the original text preserved in the Oyneg Shabes archive begins.

433 Marysia (Maria, Miriam) Ajzensztadt (1922–1942), graduate of the Yehudia school in 1939; singer, nicknamed the Nightingale of the Ghetto, daughter of Dawid Ajzensztadt, a composer and conductor.

434 Between 9 and 16 August, the borders of the ghetto were altered and its area was reduced. On 9 August, the decision was made to remove Jews from the so-called small ghetto. The operation was completed on 10 August. See: *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

435 In all likelihood a reference to the family of Jakub Tombak.

family. 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. Over the course of 5 minutes, they drove out all the occupants on Gęsia Street between Zamenhofa and Lubeckiego Streets. They pay no attention to papers.

The *kehillah* offices have moved to Zamenhofa Street 19, the post office building.[436] They have reduced their personnel by half. The number of victims has already risen above 150,000. Today will mark three weeks since the beginning of the terrible massacre. In the night a large number of women who worked at Toebbens were removed. It looks like there is a policy to destroy women and children. Yesterday at Toebbens 3 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*,[437] with two killed and a vast number seized, nearly a hundred women, children and men. The mortal terror that gripped us as we sat in the office. Smolar rang Sokołów.[438] He was told that those that are deported, or if they are to be deported to Tr.,[439] are going to their 'death'.

The news that K[o]n brought. In Warsaw there is a Jew by the name of Salbe who has brought reports of Tr. 15 km before the station at Tr. 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 5 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, and the next day they too are killed. W h a t h o r r o r!

Wednesday, 12 August

Eclipse of the sun, universal blackness. My Luba was taken away during a blockade at Gęsia Street 30. There is still a glimmer of hope in front of me. Perhaps she will be saved. And if, God forbid, she is not?

436 Following the German decree on the reduction of the ghetto, the *Judenrat* had to leave its offices on Grzybowska Street 26. On Zamenhofa Street 19 was an eighteenth-century palace, the main building of the Royal Artillery Casernes, and from the mid-nineteenth century – the military prison. This is now the site of the Polin Museum.

437 (German) Warsaw Union; institution and location not identified.

438 The Treblinka killing centre was located in Sokołów Podlaski County.

439 Treblinka.

My journeys 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 Hitlerite bestiality, along with hundreds of thousands of 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 . . . and her calamity. A child who was so tied to her mother, and how she loved her!

The *Aktion* 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 buildings. Terror and blackness. And over all this disaster hangs my own private anguish.

Thursday, 13 August

The 23rd day of the slaughter. Today about 3,600 people were removed from Toebbens' 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: Mother *(mamuśko, nie odchodź beze mnie)*.[440] Today I cried a lot, when Gucia came to visit me. I am being thrown out of the flat at Mylna Street 2: they have already taken most of my things. Those who remained are thieving and looting insatiably. Our lives have been turned upside down, 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 [14] 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 wartime flat at Mylna Street 2. 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. There is a full-scale relocation

440 (Polish) Mummy, don't go without me.

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,[441] Toebbens, Schultz,[442] Zimmerman,[443] B[r]auer[444] and others. 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.

Today is the 24th[445] day of the *Aktion*. Yesterday they took away from Toebbens' workshops, with about 3,000–4,000 people, mostly women and children. This morning the *kehillah* board posted a new announcement: all Jews who live in Biała, Elektoralna, Zielna, Orla, Solna, Leszno (odd numbers), Ogrodowa, Chłodna Streets have to leave their flats by tomorrow, 15 August.[446] Yesterday and today, a huge number of people were killed – victims of the blockades. I am moving my things over to Nadzia's[447] at Pawia Street 14. Setting up of blockade 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 Peczenik[448] is trying to save his wife and children. A new raid on the J.H.K. at Nowolipki Street 25. Dr Borensztajn and his wife taken away, Elkhanan Cajtlin[449] with his son and others. This was carried out by Jewish policemen without the Germans, that is, on their own initiative. Renia Sznejwejs. I have heard that Yitshak Katznelson's wife and one of his

441 Karl Heinz Müller's metal workshop at Mylna Street 11. It employed many artists. See: *A Guide to the Perished City*, p. 485.

442 See footnote 336, pt. 1.

443 AHAGE-Zimmerman (A.H.G.) papermaking workshop at Miła Street 43.

444 Factories at Nalewki Street 28–38.

445 In the original: 23rd, apparently by mistake.

446 See: *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

447 Author's sister.

448 Karol Peczenik, commander of the first district, and subsequently the fifth district of the *Jüdische Ordnungsdienst*.

449 Elkhanan Cajtlin (Zeitlin) (1902–1942), journalist, Yiddish writer and poet, social activist, columnist for many Jewish newspapers (including *Der Moment* and *Varshever Ekspres*), president of the Warsaw branch of TOZ, secretary of the Association of Jewish Writers and Journalists in Warsaw; in the Warsaw ghetto active in Jewish Social Self-Help. His son David, then 15 years old, died in 1945.

children have been seized.[450] 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*[451] at Leszno Street 109.

Every crime in history, like the burning of Rome by Nero, pales in insignificance in comparison with this. Kirzhner has been taken away from work and deported. Together with him they took away an additional 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 *Aktion* carried out by the butchers. I spent the night at Dzielna Street 17. 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.[452] I have nowhere to rest my head at night. Gucia is being thrown out of her flat. Nacia and Fruma[453] are not allowed to enter. All the boarding schools have been emptied. Korczak went at the head of his children. The pain because of the loss of L.[454] 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 Zonszajn misled me by saying that L. wasn't in the row. 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. Today by 8 o'clock there was a blockade on Miła,

450 Yitzshak Katzenelson (1886–1944), Yiddish and Hebrew poet and playwright. In the Warsaw ghetto, a teacher and lecturer at clandestine Dror seminars. In fact, two of his sons were caught with his wife Khana, 14-year-old Bentsiyon and 11-year-old Benyomin. Yitshak Katzenelson was murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau together with their 18-year-old son Tsvi.

451 (German) abbreviated form of *Durchgangslager*, transit camp.

452 Czerniaków was then a suburb; now it is a district of Warsaw. A Dror training farm (*hakhshara)* operated there from 1940 until November 1942.

453 Author's sister.

454 Luba, author's wife.

Gęsia, Zamenhofa and other streets. 'We faint before the killers.'[455] How much longer? Yesterday a huge number of bodies were brought to the cemetery, victims of the blockade of Toebbens's workshops. Today they were also taking people from the workshops. It will soon be seven o'clock and the blockade on Gęsia Street 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. Mirka Prywes, 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 are greatest on the streets from Chłodna to Leszno; all Jewish possessions have been abandoned and Polish thugs with the G[ermans] 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.

[15]

Sunday, 16 August

Today is the 26th day of the *Aktion*, which continues 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.[456] 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 12–14.

How painful and tragic it is for us. If women had identity papers, they were freed. Any woman carrying a child or with a child next to her was not freed. The G[ermans]'s 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 5 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 have already received confirmation that they have

455 From Jeremiah 4:31; changed into plural.

456 Exodus 1:22.

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 that the conditions are not bad. Lipszyc's son (my friend from Walek[?]'s 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 swop of the residents. No strangers are let into those buildings that have been taken over by new occupants. 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 clerks 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 Rumkowski[457] – will be inherited by Gancwajch, the man they had been hunting and trying to kill. He is outside the ghetto at the moment.

457 Chaim Mordechai Rumkowski (1877–1944), a pre-war industrialist, Zionist activist, head of the Children's Home in Helenówek, a member of the board of the Jewish Community in Łódź. On 13 October 1939 appointed head of the *Judenrat* in Łódź; between April 1940 and August 1944 was the head of the Council of Elders in Łódź. Died in Auschwitz. See: *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Reich*, Part I; Monika Polit, *'Moja żydowska dusza nie obawia się dnia sądu'. Mordechaj Chaim Rumkowski. Prawda i zmyślenie*, Warszawa 2012; *'Słuchają słów Prezesa . . .'. Księga przemówień Chaima Mordechaja Rumkowskiego*, eds. Adam Sitarek, Michał Trębacz, Łódź 2010.

Monday, 17 August

The 27th day of the annihilation. Yesterday I came to Pawia Street 14 very late at night by a roundabout way (via Zamenhofa Street) and was anguished to hear the terrible news about Jakub, Fruma 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 an announcement in the streets about a new reduction in size of the ghetto.[458] Very many streets and sides of streets (the odd or the even numbers) must be vacated by the Jews by 20 August, at 4 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 and many others. The enemy's claw is reaching out for us and it is still not sated. Yesterday hundreds of clerks of the *kehillah,* Ż.S. and J.H.K. were taken away. The Gestapo commandant Brandt stood there and struck the detainees with his own hands. Jakub, Uri and Fruma were hit.

The *Aktion* is continuing today. There was a blockade on the cemetery. Ora, who works with the group of *shomrim*,[459] was in great danger. The group was saved today thanks to the intervention of Commissioner Hensel.[460] [16] 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 to 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 G[erman] blockades and many hide themselves in all kinds of dark corners.

458 There were two announcements listing houses to be vacated by Jews, on 13 August (to take place until 15 August at 6 p.m.) and on 15 August (until 20 August at 6 p.m.). See: *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

459 Members of Hashomer Hatzair.

460 His name appears in several testimonies. According to the unknown author of ARG II 273 (Ring. II/203), he was a member of NSDAP from 1931.

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 Yitskhak Katznelson shows great inner strength and endurance, keeping hold of himself after the terrible disaster that has befallen him. The Ejdus's have been seized. Every day there are killings. When Jakub, Fruma 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 war's progress. The last report was a few days ago of the heavy bombardment of Mainz.[461] The story about the Jew Khunkis[?] (one of the directors of Adriatika).[462] Fruma 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 a head for a sculpture) – Rafuś – were deported.

Tuesday, 18 August

Today marks 4 weeks or 28 days of this bloody operation, which has no parallel in history. The G[ermans] 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 G[ermans], who entered their building. This is a very heavy blow for me. She had been so concerned for us and helped us over the years of war. I have heard talk again about the new rise of Gancwajch. He will take over Lichtenbaum's place and become commissioner of the *kehillah*.

Today I went with 3 friends to collect up the books that are in the flats that our firm[463] has been allocated on Miła Street. We set eyes on an appalling vision, all the doors broken open, all the goods and property smashed

461 A reference to air raids on Mainz on 11 August 1942. Lewin uses the Polish form of the name, Moguncja.

462 Probably Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà, the second-largest insurance company in Italy, founded in 1838 in Trieste; its Warsaw branch existed from 1844.

463 The OBW workshop.

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 Jewish Council 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. 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 to the *Umschlagplatz*. Otherwise, their food cards will be taken away and they will be driven out by force.[464] We can see that the G[ermans] 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. W h a t h o r r o r ! They are preparing to destroy us utterly.

Wednesday, 19 August

The 29th day of the bloody *Aktion*. Last evening ended in a massacre and with a large raid on the brush workshop on Franciszkańska and Świętojerska Streets. 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 Mokrska,[465] Rabbi Huberband and others. I have been informed that Nisenbaum's father and Szczerański[466] have been seized. Rachel Sztajn[467] poisoned herself at the *Platz*. Hilel Cajtlin's wife was taken. Last night the terrible news reached me that Mrs Leonka Schweiger[468] has been taken away. She tried to poison herself, but they saved her.

464 See: *Oyneg Shabes. People and Works*, Doc. 68.

465 Shulamit Mokrska (c. 1889–1942), social activist in women's organisations, both before the war and in the Warsaw ghetto.

466 Leyb Szczerański (1886–1942), in 1931 the Mizrachi representative on the Board of the Jewish Community in Warsaw; in the ghetto involved in the underground movement.

467 Rachela (Rayza) Sztajn (c. 1884–1942), social activist, in the Warsaw ghetto collaborated with the Jewish Social Self-Help and CENTOS.

468 Most probably the family of Stefania Szwajger.

[17] There is no *Aktion* in Warsaw today. The squad has left for Otwock.[469] And there is an *Aktion* 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 in dark corners and cellars. Large numbers of Jews commit suicide. 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 'Briyus' and 'Zofiówka'.[470] 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 1942

There was no *Aktion* 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 *Aktion* 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 and her step-daughter Hela have been driven out. 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 years of war. It is such anguish and only death will end my suffering.

An order for the buildings' janitors 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, Hitlerite-style; the G[ermans] are preparing to remove all the Jews' possessions.

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469 In the Otwock ghetto, established in November 1940, there were both Otwock residents and patients of local TB sanatoria. Approximately 2,000 of them died of hunger and diseases. On 19 August 1942 during the *Aktion,* approximately 8,000 people were deported to Treblinka, and several hundred were killed on the spot. More than 3,000 people were then hunted by the Jewish policemen in subsequent weeks, then shot and buried in mass graves near the town.

470 Briyus-Zdrowie [Yiddish-Polish: health], a tuberculosis sanatorium for Jews, and 'Zofiówka' Hospital for the Mentally and Nervously Sick in Otwock. On 19 August 1942, during the *Aktion* in the Otwock ghetto, the hospital patients were shot, while patients and doctors from the sanatorium were either shot on the spot or taken to Treblinka.

Friday, 21 August

Yesterday evening after six the Jewish police moved into the buildings which were supposed to have been emptied by the occupants. They drove out the occupants by force, broke into locked flats, robbed and looted and smashed whatever they found and at the same time seized [18] women, especially those who had no papers (*Meldekarten*).[471] Where did the Jews get this brutality from? The G[ermans]' spirit has passed into them. They also entered our workshop at 8 and caused panic among the women. They were bribed and left. I was worried about Ora and walked with her late to Fruma's. At 11 in the evening the air raid on Warsaw began.[472] It was as bright as on a clear, moonlit night, because of the bombardment. Bombs were dropped. In spite of the danger, we welcomed the raid with a feeling of great satisfaction. Perhaps our salvation will come, perhaps this evil power will be broken. There is talk of a second front in France and Holland. If these things had happened 4 or 5 weeks ago, perhaps we would have been saved from the catastrophe. I have heard there was an assassination attempt on the chief of police Szeryński. He was wounded in the cheek. According to rumours he was wounded by a Pole from the P.P.S. disguised as a Jewish policeman.[473] Today leaflets were distributed against the Jewish police, who have helped to send 200,000 Jews to their deaths. The whole police force has been sentenced to death.[474]

What should I do with my mother? Old people have nowhere to turn. They have nowhere to hide. They have been driven out of their former flats and are not let into the new blocks. The entrances are closed and the janitors will not admit strangers. There are those who go to the *Umschlag* and hand themselves over to the butchers to die a martyr's death.

471 (German) registration card, here as a proof of employment.

472 A Soviet air raid on Warsaw on the night of 20/21 August 1942 targeted mainly Grochów, Mokotów, Wola and Żoliborz districts.

473 Abbreviation for Polska Partia Socjalistyczna (Polish Socialist Party). A failed assassination attempt on Józef Szeryński was carried out by Izrael Kanał, a member of ŻOB, on 20 August 1942.

474 It is a reference to the ŻOB announcement of 17 August; the document is not preserved; it is mentioned in the ŻOB announcement of 30 October 1942; see ARG II 426a (Ring. II/333).

Saturday, 22 August

Yesterday there was no *Aktion*, but the squad is active in the Warsaw area. Yesterday, it is said, it was in Mińsk.[475]

The heavy and gloomy scene that I had at Nacia's because of her mother. The Tombaks will not let her sleep there. She has nowhere to go, except to go and give herself up to the executioners. How horrifying. Ora is ill and she has nowhere to lie down and no medicine. We have no roof over our heads. I leave her at Nacia's. I am deeply [19] worried and frightened.

Sunday, 23 August

Yesterday was the 32nd day of the bloody *Aktion* in Warsaw, which has not been discontinued; on the contrary, it is still continuing. Yesterday the Jewish police rounded up mainly women and children with rampant viciousness and savagery. I was told that a prettily dressed 10-year-old girl was seized on Pawia Street. The girl screamed in anguish and cried out: 'Mr Policeman!' but her pleas were of no avail. He was deaf to her screams and put her in a rickshaw to the *Umschlag*.

Yesterday the 2 *shomrot* from Ostrowiec who work at our office were seized. I have heard that the Jewish police have been ordered to round up 1,000 victims a day, and that the hunt will continue for another 14 days. In short, not one of us is sure to survive, especially women and children, who are left living with the threat of destruction, every day, every minute. The knowledge of this so preys on their nerves that many nearly go insane. There is talk of an *Aktion* in Piotrków.[476] About the group from Hashomer Hatzair that works at the Jewish cemetery, and the 'business' that is carried on with the Christians.

The G[ermans] are looting Jewish property. Yesterday they came to the 'Tepicyn'[477] factory and took away the best suitcases and everything of value. They even pillage from the wagons in the street.

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475 On 21 July 1942 Jews from the ghetto in Mińsk Mazowiecki were deported to Treblinka.

476 Piotrków Trybunalski had the first ghetto in Nazi-occupied Europe, from early October 1939. At first, 9,376 Jewish residents of Piotrków were crowded there, and then until July 1942 there were up to 29,000 Jews, among them those deported from Łódź, Poznań, Gniezno, Bydgoszcz and other towns. Between 14 and 21 October 1942, some 22,000 were deported to Treblinka, and the remaining Jews were sent to various labour camps, the last ones in November 1944. See: Daniel Warzocha, *Piotrkowskie judaika. Przewodnik*, Łódź 2017, pp. 162–169.

477 T. Tepicyn & M. von Szaniawska, carpentry workshop at Gęsia Street 69.

Life in the ghetto has become quiet. The few who have survived wander the streets like shadows, like corpses, and their number diminishes from day to day. Mr R. told me something he had heard from some German woman that in the area around the station at Kosów you can hear the screams of them being tortured to death 3 km away.[478] The savagery of the Jewish police against their unfortunate victims: they beat viciously, they steal, and they loot and pillage like bandits in the forest. What degeneracy! Who raised these bitter fruits among us?

I have heard that in Falenica[479] all the Jews left their homes, dispersed in the nearby small towns and the woods, and not a single one remained behind. The executioners were left without prey. [20] Apparently, they massacred everyone in Otwock and didn't deport people. In Falenica the Jews tried to resist and they were slaughtered. Anyone who was found was killed. The remainder ran off into the woods. Today the butchers are supposed to return to Warsaw and there are terrible rumours circulating because of this: that they intend to liquidate the whole of Jewish Warsaw and empty it of Jews. Horrific.

Fela has returned from the *Umschlag* and told me that Suchowolska has been seized. A few hours later I learned the end of the story. The neighbours collected a little money, clothing and food . . . and sent the mother and her two children, boys aged 10 and 12. Asz's[480] brother-in-law has died – Alberg. Yesterday he was still walking around, and today he died because his strength gave out.

Today the Jewish police carried out the *Aktion* with savage brutality. They simply ran riot. There is a dread of tomorrow, of an *Aktion* with the participation of the G[ermans]. The firm OBW has set up a confiscation team, which drives around carts with beds, plank beds and other goods. The whole society has been pillaged from top to bottom. God, is there any help or salvation for us? Will the survivors stay alive, or will our end be the same as that of the hundreds and thousands who have already died?

478 A reference to the Treblinka killing centre, located near Kosów Lacki (Sokołów County).

479 On 20 August 1942, almost all inmates of the ghetto in Falenica, numbering approximately 7,000, were taken to Treblinka. Only about 100 Jewish workers remained in the city.

480 Natan (Nute) Asz, secretary of the General Zionist organisation in Poland before the war, secretary general of the Jewish Social Self-Help in the ghetto.

Monday, 24 August

A meeting of Oyneg Shabes at the Hashomer Hatzair[481] with the participation of R-m,[482] G-n,[483] G-k,[484] B-ch,[485] L-n,[486] G-ski,[487] W-r,[488] Shmuel,[489] Josef,[490] L-au.[491] Rabbi Huberband was missing, he was seized at the brushmakers.[492] The place, the time, and the appearance of the participants underline the special tragedy of the meeting.

481 Hashomer Hatzair's main office was located at Miła Street 61.

482 Emanuel Ringelblum.

483 Yitzhak Giterman (1889–1943); during World War I he had co-organised the Jewish Committee to Aid War Victims (EKO-PO) in Russia; in 1926 he became the director of the Polish section of the Joint; cooperated with YIVO; using the Joint's funds he organised aid for the Jewish population until the end of 1941; member of Oyneg Shabes. He was killed on 18 January 1943.

484 David (Daniel) Guzik.

485 Lipe Leyzer (Eliezer) Bloch (1888–1944), Zionist activist, director of the Jewish National Fund (KKL), Tarbut associate; Oyneg Shabes member; associated with the Dror movement, collected funds for the ŻOB; deported to the Budzyń labour camp during the ghetto uprising in April 1943; he died in Mauthausen concentration camp.

486 Abraham Lewin.

487 Eliyahu Gutkowski.

488 Hersh Wasser.

489 Probably Shmuel Winter (1891–1943), son of a rabbi from Włocławek, during the interwar period an affluent entrepreneur running a large trading company (for seed production), member of the leadership of the Jewish Traders' Union, co-founder of YIVO and researcher of Jewish folklore and Yiddish literature; in the Warsaw ghetto he worked in the Supply Section of the *Judenrat*, at the same time closely cooperating with Oyneg Shabes which he supported financially.

490 Josef Kaplan (1913–1942), Hashomer Hatzair member, in the Warsaw ghetto: member of the Anti-Fascist Bloc and underground press editor.

491 Alexander (Leyb) Landau (?–1944) engineer, co-owner (with his older brother Józef) of a large carpentry workshop since the interwar period. When the workshop was confiscated by Germans he retained the position of director. He helped Oyneg Shabes organisationally and financially. A large group of social activists associated with Oyneg Shabes and the ŻSS found protection there from deportation to Treblinka. After the founding of ŻOB he became a member of the citizens' committee by its Coordinating Committee. He supported civil and armed resistance in the Warsaw ghetto. In April 1943, together with his wife and son, he left the ghetto, and after obtaining a foreign passport (as part of the so-called Hotel Polski affair), he was taken to occupied France, to a foreigners' internment camp in Vittel. From there he was deported to Auschwitz, where he was killed.

492 Rabbi Shimon Huberband was deported to Treblinka on 18 August. The broom factory, commonly called the brushmakers' workshop, was located in the building bloc bordered by Świętojerska, Wałowa, Franciszkańska and Bonifraterska Streets.

The *Aktion*, as I have already mentioned, was carried out yesterday by Jewish police without the G[ermans], and is continuing today as well. The centre where bread and soup are distributed has been reopened and orders have been issued for 1,100 portions to be prepared. An indication that they are expecting this number of victims. Rumours are going around that the G[ermans] have allowed 120,000 food cards to be prepared and distributed for September. This would seem to indicate that they are going to leave behind that number of Jews. [21] But this is only a rumour and nothing more. On the other hand, there are other rumours, much more pessimistic. There is talk again that the *Aktion* will be extended for another week.

Today is already the 34th day of the *Aktion*. Rumours have arrived that A. I. Einhorn,[493] one of the editors of *Haynt*, has been murdered or died on the way from Otwock to Warsaw. He didn't have the strength for such a long walk. He had gone there to improve his health and met with his death. The business that the Toporol-group are doing with the Christians in the cemetery. It is said that Szeryński, the head of the police, a convert, who was wounded a few days ago, died from his wounds yesterday. This piece of news has still to be confirmed.[494]

Ora is ill again. Her fever reached 40 degrees yesterday. I had to leave her at Nacia's even though she is in great danger. For the first time in her life her mother is not at her side when she is sick. How can such a situation be described? Also, the matter of my mother is causing me great anguish. What can be done with her? I have given my permission to put her to sleep, eternal rest, rather than give her over to the executioners. But J.[495] refuses to carry it out. Even the devil could not have conceived of such a situation.

Two in the afternoon. The day passes unexpectedly quiet. Have events taken a new turn? I heard that today they have taken out of the Pawiak the foreign citizens who were put in there 6 days before the events began,[496]

493 Aron Einhorn (1884–1942), journalist, contributor to the *Haynt* daily. During the German occupation he collaborated with the ŻSS. He was murdered in Otwock.

494 Incorrect information. Szeryński committed suicide in January 1943.

495 Jakub Tombak.

496 A group of Jews, all of whom held passports of other countries, were in fact interned in Pawiak in July 1942 and were mostly deported to the camp in Vittel.

as well as the Jewish councilors who were imprisoned as hostages. If these stories are true, then they herald the cessation of the *Aktion*.[497] The young man Shmuel,[498] passing by Żelazna Street 101,[499] saw with his own eyes how the squad was packing up its booty in separate boxes and loading it up into lorries. It is possible to conclude that they are preparing to take their leave. But even cessation of the *Aktion* can be of little comfort after the appalling slaughter of two-thirds of Warsaw Jewry. The mourning of our losses will continue to accompany us, especially those of us who mourn for our loved ones from the depths of our souls.

In any case the *she'erit hapletah* will be able to recover a little and continue their wretched existence until the end of the war. When will the end come? There is no sign of it. A rumour [22] is going around that Brazil joined the war against the Axis powers.[500] Does this not show the terrible duration of this war? Has Brazil come in at the end? There is also pressure on Chile and Argentina to join the war. It is possible that the thrust of these nations will be turned against Japan, and the war over here could even end this year. Abroad, as it turns out, they are unaware of our great disaster. Roosevelt, who threatened Germany with revenge for murdering the hostages, is completely silent about the great tragedy, about the great slaughter that has been perpetrated against us.[501] Apparently, he doesn't have precise and authentic information, since he passes over all this in silence.

6 in the evening. Jewish policemen have returned from the town and said that the *Aktion* is continuing. So, all our hopes that the bloody *Aktion* had ceased now, that we would be allowed a little breathing space, have been swept away. How will we survive? How will we be able to bear it?

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497 On 21 July 1942, the Germans arrested 60 hostages, members of the *Judenrat* and the Jewish intelligentsia, to guarantee that the *Judenrat* would not resist deportation.

498 Probably a reference to Shmuel Breslaw.

499 The SS headquarters that oversaw the *Aktion*. The building also housed the SS detention centre.

500 Brazil joined the war on 28 August 1942.

501 *327/304 In fact Roosevelt made a declaration on 21 August in response to the conference of governments in exile which took place in London in January 1942. Both the conference resolutions and Roosevelt's response [. . .] contained nothing in the way about concrete assistance to the threatened Jews.

Only one of the rumours from this morning has been confirmed, namely that the Jewish councilors Ekerman, Zundelewicz[502] and others, who were in prison as hostages, have been released. It might have been possible to conclude from this that the *Aktion* was over. But we are nonetheless not to be left in peace. People talk of the special danger that now threatens children. A terrible dread seizes me, when I think of the fate of Ora. She has no documents and is in danger.

Since Friday the loudspeakers have not been operating. No newspapers reach us. No newspapers are allowed into the ghetto. The guards at the gate confiscate them. Thus, we find ourselves in a special prison where we live each minute with the threat of seizure and execution, and no news reaches us from the other side of the wall. And perhaps it will be granted to us one bright morning that our eyes will be opened to the light of the sun of freedom in all its strength and splendour. How can we live like this? We never know from one day to the next if the day will pass safely. We have no roof over our head. We have no flat and our sleeping at Nacia's is already becoming burdensome to me. And Ora's illness?

[23]

Tuesday, 25 August

Today it is five weeks since the beginning of the slaughter that is being carried out without respite against the Jews of Warsaw and the surrounding area. The *Aktion* itself is continuing. G[ermans] and Ukrainians carried out a round-up today in the *kehillah's* block. This means Zamenhofa, Pawia, Gęsia and Lubeckiego Streets. I am terrified for Ora, for mother, and for all the relations I left at Pawia Street 14.

I heard that they took *kehillah* employees, from the supply division, and others. All the workshops have received instructions as to the maximum number of workers that they have the right to employ. L.'s workshop has been allocated 900. At our workplace the number is not so small, but other workshops feel themselves hard done by and are threatening to stop work and return the materials, as they cannot produce the goods with such a small

502 Bernard Zundelewicz (1886–1943), a pre-war president of the Central Jewish Merchants' Administration; Ber Ajzyk Ekerman (1891–1943), activist of Agudas Yisroel, chairman of the religious supervision department of the Cemetery Department of the Warsaw *Judenrat*.

number of workers. Yesterday there was a meeting at the office of employment with the manufacturers and the SS present. This morning, I saw an announcement on Lubeckiego Street typewritten (in Polish) to the following effect: 'In the light of the accusations raised against the head of police, the officers and the ordinary policemen who have been found guilty of criminal acts – the assassination attempt was carried out against Szeryński Jakub. Further acts of this nature (*represje*)[503] will be carried out with the full severity of the judgement.'[504]

Telephone calls from Radomsko yesterday and today with the news that everything is quiet there. Gancwajch is there. However, there are rumours that things are not quiet in Częstochowa. 6 in the evening. Once again, a difficult and terrible day that freezes the blood in our veins. The Ukrainians and the G[ermans] run riot in the blocks all day, because that is where the small crowd of survivors is concentrated. People are also being taken away from there. The impression is that they want to destroy us entirely. My own position is even more difficult now. It is very dangerous to go from here, Gęsia Street 30, to Pawia Street 14. And how can I not go and see Ora? Especially when I am tortured with worry over her fate and that of the remainder of my family. I will certainly go and take the risk.

Wednesday, 26 August

Yesterday evening two announcements were posted in the streets. The first: after 8, rickshaws may not be in the streets, and after 9, Jews are not permitted in the streets, except for police. Signed the Jewish *kehillah* (council). The second announcement is from the Office of Employment. It states that a Jew may not change place of work without the permission of [24] the Office of Employment. The penalty for disobeying the instruction is immediate removal from Warsaw.[505] It is interesting that a few days before the onset of the *Aktion*, the curfew was extended until 10 o'clock in the evening and the decree was valid until the end of September.

Yesterday was one of the most difficult since the incidents began. The G[ermans] and the Ukrainians (*[ł]obuzeria*)[506] ran riot among the few

503 (Polish) retaliation.

504 See footnote 460; this could be the only known quotation of the ŻOB's announcement of 17 August; Szeryński's name was Józef.

505 See: *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

506 (Polish) rascals.

remaining Jews in the blocks and shops. Yesterday there were renewed round-ups in the *kehillah*. Especially – so I have been told – of young people: all the messenger boys and others. People were also taken from the blocks on Pawia and Zamenhofa Streets, among them 14 doctors from Pawia Street 15. Large numbers of those rounded up were shut directly into the wagons and it was impossible to save them. Workers were also taken from certain shops (Schmidt's). Those remaining are in fear of their lives, and the nightmare is worsening, turning our lives into a living hell.

A list of the number of workers permitted to be employed in the Jewish workshops has been published, in total 24,980 people, and, together with 1,000 *kehillah* clerks, the police and the JHK. This will mean that they intend to leave 25,000 Jews in Warsaw, or 6–7 per cent of the former number. History has not witnessed a greater destruction of an ethnic or national population. Yesterday a large number of people were taken from Müller's workshop. Szymon Heller's parents, Zelmanowski[507] and many others. I have been told that Mrs David Pulman[508] has been seized. l feel very sorry for him. Szternberg and his family have been deported. Cytrynowski,[509] and others, many others. The streets are terrible to behold today: they are deserted with not a living soul in sight. The butchers roam the streets looking for victims.

Thursday, 27 August

Today is the 37th day of the greatest slaughter in human history. Yesterday the *Aktion* was carried out in the workshops and blocks. Men, women and children were taken away. The day before yesterday about 4,500 people were deported. I have learnt of the death of the person who has been my closest friend during the war, David Pulman, and his daughter Henia. His wife and youngest daughter Ada had been taken earlier. This news was a terrible blow. Einhorn's wife was also taken away the day

507 Szymon Heller (1920?–1943), an active member of Hashomer Hatzair; in the Warsaw ghetto, secretary of the kibbutz Gal-On; perished in the uprising in April 1943. Chaim Zelmanowski, biologist, teacher; in the Warsaw ghetto co-organised the Dror seminar; after the uprising of April 1943 imprisoned in the labour camp in Budzyń. Lived in Israel after the war.

508 *338, 340/313 It was Sarah Pulman, née Friedman. David Pulman was a pre-war director of the library of the Institute of Judaic Studies. Their three daughters Lily, Henia and Ada were Yehudia students. Ada was Ora Lewin's friend in the ghetto.

509 Yekhiel Cytrynowski, Tarbut school principal in the Warsaw ghetto.

before yesterday from Müller's workshop. I talked with her in the morning on the way to work. The destruction of a whole family.

The appearance of the streets at five in the morning. [25] At five o'clock a few isolated people begin to appear. The 'dealers' go about with their 'wares'. They sell saccharin (fake), bread, potatoes and so on. Later the streets are deserted until 7 in the evening. The prices: bread – 28–30 zlotys, potatoes – 12–14 zlotys, butter – 300 zlotys, meat – up to 100 zlotys (hard to get), cigarettes (a packet of 20) – 20 zlotys.

Today we are expecting a visit from the murderers to our workshop and everyone is waiting nervously and in a state of agitation. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon there was an inspection at our workshop and it passed off peacefully. Two men from the SD sat in the director's office and drank and ate and looked over the list of employees without checking documents or going to see the workers for themselves. At the same time there was a blockade on our block on Miła Street. 39[510] people were taken away, mainly women and children. The *Aktion* is directed against women and children. Weeping mothers are seen whose children have been taken away (I saw this with my own eyes). There was also a blockade on the other streets. We are drowning and the water is already up to our mouths.

The meeting of all the workers and the speech of commissioner Hensel and the words of thanks to him from the Landau brothers: He spoke of the benefits for us and of his efforts on behalf of the workers during the terrible *Aktion* which is now coming to an end for us. His efforts had met with partial success and partial failure, perhaps because of a lack of understanding on our part. In return for these benefits, he appealed for our dedication to the work and loyalty to the firm. He will hunt down saboteurs. The workers applauded and thanked him, as did the Landau brothers. This was a performance, prepared in every detail. Unfortunate slaves – when they hear an encouraging word – it goes to their heads and they get excited and enthusiastic. Among the children who were rounded up today were 10-month-old babies and eight-year-olds.

510 Crossed out 'over 40' and 'around 40'.

Friday, 28 August

The acts of terror continue. I heard that yesterday evening a group of workers was returning from work at Oschmann's shop.[511] The SS divided the group in two. Half were allowed to keep walking, and the second group was led away straight to the *Umschlag*. The children who were seized yesterday were not rescued. They have perished, perished.

Today we had a long talk with Dawid Nowodworski,[512] who returned from Tr. [26] He gave us the complete story of the sufferings that he endured from the first moment he was seized to his escape from the murder site, up to his return to Warsaw. His words confirm once again and leave no room for doubt that all the deportees, both those who have been seized and those who reported voluntarily, are taken to be killed and that no one is saved. This is the naked truth, and how terrible, when we remember that in the last weeks at least 300,000 Jews have been destroyed, from Warsaw and other towns: Radom, Siedlce,[513] and many, many others. From his words we put together a testimony of such stark anguish, so shattering, that it cannot be grasped and put into words. This is without doubt the greatest crime ever committed in all of history.

Yesterday about 4,000 people were driven from Warsaw to their deaths, men, women and children. The *Aktion* continues today. Workshops are surrounded and besieged. But – I have heard – there are no wagons. They will be held until evening, or until tomorrow and then another large group will be sent away. This is the thirty-eighth day of the great slaughter. From the cup of poison have so far drunk – apart from Warsaw – Siedlce, Rembertów,[514] Radom and many, many more.

Yesterday I heard that the large shops' owners, Schultz, Toebbens, are negotiating with leaders of the murder squads. They are promising them millions in bribes if they leave the rest of the Jews in Warsaw, which they

511 Oschmann-Leszczyński workshop at Nowolipie Street 18. It manufactured military caps.

512 Dawid Nowodworski (1916–1944), Hashomer Hatzair activist. He was taken to Treblinka on 17 August and managed to escape after ten days. He fought in the Warsaw ghetto uprising in April 1943, and then in 1944 in a partisan unit in the vicinity of Warsaw. Following a denunciation, he and his wife Julia (Rivka) Szafirsztajn and three other members of the ŻOB were murdered by the Germans. See: *The Last Stage*, Doc. 19.

513 Deportations from the ghetto in Radom took place on 5 and 16–17 August, from Siedlce – between 16 and 18 August 1942.

514 Deportations from the ghetto in Rembertów took place on 20 August 1942.

estimate at 100,000, and if they leave the city. In this connection there are rumours going around saying that the *Aktion* will continue until Saturday or Sunday, and after that they will leave Warsaw and the town will be quiet. We have so often had our hopes raised about an end to the bloody *Aktion*, and they have turned out to be false and we have been disappointed. No doubt this time we will also be let down, and blood will continue to be spilled. God! Are we really to be exterminated down to the very last of us? Now it is certain that all those deported from Warsaw have been killed.

Saturday, 29 August

The 39th day of the bloody extermination that still continues in all its terror and fearfulness. Yesterday in the course of the evening, when the workers at various G[erman] workplaces, the so-called *placówkarze*,[515] [27] were returning home they were attacked by SS men who shot or seized many of them and took them off to the *Umschlag*. Who was seized? I have heard various accounts: some say that they took away the very young and the old, those over 50; others say that they took people away at random. There was turmoil and screaming at the *Umschlag*. Many were shot. Two doctors from Pawia Street 14, who worked at a location outside the ghetto, did not return home to sleep. We must assume that they were seized. There are different opinions with regard to the numbers killed during the *Aktion* so far. Some say, Dr R.[516] for example, that 15,000 have been killed. Others believe – the head of the police, Brz.[517] – that the number is 'only' 6,000. As far as the number of those deported (read: murdered) is concerned, there are also different estimates: some say that the number is over 230,000, others believe that it is smaller, about 190,000. This is according to the G[erman] figures. The number of Jews remaining in Warsaw is estimated at about 100,000. The number of hostages who were held in prison until the 24th of this month was 53. They were treated very badly. Some of them came back and could not find their families. Ekerman,[518] for example, found only one son left out of his numerous relations.

515 (Polish, in Latin characters) workers at *placówki* (worksites).

516 Emanuel Ringelblum.

517 Mieczysław Brzeziński, *Jüdische Ordnungsdienst* officer, tasked with loading railway wagons and counting deportees on the *Umschlagplatz*.

518 Ber Ajzyk Ekerman. His only son's name was Hilary; he was a communal worker.

One gendarme said that the *Aktion* will be extended until 1 September; after that, according to him, the execution squad will leave for France. In reply to the question as to why it will go to France, there not being many Jews there, the gendarme replied that the unit's activities, the extermination squad, were not only directed against Jews. However, it seems that he doesn't know what he is talking about. For the moment all the bloodlust and animal violence in the form of these human butchers is directed exclusively against us. It is possible that they will leave Warsaw, but they will turn their attention to those places that have not as yet tasted the cup of poison.

Among the prominent people and those near to me who have fallen victim: Rabbi Huberband, Mrs Słapak and her daughter, Celina Lewin[519] and her son, the poetess Łazowert,[520] Winnik. Moshe Lewite or Lewitas (Twarda Street 4), went to look for his wife three weeks ago at the *Umschlag* and was himself seized and sent away to Kosów. Two days ago [28] he returned. The Germans freed him as he was a carpenter. He said that Kosów, which was emptied of its Jews, is now full of expellees. The Jews who have money buy food from the peasants and distribute it among those who have none.[521] The matter must in any case be investigated. It would mean that not all of those deported have been murdered.

Sunday, 30 August

Yesterday, on the 39th day of these bloody events, the *Aktion* was carried out in the workshops. Several hundred people were removed from Brauer's workshop on Nalewki Street. Czerski and Rakowski[522] were taken away, but freed later. In the evening at about nine o'clock there were loud shots in the streets of the new ghetto.[523] There were many deaths. 7 bodies

519 Celina Lewin (?–1942), social activist, author of a study about house committees; see: *Warsaw Ghetto. Everyday Life*, Doc. 21.

520 Cecylia (Luba) Słapakowa (?–1942), translator, member of Oyneg Shabes; Henryka Łazowert (1910–1942), poet, cooperated with the Jewish Social Self-Help and Oyneg Shabes.

521 Jews from towns that included Kalisz, Mława and Wyszków had been resettled to the ghetto in Kosów. In the autumn of 1942 its inhabitants were murdered in Treblinka. See: *Accounts from the General Government* , Docs. 165, 166.

522 * 349/322 Pinkhas Czerski was one of the directors of the Joint in Warsaw. L. Rakowski, a teacher, was involved in self-help and Jewish education in the ghetto.

523 I.e. its reduced area, called the central ghetto, roughly bordered by Gęsia/Franciszkańska, Bonifraterska, Stawki and Smocza Streets.

were found at the corner of Smocza and Wołyńska Streets.[524] They were Jews who were found on the streets at nightfall. It is dangerous for Jews to show themselves on the street in the day, when the streets are completely deserted, and it is dangerous to go out after dark. This means that a Jew can go out only from 5.30 to 7 in the morning and from 7 or 7.30 to 8 in the evening.

The large number of fictitious marriages. Mrs G. P.'s[525] husband arrived from Paris and told us that the same bloody *Aktions*[526] are being carried out there as here. He does not know where G. is. Again they are preparing another expulsion of 200,000 Jews or more. Where will they be sent, and will they do to them what they are doing to us?[527] God only knows.

I have heard that the squad have booked the orchestra of the Jewish police for today. It looks as though they are celebrating a holiday today, are making merry and want to relax to music. From this it might be deduced that they are preparing to take their leave. Today terrible rumours were going around that from midday today until tomorrow evening the ghetto would be closed to Christians. In the end it turned out that the rumour was false and without foundation. I have heard that Rabbi Kanał[528] of Warsaw decided to die so as to be buried as a Jew. When he was seized, he refused to enter the wagon. He was shot and killed by a gendarme. His wish was fulfilled; he was given a Jewish burial.

I have heard that the day before yesterday a group of workers returning from their workplace outside the ghetto were murdered by Ukrainians. Hence the large number of bodies found at the corner of Wołyńska and Smocza Streets.

[29]

Monday, 31 August 1942

The last day of the third year of war and the 41st day of the terrible slaughter that is being carried out against us. Today was once again a difficult day. Many workshops were blockaded. I have been told that

524 Perhaps the corner of Smocza and Ostrowska Streets; the latter is an extension of Wołyńska Street.

525 * 350, 351/323. It was most probably Gina Popower.

526 A reference to the Velodrome d'Hiver (Vel d'Hiv) Round-up, carried out on 16 and 17 July 1942 in Paris and its environs. Approximately 13,000 Jews were arrested during the round-up.

527 Approximately 90,000 or 30 per cent of French Jews perished in the Holocaust.

528 Yitzhak Meir Kanał (?–1942), vice-president of the Union of Rabbis in Poland.

80 people were removed from Hallmann's.[529] The details are not yet known. I have been told of rewards of 5,000 zlotys being offered for each Jew who is discovered on the Aryan side. I have heard of a large massacre that took place between 25 and 28 August in Międzyrzec.[530] One of the days – the 25th – was horrendously bloody. All the Jews were driven onto the street and shot down with machine guns. An *Aktion* was supposed to have begun in Częstochowa,[531] but it has been delayed or postponed. Yesterday 54 people were taken away from Schilling's shop,[532] and from Hallmann's people with small defects such as the lame, the undersized, the weak, even if they were specialists or excellent at their work.

Wednesday, 2 September 1942

Yesterday marked 6 weeks since the beginning of the *Aktion* that still continues, as if it is only to be ended along with the last Jew. The tempo of the *Aktion* was a little less frenetic yesterday, but it still continued.

The Jewish police have, as mentioned, received an order for each to bring 'two heads'. At Pawia Street 6 women were queuing to buy green vegetables. The Jewish police swooped and took several of them away. The G[ermans] have blockaded several shops. In the evening they led away groups of prisoners. I have heard that these are from the *placówki*. They had been going home from work and were seized. Yesterday there were 1,400 people held at the *Umschlag*, so R-m,[533] who lives at Dzika Street 3, told me.

Last night from 10.15 to 12 o'clock there was a second air raid after a break of 12 days. This time more bombs were dropped than the previous

529 Bernard Hallmann's carpentry workshop at Nowolipki Street 59.

530 On 25–26 August 1942, some 11,000 Jews from the Międzyrzec Podlaski ghetto were deported to Treblinka. Lewin uses the Yiddish name of the town, Mezritch.

531 The ghetto in Częstochowa was closed on 23 April 1941. The number of people confined there was initially about 40,000, a total which then increased to 48,000. Between 22 September and 8 October 1942, about 38,000 were murdered in Treblinka, while 2,000 were killed on the spot. The remaining 6,000 were crowded into the so-called small ghetto and forced to work in local labour camps. Most of them were murdered in late June 1943, also as a reprisal to the resistance of ŻOB. Around 5,000 Jews lived in Częstochowa after the war.

532 Oskar Schilling's carpentry workshop at Nowolipie Street 54; it employed 600 people.

533 Eliezer (Leon) Ringelblum (ca. 1902–1942), Emanuel's brother; see the entry for 15 September. He lived on Dzika Street 25. See ARG II 522g (Ring. II/388).

time and many buildings in the ghetto were hit.[534] In the building on Dzielna Street 7 ('Moriah')[535] – which has been occupied by the Jewish police – a fire broke out which lasted all night. The building at Gęsia Street 35a was also damaged, the roof and façade are in danger of collapse. Many windows were broken in the nearby streets, Lubeckiego and Pawia. On Wołyńska, Miła and Smocza Streets there were also fires and several wooden buildings were burned down. The air raid also hit the Jews hard but they welcomed it with feelings of satisfaction. We are waiting for events that will change our fate. Today – on the first day of the seventh week of the bloody events – there are already reports that they are blockading Schultz's shops.

Thursday, 3 September

Yesterday there were heavy blockades of Schultz's and Toebbens' workshops. From Schultz's alone they took out several thousand workers; from other workshops too. There is no end to the disaster that is devouring us relentlessly. Today was a day of calamity, and disaster. Josef K.[536] was arrested this morning. Later Shmuel Br.[537] was shot. In the afternoon there was a heavy blockade of our shop: 100 men and women were taken away. By a miracle Ora and I were saved. God! What terror, what a feeling of imminent death! And the visages of the executioners – the G[ermans] and the Ukrainians! Rumours about the transferring of the remainder of the ghetto outside Warsaw across to Wola.[538] The supply division has received permission to distribute 105,000 food cards.

[30]

Friday, 4 September

The 45th day of the bloody operation against us, which is being carried about with great savagery. In addition to the blockades on our shop, they also took 400 people away from A.H.G. and the whole shop is being liquidated. The same fate awaits our workshop as well. Yesterday 100 people were taken from our shop itself and 70 from the block. Today the same thugs

534 The second Soviet air raid on Warsaw, on the night of 1–2 September 1942 targeted mainly the Wola, Praga and Powiśle districts.

535 Synagogue of the Moriah Zionist Association, established in 1908. Located in the courtyard of Dzielna Street 7, in the attic.

536 Josef Kaplan.

537 Shmuel Breslaw.

538 Industrial district of Warsaw, west of the town centre.

came back completely unexpectedly, set up another heavy blockade, and took 100 people away from the shop. Among them people dear to me – Asz, Gut-ski, Zilber-g, Mazur[539] and others. The G[ermans] were also at the broom manufacturer's this morning and took away 250 people. Considering the large number of workers, that is not many. The role of the Jewish police today during the blockade: they extorted money from those they set free. She–g[540] was freed in the street for 800 zlotys. Someone else was also freed for money. Shmuel's funeral was attended by the *shomrim* who worked at the cemetery, at 'Toporol'.[541] His tragedy expressed in Ora's story, God!

Saturday, 5 September

The enemy shows no mercy and continues to torture and murder us. I spent the day in the workshop in dread of a blockade and death. In the morning blockades were set up at Toebbens', so I heard, and they took away about several thousand people. Once again they took everyone away from Frank[e]-Schultz's[542] and left behind only 50. There was also a blockade at Hallmann's. Several hundred people were taken away from there. It seems that their plan is to destroy the Jewish community in Warsaw utterly. Our shop is threatened with liquidation. Then we will be left hanging in limbo.

The whole day passed with a heavy presentiment of imminent death. I would like to die peacefully and with the knowledge that it had to be and nothing could prevent it. I have not forgotten Stolypin's[543] last words: he said before his death: *Tomu chto byt' tavo nye minovat*.[544] This is our bitter fate – to fall into the hands of the butchers and to be the sacrificial blood of a new era. I believe that there is no way out of the clutches of the savage animal and that we are only drawing out our agony.

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539 Most probably Jakub (Jankiel) Zylberberg, teacher, a CENTOS employee; Albert Mazur, physician from Łódź, TOZ activist.

540 Perhaps S. Szejnberg, a translator.

541 *363/334 Shmuel Breslaw was buried at the former Skra sports ground, adjacent to the Jewish cemetery on Okopowa Street.

542 Franke and Schultz's workshop on Smocza Street 37.

543 Pyotr Arkadyevich Stolypin (1862–1911), Russian politician. Between 1906 and 1911, he served as Russian Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior. He was assassinated while holding office.

544 (Russian, in Cyrillic characters) What is to be, cannot be escaped; what will be will be.

Gutk. and Zilberb. have managed to save themselves in a quite miraculous and heroic fashion. News from Asz has reached us from Wołomin.[545]

Friday, 11 September[546] *– erev Rosh Hashanah 5703*

Since last Saturday I have had neither the inclination, the time nor the opportunity to write anything. The human hand and pen are weary of describing all that has happened to the handful of Jews who are for the time being still alive, myself among them. The cup of our sorrows has no parallel in our history. [31] The horrific and brutal week[547] began on Saturday night, Sunday morning. A Jewish policeman knocked on the door at 3 in the morning and gave us the terrible news that all Jews were to be concentrated within the boundary formed by Gęsia, Miła and Ostrowska Streets, for a new registration. Enough food for two days should be taken and we should bring something to hold water.[548] The panic that gripped the Jews of Warsaw on Sunday morning. We all believed that our time had come to depart this life. With tears in my eyes, I said goodbye to my whole family: to mother, Fruma, Nacia, Jakub and the children. The terrible and particular appearance of the streets: Miła, Wołyńska, the rectangle that has been transformed into an *Umschlagplatz*. The crowds of Jews with packs on their backs, streaming from the streets of the ghetto. Everyone is camped out on the street. In this way we spend the whole of Sunday. In the evening the inspections begin at the workshops, and certain groups return to their factories or to their blocks. On Monday the return to the blocks continues. The inspection brings new victims: children do not pass. The old, women, do not pass. However, everything depends on chance. With some groups the inspection is not so severe; other groups on the other hand have enormous losses. Murders in the streets. I saw with my own eyes how a young, strong man and a young, attractive woman were shot. A sight that I will never forget as long as I live: five tiny children, two- and three-year-olds, sit on a camp bed in an empty square from Monday night to Tuesday and cry and cry and scream without stopping: *Mamo, mamo,*

545 *366/336 A reference to Gutkowski's, Zylberberg's and Asz's escape from the transport from the Warsaw ghetto. The first two returned to the ghetto, and Asz hid in Wołomin, a small town 26 km north-east of Warsaw.

546 In the original, 11 August, apparently by mistake.

547 From 6 to 10 September; it was called in Polish *kocioł* [literally, cauldron], a word used also for a trap or encirclement.

548 See: *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

chcę jeść![549] The soldiers shoot continuously and the shots silence the children for a moment. The children lay there for 24 hours, sobbing and screaming: *Mamo, mamo*. Tuesday afternoon a middle-aged man, about 50, went up to them, cried and gave the children something to eat. Earlier, women had come up and given them food. Our hearts have turned to stone and there was no way to save them. What are we saving them for if we are all sentenced to die?

We were waiting for the commissioner of the firm, Hensel, to come and take us to the factory. He doesn't come. Our mood becomes more and more despairing. The feeling that death, in the form of the *Umschlag*, is getting slowly nearer and nearer, chokes us and is throttling us to death. A rumour went round that our firm had been closed by the Warsaw SS. The people's mood swings between hope and despair. Meanwhile there are blockades in the nearby streets and in Miła Street. Several dozen of our people are removed from the building at number 61 and from the *Werkschutz*: Rozenowicz and his father, Ryba and his family. This happened on Monday. Our despair and the suffering of the hundreds of people, shut in the alleyway, reaches the ultimate limits of endurance. The shooting that goes on all day and, especially, all night shatters the nerves, bringing a deathly depression. Midday Tuesday a glimmer of hope appears, but is immediately extinguished. Hensel arrives for a short visit from 10 till 11 in the morning and promises he will soon come to take us away. He leaves, the hours go by and he doesn't return. Once again our resolve is weakened and we fall into deep despair that is many times worse. We wait for the end that is inevitable: to be taken to the *Umschlagplatz*.

It is hard to keep going. I have no food, nothing to sleep on. I am sleeping (a) at Dzika Street 3, (b) at Rabinowicz's,[550] on the floor, (c) with Radzimer.[551] [32] People are quarrelling with each other. Anyone who has anything left cooks and eats and watches over their property. People steal everything they can lay their hands on, especially food; there is no feeling of common fate, of mutual aid. People wander around aimlessly like shadows. Ora is with the *shomrim*. These young people are more mature, more united.

549 (Polish) Mummy, mummy, I wanna eat!

550 Shiye (Yehoshua) Rabinowicz (1888–1943), businessman affiliated with the Bund, Oyneg Shabes contributor and donor.

551 Lewin's neighbour; see the entry for 1 November.

Tuesday night was bitterly sad for me. I tried very hard to acknowledge the idea that death is inevitable and to prepare myself. I thought: the whole thing will only last 10–15 minutes (I mean the execution), and it will all be over. The lack of news from my sisters and my mother weighs oppressively. There is also an oppressive plague of fleas. Hunger forces us to beg, to ask for a little food. Even in such terrible hours as these a hungry person wants to still the hunger.

Wednesday morning: once again a rumour that brings hope. Hensel is coming to get us. He really has come. Joy grips all those who are shut in the street. Straight away most of those who work in the workshop come down, men and women. Left behind in their homes, that is, in their hiding places, are the old women and children. We stand and sit in the street from 10 in the morning until 6 in the evening. The mood is almost joyful. A crowd of women, like some unit, stands in front of us. The hours pass. But still, everyone waits patiently. They want to get to the factory. Suddenly 4 or 5 SS officers appear and . . . a pogrom begins, the like of which I have never seen. Even the marauding of the Cossacks[552] in the first revolution of 1905–1906 bore no resemblance to what the G[ermans] did. They beat men and women with whips, sticks and strips of wood. They took all the women away to the *Umschlag* (except for a few with metal plaques with numbers) and large numbers of the men, who had by chance not obtained a metal number, thinking them to be worthless. The best-looking and the most elegant women perished. Whole families were cut down. A young officer hit out with murderous blows and shouted wildly: *Über euch, verfluchte, verdammte, kräzige Juden habe ich 3 Jahren Lebens verloren. Schon 3 Jahren plaget ihr uns, ihr Hunde . . .*[553] and so on. I have never before seen such bestial hatred. There was also killing. We go towards Gęsia Street 30 and there is a round-up going on there, that is continuing today. Yesterday and today, there were blockades on our blocks; people have been taken again. The Świeca family has perished. He gave himself up after seeing how his wife and two children were taken. Initially he went with us to Gęsia Street, later he went back, gave himself up and was sent away. I feel a great compassion and admiration for this straightforward person. Strong

552 A reference to a wave of anti-Jewish pogroms between October 1905 and January 1906, mainly in the southern provinces of the Russian Empire.

553 (German) 'Because of you, accursed, damned, leprous Jews I have already lost three years of my life, for three years we have been plagued, you dogs.'

in mind as well as strong in body. I think that Luba would have done the same, but I didn't have enough strength to die together with her, with the one whom I loved so much. Apart from the hunt for people, the G[ermans] are looting openly, as if it were something quite legal. They take away everything that appeals to them from the buildings. The Ukrainians are common bandits. They break into the buildings at night and steal everything they find, with revolvers and rifles in their hands. The Jews are also in the grip of frenzied looting and thieving. They loot and steal everything they can lay their hands on.

We have been shut in the factory since the day before yesterday. We tremble at every noise and shot that comes from the street. Yesterday the SS visited us for the purpose of looting. Today is the eve of Rosh Hashanah 5703. May the coming year bring salvation for those who have survived. Today is the 52nd day of the greatest and most terrible slaughter in history. We are the tiny remnants of the greatest Jewish community in the world.

[33]

Tuesday, 15 September

The days go by without the shattering upheavals of the previous weeks. Yesterday I was told that the *Umschlagplatz* has been totally cleared. Those who were still there in hiding, have been freed. Thus the bloody *Aktion*, of which history has not seen the like, lasted 54 days. The conclusion was the deportation from the hospitals of their patients and their doctors, nurses and staff. Nor did they spare in this those patients whose days are numbered.

According to the *kehillah circles* the number of Jews remaining legally in Warsaw is around 34,000, and together with those in hiding there are as many as 50,000. This is the sum total of the greatest Jewish community in Europe, in actual fact, in the whole world. More than three hundred thousand Jews have been exterminated in the course of seven and a half weeks. Jewish Warsaw now has the air of a cemetery. In the last days of the *Aktion*, on Saturday, more than 20 people were killed in the building at Dzika Street 3, the only building where there had not been a blockade. Two Jews were having an argument, Goriełow[?][554] and one other. At that moment two *junaks* were passing; they stormed in and led out more than twenty Jews. Among the dead was the family of Leon Ringelblum: himself, his wife and their three-month-old son.

554 Reading uncertain. Perhaps A. Goriełow, actor, active in Jewish Social Self-Help.

I have great respect for those Jews such as Świeca, Dr Wiślicki, Dr Płońskier[555] and others, who sacrificed themselves, not wishing to survive the death of their wives and children. The greatest admiration and awe are awakened in me by the Jew Świeca, a giant in physical stature, who stood with us in the square, came with us to the factory and then went back and gave himself up to the butchers, because he could not part from his wife and children, who were seized on that day of the slaughter. The next day his two other children were taken away, so the whole family perished. Only his aged father is left, for whom we have great compassion in his loss and loneliness.

Word has it that the *Aktion* has begun in Częstochowa.[556] It is already in its second day. We, who have been through the ordeal, feel what our brothers are going through there. I have heard the following about Kielce: when the thugs arrived there, they approached the *kehillah* with a request for help in the *Aktion*. They refused to help. They were given 24 hours to think it over. After the deadline they gave another negative answer. In reply to this, the thugs murdered all the council members and the members of the police, and then carried out a large-scale massacre in the streets. They killed about 1,000 Jews and expelled the remainder in familiar fashion. According to what I have heard, not a single Jew is left. According to another rumour, there are still about 1,000 left out of about 30,000.[557]

Josef Kapłan is now no longer alive. He was buried last Saturday at the cemetery, the first day of the new year. It turns out that he was murdered in the Pawiak. Those two fine boys Josef and Shmuel[558] have paid the highest price for their strivings and their ideals: with their lives.

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555 Moryc Markus Płońskier (1896–1942), pathomorphologist, head of the laboratory in the Jewish hospital in Warsaw; in the ghetto, he continued his work in the hospital and participated in the research on starvation. See M. Ciesielska, *Lekarze getta warszawskiego*, p. 352 and *379/347.

556 It began a few days later. See footnote 531, pt. 1.

557 The ghetto in Kielce was closed on 1 April 1941. The number of inmates was around 27,000, including local Jews and deportees from many towns. Between 20 and 24 August 1942 most of them were deported to Treblinka, and around 2,000 were sent to forced labour camps. Of some 200 survivors, 42 were murdered in a pogrom on 4 July 1946.

558 Shmuel Breslaw was murdered on 3 September 1942 on a street in the ghetto. Josef Kaplan was murdered on 11 September 1942 on his way from the Pawiak prison to the *Umschlagplatz*.

Wednesday, 16 September

Once again we have been through two days of misfortune and abuse at our shop. Yesterday the SS raided it and took 50 people away to work in Smolensk.[559] During this incident they killed Rabbi Blumenfeld.[560] He wanted to go up to the officer to ask that his life be spared. He was shot 7 times over several seconds, slowly. The events yesterday shook me up terribly. Today there was another formal blockade. A whole squad of SS raided the shop and again they took away an additional 50 men and several dozen women. I was lucky yesterday and today and remained alive. But how much can we bear? Of those rounded up today, those with money came back. In the evening 9 Jews in the shop were rounded up and sent [34] to the *Umschlag* in place of the nine Jews who were taken this morning and freed. Things that we would not believe if we were told about them.

Friday, 18 September

New and extreme difficulties are besetting us. The ghetto boundaries are being reduced further. The whole rectangle: Pawia, Lubeckiego, Gęsia, Zamenhofa Streets is being removed from the ghetto. My two remaining sisters are losing their flats. In any case they have no right to be alive, since they have not received numbers from the *kehillah*. All my belongings are over there. If they lose the flat, that little clothing and bedclothes I have will be endangered and I will be naked and destitute. This disturbs me deeply, even though we are in mortal danger and there is no need to get upset at the prospect of having nothing to wear or no pillow for our head, at a time when our very survival is in doubt. But perhaps a miracle will happen and our salvation will come suddenly?

Sunday, 20 September erev Yom Kippur

Such bleak and gloomy days go by, our spirits are being crushed. In our workshop (Gęsia Street 30), of the OBW, nothing out of the ordinary has happened. People work a little, become tired and hungry. A few individuals who have a lot of money or goods make murky deals, eat and drink. The rest suffer. My position is very difficult. I have no money.

559 News about labour in Smolensk was disseminated by the Germans in order to soothe the mood in the ghetto.

560 Rabbi Yekhiel Meir Blumenfeld (1892? –1942), Mizrachi activist, a participant in a Takhkemoni seminar of directors and teachers. See ARG II 291 (Ring. II/219/2), a plea to Aleksander Landau to rescue Rabbi Blumenfeld and his family, employed in the OBW workshop, from the *Umschlagplatz*.

The general state of things is indescribable. It is as if they want to destroy all Jews down to the very last one.

The *Aktion* is still not over. Yesterday a strong blockade was suddenly set up on Miła Street at the AHG company. A lot of people were taken away. I heard that it was 600. The *Umschlag* has been set up again, so people are saying. Yesterday an order was issued that one doctor and two nurses were to report to work there. Unless a miracle happens, we will all die. Will there be a miracle? Will it happen?

My meeting with my girl students from Yehudia: Hochberg-Szechnarowicz,[561] Adina Szwajger.[562] I receive the shattering news that the whole of Yehudia has perished: her mother, Brotmacher, Złotowska, Wajnberger[563] and everyone, everyone. A terrible scene. Nejburg.

The difficult and dangerous position of the *kehillah* employees who have been dismissed. Among them my brothers-in-law, Moyshe and Jakub. They don't have numbers from the *kehillah* and have no refuge of any kind. They will not receive a flat, they have now to move out of Pawia Street, and in general they have no 'right' to live. What will happen? What will happen?

I went to bed at 9–9.30. There was a knock at the door. Thugs – *Junaks* or soldiers – who roam around at night thieving and looting. We didn't open up for them. They hammered on the door and fired a lot of shots. I lay in terror, sweating. Days of terror and nights of terror. The Kassel family is no longer here. More than 300,000 Warsaw Jews have been struck out from the book of life, that is five-sixths of the Warsaw Jewish community. For each 6 Jews, 5 have gone. This is for the time being, for the enemy is still not yet sated.

Monday, 21 September – Yom Kippur

We are not allowed into the shop. I spent the day at Nacia's and Fruma's. There were blockades on Miła Street, in the building where the office of employment is, and others. Already a large group has been led away, most of them women. According to rumours, these are women from Toebbens', from the small ghetto. They were tricked: they

561 *384/352 It was Ida Hochenberg, one of the first graduates of Yehudia, later a physician in Israel.

562 Adina Irena Blady-Szwajger (1917–1993), medical doctor, daughter of the Yehudia school's headmistress.

563 *385/353 Mother, i.e. Stefania Szwajger, Rachela Brotmacher, Gustawa Złotowska and Cecylia Wajnberg all were teachers from the Yehudia school.

were asked who would like to be transferred from the small to the large ghetto: living conditions are very, very difficult in the small ghetto. [35] Three hundred women volunteered, and they were taken straight to the *Umschlag*. Anyway, it should be set down that the *Aktion* is still continuing and today is the 62nd day.

Warsaw's fate is more tragic than that of other towns that have been touched by this evil. Those who are far away cannot imagine our bitter situation. They will not understand and will not believe that day after day thousands of men, women and children, innocent of any crime, were taken to their death. And the handful of those remaining after 9 weeks is in mortal danger and, it seems, can expect the same fate. Almighty God! Why did this happen? And why is the whole world deaf to our screams? 'Earth, earth, do not cover our blood, and let no place be free from our cries!'[564]

A Jew[565] has returned to our workshop who was taken away from here three weeks ago and worked as a gravedigger in Treblinka for 9 or 11 days before escaping in a railway wagon in which the martyrs' belongings were being taken away. He tells horrific and shattering things. In any case we have another eyewitness to the fate of those who are deported. According to what he said, not only Jews from Warsaw and of the *Gubernia* are being exterminated in Treblinka, but Jews from all over Europe – from France, Belgium, Holland, among others. Such a calamity has never before befallen us in all the bitter experiences of our history. In our courtyard Jews are praying, pouring out their cares to the Creator.

Wednesday, 23 September

Yesterday I was quite unable to record what happened in the ghetto on Monday, Yom Kippur. All the heads [of the factories] made an inspection or selection on their own initiative and themselves sent those they had picked out on the way to the *Umschlag*, with the help of the *Werkschutz*. There was also a new registration [at our factory] after I had gone to Pawia Street. After the registration the commissioner himself inspected the flats and found 13 people hiding there. 6 of them were workers with numbers, completely legal workers, who didn't go down to the registration out of fear, and seven outsiders, who were hiding in the block. He sent these 13 people off to the *Umschlag*. Grosberg's elderly mother has perished. The same thing happened in other

564 From Job 16:18.

565 See the accounts of Jakub (Jakow, Abram, Abraham) Krzepicki, *The Last Stage*, Docs. 22, 23.

workshops. In M. Kirshenbaum's[566] workshop at Gęsia Street 81, the director threw out all those he didn't like. After he had reached the letter 'T',[567] he sent everyone to the *Umschlag*. A large number from the ranks of the Jewish police have also been sent to the *Umschl[agplatz]*, together with their wives and children. The Jews who watched this scene felt a definite satisfaction. This is the reward for their brutal acts against the Jews of Warsaw.

[36]

Thursday, 24 September

A day of turmoil and unrest among the few Jews who for the time being are left. Yesterday the new phase of moving out from the buildings on Pawia, Gęsia, Zamenhofa and Lubeckiego Streets began. No one gave the order for us to leave the streets, no one has set the deadline by which the move had to be completed, but there has been a feverish exodus from the streets since yesterday. Instead of the 36 buildings of which the earlier block consisted, only half this number have been allocated to us and they are in very poor condition. Another problem: many *kehillah* clerks and doctors have no numbers, that is, they are not 'legal' and didn't receive a flat, and they move in as guests with the legal workers. The crush that there will be in the new flats can easily be imagined. And over us hangs the sword of the SS.

Everyone lives in dread of a new blockade and of deportation to Tr., to death. Even yesterday, which seemed to us to be a quiet day, there was a blockade at von Schön's factory and people were taken away. Norbert Mędrzycki's wife and Ewa Lewin's brother were taken away. Woe to us that they do this to us.[568]

Friday, 25 September

Terrible things happened yesterday. The commissioner himself and his assistant rounded up women from among the workers, like Yerakhmiel Rabinowicz's wife, and sent them to the *Umschlag*. The same happened in the evening. The thugs of the *Werkschutz* allowed themselves a further terrible outrage. They went out into the street, seized passing women and freed those they had already taken in their place. [37] Also: the husbands of two

566 Most probably Menakhem Kirshenbaum (Kirshnboym) (?–1943 or 1944), Zionist activist, AJDC employee, ŻSS activist; perished in the 'Hotel Polski affair'.

567 A Latin character.

568 From *Lamentations* 1:12; singular changed into plural.

women who had been rounded up pointed the finger at two women hiding in the block. They were seized and their two wives freed. The hunt for people has started up again, especially for women. The deathly grip is tightening. Someone else has come back from Treblinka, a certain Rabinowicz,[569] and what he told us made our hair stand on end. Everyone without exception is exterminated. The proclamation with seven sections in the courtyard begins with the announcement: *Warschauer Achtung!*[570]

Sunday, 27 September

The days pass by, in all their gloom and oppressiveness. Yesterday morning I was racked and tortured by hunger. There was no bread to eat. I filled my stomach with vegetables, but the hunger did not go away. For two days running now there has been no bread at the shop. Next to me was sitting the L. family, the owners of the shop, eating white bread and butter, eggs and other things. This was hard to bear, especially as I like Mr L. It is hard for someone going hungry to sit next to someone who is eating their fill.

In the morning they announced the closing down of the 'Dahl' shop.[571] There was a blockade and people were taken away, it is estimated about 150. The whole shop has been put out of action; hundreds of people have been left without legal protection. I visited Nacia for the first time at Muranowska Street 44, a building that I lived in when I was seven. The terrible appearance of Miła and Zamenhofa Streets. On my way back I spent the evening with the Wassers.[572] Rabinowicz was there, a relative of the Rabinowicz who escaped from Tr. For hours on end, he recounted the horrors of Tr. His central observation: it has nearly reached the point that the Jews are more afraid of a German than of death. The facts that he recounted show that his observation was correct. 'Graves for the Führer' (head of the camp). The women go naked into the bath-house – death house. [38] The condition of the dead bodies. What are they killing them with? With simple steam.[573] Death comes

569 *387/355 It was Jakub Rabinowicz, a 25-year-old son of the *admor* (spiritual leader) of Parczew.

570 (German) 'Warsaw residents (literally, Varsovians), attention!' Rabinowicz's account; see: *The Last Stage*, Doc. 21.

571 Dahl company pursemakers' workshop on Szczęśliwa Street.

572 Hersh and Bluma Wasser.

573 In Treblinka, people were killed in gas chambers with exhaust fumes produced by the engines of Soviet tanks.

after 7 or 8 minutes. On their arrival they take away the shoes of the unfortunates. The proclamation in the square: *Warschauer* . . .

Thursday, 1 October

The devastation in the streets of the small ghetto. It now only extends over a few streets: Miła, Zamenhofa, Franciszkańska and a few alleyways: Ostrowska, Libelta, Wołyńska, Niska among others. lt is forbidden to be on the street. Not a single Jew to be seen. Every factory is a prison, locked and bolted. One can't go from Schultz's factories on Nowolipie Street to Toebbens' factories on Leszno Street. We are shut in the whole day at Gęsia Street 30. We go in a group to and from work, before seven in the morning and at six in the evening.

Most of the Jews still live by selling their possessions. The prices are incredibly low. A dress is sold for 50 zlotys (a new, good quality dress), that is for two kilos of black bread or for one kilo of white bread. The *shmugl*[574] is carried out by groups who go to work outside the ghetto. The smugglers can sustain themselves: they eat and feed their families. The vast majority goes hungry. The *Aktion* has in fact still not been completely halted. The *Umschlag* is still in existence. Hundreds of Jews are sitting there waiting for their end. In the last few days there have been no wagons, and they have not been transported to Treblinka. I have heard that it is very difficult to get oneself freed. In any case it costs a great deal of money. The day before yesterday a member of our *Werkschutz* at OBW grabbed two people, an old man and a woman, and sent them to the inferno (*Umschlag*). Openhajm, who slept at Leszno Street at his wife's who works at Toebbens' told me today that people were taken away from there yesterday to the *Umschlag*. The sword of destruction hangs continually over our heads. Last Sunday, the first day of Sukkot, the infamous Frankenstein killed two Jewish policemen at the cemetery and mortally wounded a third. Wasser was at the burial. A Christian girl was weeping bitterly: *Mój kochasiu*.[575]

[39]

Monday, 5 October

The days pass in gloom, without upheaval, bleak, full of grief and sorrow. We spend the whole day at the 'shop'. During the day, we are not allowed on the street at all. The street casts a pall over the chance

574 (Yiddish) smuggling, contraband.

575 (Polish) my sweetheart.

passer-by or over those who march in groups. Not a living soul is to be seen. The streets are deserted, streets that were once humming with bustling crowds of Jews, like a hive. The head of the *kehillah* has issued an order that no one at all is permitted south of Gęsia and Franciszkańska Streets and into the small ghetto during working hours.[576] Anyone found in the street without a special permit will be deported from Warsaw to their death.

The few who remain in Warsaw tremble like leaves in an autumn wind. Each passing hour brings new and terrible rumours about the end that is imminent for the remaining Jews in Warsaw. There are also those who, quoting some German or other, say that this small group of Jews will be left in Warsaw until the end of the year. But in fact, no one knows what tomorrow will bring and we all live in perpetual fear and terror.

Yesterday I had a short talk with the famous social activist G-n.[577] He said that no one knows what plans the authorities have for us and that our fate is dependent not on economic but on political factors. The question is: have they decided to leave us alive or to cross us out from the book of life? He [Giterman] also told me that they had an explicit order to leave sixty thousand Jews in Warsaw, and that have only f i f t y thousand are left. The SS commandant Brandt admitted that they deported more people than necessary. They destroyed ten thousand extra Jews: either because they wanted to excel themselves and show their devotion to duty, or through an error in calculation. How appalling!

Today a policeman informed us that there are 829 Jews at the *Umschlag*. They are not being sent to Treblinka, nor being set free. In general it is difficult to get someone freed, because they are signed in and registered with their full name. Thus to get a Jew freed costs a great deal of money. Dr Ringel[blum] told me that in 'Halmanowa'[578] they offered to give 15,000 zlotys for the release of Brandl (of the family of bakers) and have had no success.

The 'plague' is now ravaging the small towns around Warsaw. In the past few days, they have wiped out Wołomin,[579] Jabłonna;[580] similar news has

576 See *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

577 Yitzhak Giterman.

578 Hallmann's workshop.

579 The Jews of Wołomin (Radzymin County) were deported on 5 and 6 October 1942.

580 Jabłonna (Legionowo County); it refers to the destruction of the Legionowo Jews on 4 October 1942.

reached us from Skarżysko.[581] The Jews dream of escaping from Warsaw,[582] to the Aryan side, to the Poles, or to the *Ost*[583] in the area of Białystok. Each day someone leaves the shop secretly and gets out of the town. Yesterday the Margulises left, among others. Friends around me are having photographs made and are trying to negotiate various kinds of papers, *kennkarten*,[584] and are preparing to leave Warsaw. I, having no money, do not involve myself with these matters. Hurwicz,[585] the member of the *Judenrat* with responsibility for the cemetery, was here and said that since the beginning of the bloody events 12,000 murdered Jews have been buried at the cemetery.

Wednesday, 14 October

Nothing new is happening. The days drag by in tedium and desolation, filling Jews with terror and despair. Since yesterday the feeling of being caged in has become unbearable. An order was issued yesterday absolutely forbidding us to walk alone in the street, irrespective of the hour, that is, before and after work. This applies here too – that is, even in the small [40] and much reduced ghetto a Jew is not allowed to walk alone,[586] with the result that we are shut up all day in the workshop to which we have come marching in a group and which we will also leave in a group when we go back to the block. This is our only exercise the whole day, nothing more. Some of the ghetto streets are completely deserted all day and all night.

This new order was issued in conjunction with the arrival of the SS commandant Krüger[587] in Warsaw. Word has it that Himmler[588] has arrived or is due to arrive today. Life is ever so hard, throttling us until we breathe our last. Over us hangs the threat of destruction. The Warsaw workshops are authorised to operate only until the 20th of this month. The twentieth falls in six days and we still do not know what the fate of the handful of surviving

581 On Skarżysko-Kamienna (Konin County); see: *Accounts from the General Government*, Doc. 60.

582 That is, from the ghetto.

583 (German) east.

584 (German) identity cards.

585 Zygmunt Hurwicz – head of the *Judenrat* Cemetery Department from January 1942.

586 See: *Oyneg Shabes. People and Works*, Doc. 68.

587 Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger (1894–1945), senior commander of the SS and Police in the General Government in 1939–1943.

588 Himmler visited Warsaw in November 1942.

Jews. The workers at our workshop (OBW) are especially afraid and despondent, as its existence is less sure than that of the others. Since I wrote my last entry on 5 October, we have lived in perpetual fear for our fate. We have made several visits to the social worker Git-n[589] to discuss this and are making efforts to secure our future should our factory be closed down. Day after day there is also talk of dismissals and of a considerable reduction in the workforce. To this day we do not know what tomorrow will bring.

Friday, 16 October

Nothing new has happened to us, but there is something heavy about the stillness that is oppressive and suffocating. We are still never free from fear about our fate in the immediate future, that is 20 October and thereafter. There are some who are reassuring, who say: it is clear that the Jews left in Warsaw will be remain alive and there is no need to worry about our fate. On the other hand, some never stop worrying and live in continual dread of tomorrow. When the first argue: look, we are being surrounded with a new wall along Smocza Street up to Gęsia, the others – the pessimists – reply: were we not also surrounded by walls even before the *Grossaktion*, and what good was that to us?

Furthermore, there are terrible reports reaching us from the provinces. The whole of the Kielce district has been completely cleared of Jews. Today I heard that in Białystok, which had been an *oaza*[590] in the desert, as far as the behaviour of the authorities towards the Jews was concerned, an *Aktion* has started.[591] The sword of destruction is cutting through the whole of the *Gubernia* and thus those who see everything through dark glasses are troubled and have no faith in our survival.

The position of our 'shop' has still not yet been clarified. Every hour brings a different rumour. Some say that the confirmation has already been granted, and even if it is not yet in black and white, it is as good as in the drawer. They point to an order for 1,500 new boxes in support of their argument. The sceptics retort by saying that the prospects for our workshop are extremely poor

589 Yitzhak Giterman.

590 (Polish) oasis.

591 Probably Lewin mentions the deportation of 5,000–6,000 of the Jews to Prużany (now in Belarus). The majority of the Białystok ghetto inmates were murdered in Treblinka in February 1943.

and we are faced with the danger of closure and liquidation. And even if it is not closed, we will have a scourge of dismissals and a large number of workers will be sacked. What will they do? Where will they turn? Will they be allowed to live? All these fears and doubts are consuming us like fire.

The prohibition on walking alone in the street is in force and means that throughout the whole day not a Jew is to be seen outside. [41] The streets of Jewish Warsaw are deserted without their inhabitants. A cold shudder goes through me as I march to work in the morning, and especially in the evening, through the deserted streets. A 'dead city' in the fullest meaning of the word. Even three months ago these same streets, despite the terror and the G[erman] persecutions, were bustling with people and the buildings were full of Jews, women and children, young and old. What has become of them all? Have they really murdered over 300,000 (more precisely: 310,000–320,000) Jews in Treblinka? It is so hard to believe this appalling and terrible truth, but we cannot escape the knowledge that it is the truth: more than three hundred thousand Jews have been murdered in the course of 8 weeks, dying such a cruel and terrible death. The best of our blood has been spilled by these thugs. 'Earth, earth, may you never cover this blood!'[592]

In the streets of Aryan Warsaw announcements have been pasted up to the following effect: as punishment for the damage that was inflicted by criminal elements on the railway track on 7 October in the area of Warsaw, 50 Polish communists have been hanged. If similar acts are carried out, even more severe punishments will follow.[593] There is talk of an *Aktion* against the Poles, similar to that which was carried out against us. In general there are rumours going around about acts of sabotage in various locations, about acts of revenge, severe retribution exacted, and self-defense and resistance by the Poles. It is hard to know how much truth there is in all these rumours.

The time has not come yet to add up the total number of our dead, but every time a new report reaches me of our cherished martyrs, a shudder passes through me. I had this feeling when I heard recently of the deaths of Hilel

592 See footnote 564, pt. 1.

593 On 16 October 1942, 50 Pawiak prisoners were hung on five gallows, set up in the outskirts of Warsaw. They were executed in retaliation for an act of sabotage on the railroad line on the night of 7–8 October.

Cajtlin and Gawze.[594] They were both seized during the *Aktion*. I have heard that Cajtlin was shot standing in front of the railway wagon.

God! Will revenge be taken for our innocent and cherished blood? May the day come quickly when our suffering and our humiliation will be washed away in the blood of these degenerates and barbarians.

Tuesday, 20 October

Days of turmoil and great fear have gone by at the workshop. A number of days ago a representative of the management of the G[erman] company, Kacparek, announced the sad news that the SS were reducing the number of workers in the OBW to 140 people. It became clear that they are to leave behind in the first instance only the carpenters and family members, that is, the Landau family and their relatives. Then they spoke about efforts to raise the number of workers to 250. There was also talk that the shop would be closed altogether. The mood of the workers was one of deep despair. People are walking around like shadows. They ask each other: what will happen to us if the firm is closed, or if the workforce is reduced? Will we be allowed to go on living in the block? Or will they come and take us to the *Umschlag*? And what will we do then? What protection is there for our lives in these circumstances? We have begun running to the Jewish community official Gi-man,[595] to ask him to intervene for O.Sh.[596] and the J.H.K. who are here. The danger threatens us in the first instance, the leaders of the idle intellectuals, since people without a skill are certainly not [42] required in a carpentry workshop if only 140 or 250 workers are to be employed. As I described, we are going around in anguish and despair, helpless. The assistance that Mr G. was able to give was to find for a second German place of work some of us (at a so-called *placówka*). For some of us, for me, for example, this was practically a death sentence.

Suddenly a day of relief. A way out was found: collect (350,000 zlotys) and buy out the firm and its present owners, on condition that it pass to the *kehillah*, and then all the workers will be able to stay registered. Today our position improved still further, since in the meantime everything will be unchanged, until the end of November. The collection of money is

594 Aron Gawze (1876–1942), one of the founders of the daily *Haynt*; involved in the self-help in the ghetto.

595 Yitzhak Giterman.

596 Oyneg Shabes.

being carried out with great urgency. In any case we have been saved for the time being and the joy (*mishteins-gezogt*)[597] is great in our wretched and desolate abode.

The mood of the small group of Jews is in general sombre and embittered, as there are fresh rumours about a renewal of the *Aktion*, of the bloody operation. It has been said that they will begin by clearing out all the 'illegal' women, children and men in the Jewish population, that is, those who are not working and are not registered in any shop or in the *kehillah*. Many of us did not sleep last night and many have hidden themselves in advance. To our great relief the night passed peacefully. The fears were groundless.

The walls around the ghetto, that is, around the few streets still occupied by us, are nearing completion. The new ghetto – even more than the old – is like a small cage. It will be even harder to live here than in the old. The hunger, the cold – there is no fuel – will bring destruction upon us. Typhus has already appeared in our block.

Last Saturday the victims of the German terror were buried at the Jewish cemetery, the fifty people who were recently hanged in public as a punishment for the acts of sabotage against the railway. The bodies of the executed were displayed for several days in various locations for public view.

Friday, 23 October

The days go by in superficial calm. Without the *Aktion* and without blockades, but none the less they have cost us – the workers at OBW – a large number of victims. I can't give the exact number, but it is as high as thirty. A group of people, mostly women, goes to the cemetery each day, supposedly to labour there, a remnant of the days of 'Toporol', but in reality, not for work but for prospective business. They bring clothes and linen and sell them to the Christians who come there every day. The Christians bring food produce to sell to the Jews. The group is about 60–70 in number. The firm has been exploiting the situation and has been taking 30 to 50 zlotys from each of them per day. Yesterday morning, when the dealing was in full swing, the SS raided the cemetery, with the infamous Brandt at their head, and renewed their practice of a few weeks ago. All the Poles, 20 in total, that they found there were arrested and taken away – they claimed – to Prussia to work (certainly to Treblinka). They divided the Jews into two groups: one

597 (Yiddish) so to say.

was set free, and the second – about 30 people – was led away to the *Umschlag*. Among the second group were also children aged 13–14. Since yesterday they have been at the *Umschlag*. What will happen to them – is not yet known.

[43]

Friday, 30 October

The days are the glorious, sun-filled autumn days of which Poland used to be so proud. But for us, here in our cramped and gloomy little world, the days are black, desolate, with a tedium which is in itself almost deadly. My life and that of all my companions is passed between the 'shop' and the 'block'. At seven o'clock in the morning we walk to Gęsia Street 30 and we spend the day there. Everyone does something, or gets out of work and idles the day away somehow. At five in the evening we return home to Miła Street to our block and kill time in the evening and spend the night there, only to get up at five or half past six, and so on continually. We have no holidays or rest-days. We work both Saturday and Sunday. There is only the concession that on Saturday we finish work at four in the afternoon and on Sunday at two. When will our suffering end? When will our situation and that of the whole of Europe change? If in the future someone should inquire about what the select few who remained alive lived on, [44] it would be very difficult to give them a clear and satisfactory answer. We live mainly from selling things, that is, mainly from clothes. But the selling of clothes is also no simple and straightforward matter. In the ghetto people pay very low prices. Ultimately they are not needed there. Their value is realised outside the ghetto. The Poles buy our clothes and linens, pay their low prices, and the vast majority of the Jews live from this.

The amount of Jewish property that the Germans confiscate through their office known as *Werterfassung,*[598] which is part of the *[Um]Siedlungsstab*[599] (this is the name of the department of extermination, whose head is here and everywhere and whose rear-end or nether-organ is in Treblinka), is so vast that this alone fills the Jews with terror. The empty houses with the air of a graveyard shake me to the core every time I pass by them on the way to my quarters from the factory.

598 (German, in Latin characters throughout the text) SS agenda tasked with collecting property of the murdered Jews

599 (German, in Latin characters) resettlement authority.

The pain for the loss of the person dearest to me grows from day to day. Only now I do understand the full meaning of [45] the words of the Bible: 'Thus a man leaves his father and his mother and goes unto his wife and they become of one body.'[600] I have lost a good sister whom I loved dearly; I have lost so many who were close to me! But their absence does not hurt me as much as that of my life's companion who shared my life with me for more than 22 years. And what makes the pain more intense – until I almost go insane – is the way in which she left this vale of tears. It is not easy to make peace with this thought and with the images that accompany it. How was this gentle and delicate woman killed, whom I used to call 'child'? And when I wake at night this thought drills into my head and my whole being cries out the cruel piercing sentence: 'My child is no longer with me. Wild animals have appeared and murdered her! Where are you, child of mine?' Five of the women who were taken away a week ago were freed today at a price of 6,000 zlotys for each. There are still 15 being held there, and their husbands are making efforts to free them. Of course it will be at the same price.

[46] At about five o'clock yesterday evening at Gęsia Street 10, the deputy-head of the Jewish police, the lawyer Lejkin,[601] was shot dead. His helper Czapliński[602] was wounded in the leg. There is not much precise information about the killing. It is assumed that this is an act of revenge and retribution against those Jews whose hands are stained with Jewish blood, who have sent hundreds and thousands of Jews to the *Umschlag* and to Treblinka. A while ago the police commander, the convert Szeryński, was wounded but only slightly and he is already better. This time – so it is thought – his chief assistant has been punished, Lejkin.

Saturday, 31 October

Yesterday the social worker G-man informed us that children aged 14 who have somewhere to go are being freed at the *Umschlagplatz*, and are being sent to their relations, and those who have no one will be taken into educational institutes of CENTOS. The adults are divided into those fit for work and those unfit. It is not yet completely clear what will be done with them, either with the first or the second group.

600 Genesis 2:24.

601 Jakub Lejkin, attorney; following Szeryński's arrest on 1 May 1942 he was the acting commissioner of the *Jüdische Ordnungsdienst*. See: ARG I 426 (Ring. II/333).

602 Marceli Czapliński, *Jüdische Ordnungsdienst* member, Szeryński's aide de camp.

Things for the moment are very quiet here: there are no murders and no one is being sent to their death in Treblinka. I heard a very sad piece of news today that in Kraków[603] and Sandomierz[604] all the Jews are being liquidated. Terrible, terrible, woe to us!

[47]

Sunday, 1 November

The weather in this period has been unusually warm and bright. Not like autumn, like spring. The sun shines and warms. The air is so clear. A warm, caressing breeze. You can walk around in summer clothes. We are not used to being spoiled in this way by nature. As far as I can remember, this day, the Christian day of remembrance of the dead (*Zaduszki*)[605] – has always been a rainy one, with cold winds and even snow. This year is such a pleasant surprise. Among the Jews as well there was an air of relaxation. The streets were full of people strolling. The few Jews who have remained have come down from their cramped flats and have gone outside. Miła and Zamenhofa Streets have filled up with these few Jews. True – they are gloomy, broken, emaciated, but they have dared to show themselves in the streets, something that has not been seen for weeks and months, since the intensification of the *Aktion*.

What has affected the Jews' spirits? First of all, the release of the children from the *Umschlag*. It actually came about yesterday when they decided to free children up to the ages of 14–16. Officially they were freeing [48] 14-year-olds but because they didn't require any kind of papers, 15- and 16-year-olds were able to get released, if they were small. Two children of our neighbour Radzimor's family (out of six boys and girls, only a 14-year-old girl remained), the daughter and a nephew, came home yesterday. Those who have no one to go to are being taken into the orphanages run by the *kehillah*. The number of freed children was 118.

603 The second of the three major deportations of Kraków Jews occurred on 27 and 28 October; there were approximately 7,000 victims. Most of the 24,000 Jews from the Kraków ghetto perished in Bełżec, Płaszów and Auschwitz.

604 On 29 October 1942 the majority of local Jews were murdered in Bełżec. Two weeks later a vestigial ghetto was established in Sandomierz; most of its 7,000 inmates perished in Treblinka in January 1943.

605 (Polish, in Latin characters; also below) All Souls' Day.

The release of adults has also become easier and cheaper. I have heard that one can buy one's freedom for 2,000 zlotys instead of 6,000. It seems as though they really have stopped sending people to Treblinka and the *Umschlag* is on the point of being closed. In the ghetto there is a rumour going around that an international commission (of the Red Cross) is supposed to come here and the Germans want to prove that there are Jews still here and that they are working. We must take this as a fabrication.

Our spirits were also lifted by the double holiday: it is Sunday and the day of remembrance for the dead (*Zaduszki*). I have been told that in general optimism has increased among us. There is a belief [49] that important new developments will take place this month. If only! Com[rade] Rabin-cz told me something unbelievable today. The SS commandant, the one who has carried out the murder of 300,000 of us (not to mention the victims in the provincial towns) came to the *kehillah* offices yesterday and gave a 'sermon' to the effect that children are the future of a people, that the old are dying off, and that therefore our hope and future is with the children, and that because of this we should take excellent care of them. He called on the *kehillah* leaders to look after the children and to put them into educational establishments for orphaned children. What words are there for such hypocrisy, such cynicism? In our language, in human speech, there are no expressions that can describe the behaviour of the sick and savage butcher, Brandt, just as there are no words in our human tongue to capture the devilishness of their ghoulish acts during the three months of the *Aktion* – the extermination action.

There is no communication whatsoever between Warsaw [50] and the provinces. We do not know what is happening now in Poland, in the areas that have been annexed to the Reich, and in those that belong within the borders of the *Gubernia*. We know that whole communities have been wiped off the face of the earth and torn root and branch from the ground. In certain areas of the country 10 per cent have survived. At a rough estimate we can say that of the two million Jews of the *Gubernia* about 200,000 are left, that is 10 per cent. There is talk of new expulsions in Kraków, Lublin and elsewhere. But it is difficult to say anything precise. No one leaves here or comes in from the outside. If anyone manages to steal into the ghetto, it is someone who was seized and taken to Treblinka and managed to escape. Such a person has spent several weeks on the road, has seen or heard about the destruction of Jewish communities, stayed at night on the peasants' farms or in the fields

and then finally returned. All that they can utter is sighs and lamentations, but precise accounts of the extent of the slaughter and of the number of survivors and their fate are difficult to get from them. But there is no doubt that Polish Jewry is finished, it exists no more. Hitler has put an end to it. And the reaper has raised his scythe over all of European Jewry.

[51]

Tuesday, 3 November 1942

I have heard, and it seems that the report is true, that the SS commandant Brandt announced during his visit to the community offices that he would return the Torah scrolls that were found in the streets that Jews have moved out of and that he will permit the allocation of space for prayers, not a synagogue, but minyanim[606] *(kleine Gebethäuser)*.[607] There is also talk that a theatre and a cinema will soon be opening in the new, miniature ghetto. I have also heard it said that permission has been given for shops to open. The day before yesterday it was a surprise to see a barbershop open at Miła Street 50–52, in which Jews were sitting and having a shave. One gets the impression that the Germans want to create the illusion of life and movement in the ghetto. Why do they need it? The devil only knows. Perhaps a commission really will be coming from abroad? According to rumour there will soon be a cabaret opening on Wołyńska Street. Yesterday I was told that Treblinka, which has been a place of execution for hundreds of thousands of Jews, no longer exists. Supposedly there is a huge [52] labour camp there now. Perhaps this story is true as well?

In our block there is an epidemic of stomach-typhus. Among the seriously ill are the engineer Perlrot and Josef Landau, of the firm owners. Zilberberg's wife and others are also ill. And no wonder.

Wednesday, 4 November [19]42

The few remaining Jews who have survived the massacres are perplexed. Things have become a little easier, there is continual talk of shops, cinema, theatre, about this and that, from which we can infer that we will be allowed a breathing-space in the coming weeks and months. Thus I have heard that we will be allowed to take flats in any building of the ghetto. True, the number of buildings is limited, but we will all be

606 See glossary; here in plural.

607 (German, in Latin characters) small prayer houses.

able to move in where we can find a place, not as now, when every 'shop' has its own building or block where all the workers are concentrated. For example, we are concentrated on Miła Street in the buildings at numbers 54, 56, 64, 68, 61 and 59. They will start to demand rent once again. This all creates the impression that the Germans intend to let the tiny ghetto come to life.

At the same time, reports are arriving that the horrific [53] extermination operation against the Jews is continuing in the provinces, and that town after town is falling victim to these brutal animals who show no mercy in their thirst for Jewish blood. Yesterday or the day before, a refugee arrived from Sandomierz or Tsuzmir.[608] He recounted the following: the butchers had raided during the night and attacked the Jewish quarter. But the Jews had known in advance what was coming. The members of the Council, the policemen and three-quarters of them had fled for their lives and were in hiding. The butchers were unable to carry out their plan, that is, to administer the expulsion as was set up and ordained in advance. They murdered the few Jews who had remained there on the spot. The town has been left empty of Jews for the time being. There is further talk of Kraków; there too they raided the Jewish quarter in the night and took out or 'expelled' 5,000 Jews. These reports fill us with terror, forcing us to fear for our fate and to reflect on what terrible plans the Germans have for this tiny and ragged community, the remnants of the great Jewish centre that Warsaw once was. [54] It is worth recording that there is a rumour that soon 25,000 Jews will be returning from Treblinka to Warsaw. The same report tells of a large number of Jews being gathered together in Treblinka; exaggerated figures in the hundreds of thousands are being mentioned. It is hard to tell who is spreading these fantasies. We have spoken face to face with escapees from Treblinka and know very well that one can find bones there, the bones of hundreds of thousands of Jewish martyrs, but no living Jews, if we exclude the few who are employed to sort out the clothes and belongings of the dead.

Just today I heard the bitter news of the death of Israel Zelcer, one of the leaders of 'Gordonia'[609] in Poland. He was buried together with Josef

608 The name Jews used for Sandomierz.

609 Israel Zelcer (1913–1942) was sent in August 1942 with a group of Dror partisans to the Hrubieszów forests; the group was seized; see: I. Zuckerman, *Surplus of Memory*, p. 52. Gordonia was a Zionist youth organisation founded in 1923 in (former) Galicia.

Kapłan from the Pawiak.[610] I remember meeting him on Pawia Street in early autumn on my way to work at the OBW factory. He was carrying a pair of boots under his arm. He said that he was leaving Warsaw. Now I have learnt that he really did leave Warsaw, but was caught and imprisoned in the Pawiak, where he was murdered, apparently on Yom Kippur, together with Kapłan.

[55] Ostrowicz, who goes to the cemetery each day to do business, told me about two funerals that took place yesterday. Two martyrs were buried who had been killed in the Pawiak. One of them was hanged. He was a strong man, well-built and white as alabaster. The second was shot. He was a policeman. Why they were murdered and who did it is not known. There are days when there is not even a single funeral at the cemetery, something which has never happened before in Warsaw. This can be explained by the nature of the human material that has survived: that is, the young and strong, in the main, the workers, and also the number of Jewish inhabitants is very small. Yesterday no one was buried either, apart from the two murdered men. I heard that yesterday the bloody *Aktion* began in Białystok. This was also once a great Jewish centre. A young woman who has arrived from Kraków has said that an *Aktion* was carried out there last week from Monday to Thursday. Six thousand Jews were taken away. According to the Germans' calculations there are about 6,000 Jews left in the Kraków ghetto. According to the Jews' calculations, there are about 10,000–12,000.[611]

[56]

Friday, 6 November

Yesterday in the Polish newspaper[612] a decree was published concerning the locations where ghettos for Jews will be situated. In the Warsaw District the following places have been designated: Warsaw, Rembertów, Siedlce, Kałuszyn and Sobolew.[613] I didn't see the decree myself because it is very difficult to get hold of a newspaper, but I was told about the contents. All Jews (that is, those who are still alive and hiding or are living with Christians) must choose one of the designated places by 1 December. After this deadline

610 416/382 i.e. on the former Skra sportsfield.

611 See footnote 206, pt. 1.

612 According to BfG footnote 89 on p. 97, in *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*.

613 An ordinance by Krüger, issued on 28 October 1942. Kałuszyn (Mińsk County), Siedlce, Rembertów (Sokołów County), Sobolew (Garwolin County) and Warsaw.

any Jew found outside a ghetto will be sentenced to death. Christians (Aryans) are forbidden to be in or to enter the ghettos, under penalty of a fine of 100,000 zlotys. What is the purpose of this decree? Is it not a trick to get hold of those Jews who are hiding with Christians and shut them in a cage, so as to be in a better position to destroy them too one morning? Or perhaps they intend to allow the reminder to live and to shut them into these five holes. The coming days and months will show the intentions of the murderers and looters.

[57] Yesterday large proclamations in enormous letters were posted in the streets of the ghetto announcing that 700 male and female workers are required for those who are looting the Jewish property (*Werterfassung*). They are being promised accommodation in the *kehillah* buildings and the food that workers receive, that is half or three-quarters of a kilo of bread and soup every day.[614] I doubt if there will be 700 men and women in the ghetto of working age who will be prepared to accept this work. True it is not strenuous work, but it is humiliating and depressing work, because it involves gathering up all the property in the buildings that belonged to Jews and handing it over to the murderers and looters. Each home tells of living people who once lived and worked there and who were murdered in such a horrific fashion. To be busy the whole day with such work as that – is surely not particularly pleasant. The announcement was published yesterday.

The day before yesterday I heard that they are again rounding up people for work. It seems that the hunt in the street was not successful, because there is no one to round up and so they decided to devise a scheme to find another 700 slaves. The announcement was signed by the labour department of the *kehillah*.

[58]

Monday, 9 November

The exact list of the locations where there will be ghettos is the following. In the Warsaw District: Warsaw, Kałuszyn, Siedlce, Rembertów, Kosów (in Sokołów County), Sobolew – altogether six places. In the Lublin District: Łuków, Parczew, Międzyrzec, Włodawa, Końskowola, Piaski, Zaklików, Izbica[615] – in total eight locations. In addition, there may be closed labour camps established for Jews.

614 See: *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

615 Łuków, Parczew (Włodawa County), Międzyrzec, Włodawa, Końskowola (Puławy County), Piaski (Lublin County), Zaklików (Janów County), Izbica (Krasnystaw County).

In connection with this decree a rumour was going around in the ghetto yesterday that there will soon be 20,000 new Jews arriving in the ghetto. Apparently they will come from those places where there are still surviving Jews and where Jews will be forbidden to live from 1 December. People are also saying that all the 'shops' situated outside the ghetto walls such as Toebbens' and Schultz's will be incorporated into the ghetto. There is no way of knowing at the moment how much truth there is to these rumours.

Borowski's son has returned to Warsaw to our workshop. He was seized on 9 September during the selection and was sent [59] to Lipowa Street 7 in Lublin.[616] Thousands of Jews are there. The working conditions are hard. Each receives 190 grams of bread, and soup twice a day. In the camp there are very many Jewish prisoners who took part in the deportation of the Jews from Lublin at the end of March this year, and filled their pockets with Jewish booty. These prisoners live well. They have a lot of money (and gold) and they eat the very best food. According to him it was possible in that camp (Lipowa Street 7) for prisoners who did not need soup to give their numbers for the soup ration to workers who came from nearby. Lately Jewish workers who had been given positions of authority, the squad leaders, have been running away. Rumours were going round there that the camp was to be shut down and that the workers were to be sent away to a penal camp known as K.Z. (*Konzentrationslager*)[617] where death or a prolonged death-agony awaits all the prisoners. Living conditions are so hard there that even the strongest person can survive just a few days. If one falls slightly ill, he is sent directly to a killing site where he is murdered with vapour.[618] Out of fear of such a fate many of them ran away, among them this young man. He wandered for eight days before reaching Warsaw on foot. On the way two Polish policemen took away [60] his coat and threatened to shoot him. A Pole who allowed him to spend the night in a hay-rick stole his boots.

616 Labour camp for Jews at Lipowa Street 7 in Lublin, from December 1939 managed by the SS-controlled company Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke, DAW (German Equipment Works). Until 1941, mainly Jewish craftsmen from Lublin were imprisoned there, later it held more than 2,000 Jewish POWs. Prisoners were murdered on 4 November 1943.

617 (German, abbreviation pronounced *katzet*, with the full name in Latin characters) concentration camp.

618 It is probably a reference to both the forced labour camp and the killing centre in Bełżec. In the latter, people were killed in gas chambers with the use of diesel fumes.

Barefoot and his clothes in rags, he managed to reach Warsaw by the back lanes. He said that he had passed places where many Jews who had been in hiding were murdered. On some Jews money was found. On one woman who was murdered by the Germans 30 rubles in gold was found. The young man gave the policemen his last 100 zlotys.

In Mińsk Mazowiecki there are no Jews,[619] except in the several labour camps outside the ghetto, where a small number of Jews are working. The whole Mińsk ghetto has been sold to someone by the SS and now all the possessions are being taken to the market. On his way the peasants gave him pieces of bread, thanks to which he managed to survive and not die of hunger. He spent a few nights in the fields. In spite of the fact that he had no overcoat and no shoes, he arrived in good physical shape and doesn't look bad. We have reached a point where we have become indifferent to death. We are led to our deaths and we go without any attempt [61] at resistance or self-defense. This young man says matter-of-factly: when the police were threatening to kill him, he was sure that they would carry out their threat, because he knew that on that same spot 9 Jews had been killed the day before. He was going with them t o h i s d e a t h. On the way, as they were walking with him, they reconsidered and gave him back the bread they had found on him and taken away at the beginning. The young man could not understand why they were giving him back the bread and asked: what use is bread to me if I'm going to my death? The police replied that he would sooner or later fall into the Germans' hands and they would kill him, so why should they bother with him and get their hands dirty with such messy work? It seems that they took pity on the young boy who is still wet behind the ears, as the saying goes. In Praga he managed to slip into a group of Jewish workers who are working on the tracks of the *Ostbahn*,[620] and entered the ghetto with them.

Tuesday, 10 November [19]42

Unrest and nervous agitation have taken hold of the ghetto once again. The reason is the political events of the past few days: the English offensive in Egypt, [62] the American occupation (their landing) on the coast

619 Jews from the Mińsk Mazowiecki ghetto were deported to Treblinka on 22 August 1942. A total of 370 workers were left in Mińsk in the labour camp, which was liquidated in January 1943.

620 (German) Eastern Railway Station (*Dworzec Wschodni*).

of French Africa – Algeria and Morocco[621] – and in particular Hitler's latest speech on the anniversary of the foundation of the Nazi Party, 9 November 1922, 20 years ago.[622] As yet we have not received a copy of this speech in print, but the Jews a l r e a d y k n o w for that it is steeped in venomous hatred and full of terrible threats against the Jews, that he talked of the total annihilation of the Jews of Europe, from the youngest to the very old. If any of us manage to escape – then they will be brought low subsequently. This is what the Jews are saying and they add that his speech was mainly devoted to us, that it lasted 40 minutes and 25 of them were devoted to the Jews.

There are further developments here that are intensifying the tension and increasing our terror and dread. Word has it that more gendarmes have arrived in Warsaw and that there is activity starting up at the *Umschlagplatz*: they are clearing out further large rooms there. We should bear in mind that the days of 10, 11 and 12 and November are holidays celebrating Polish independence,[623] and that they are capable – especially during English and American attacks and at the beginning of a second front – of raising [63] the level of disorientation and turmoil among us, in Warsaw in general and among the Jews in particular.

There is another event to report in our tiny little world: half of Hoffmann's workshop[624] is being closed (tailors were employed there sewing coats for the army and also for civilians), that is it is being liquidated. The number of those dismissed is as high as 500. The reason may be, so people are saying, the demand from the authorities (SS) for 2,000 highly qualified tailors (or even tailors with fewer qualifications) to be handed over to them to be sent to Lublin as they are needed there in the workshops. Yesterday they registered the highly qualified tailors, without giving an explanation or a reason.

621 Operation Torch – the U.S.-British landing operation started on the night of 7/8 November 1942 in former French North Africa.

622 The speech was given on the anniversary of the Munich Coup (8/9 November 1923), a failed attempt at seizing power in the Weimar Republic, undertaken by Hitler and General Ludendorff.

623 11 November is a national holiday in Poland, the anniversary of regaining independence in 1918.

624 Wilfried Hoffman's tailoring workshop in the buildings at the plot between Nowolipki Street 51 and Nowolipie Street 52. In the summer of 1942 it employed 120 workers. SS uniforms were produced there; it also specialised in upholstery.

Last night at half past one there was a commotion among those who work at Nowolipie Street 52. Early in the morning, at five o'clock, they began to make their escape. The workers have scattered in all directions. They are afraid that they will be rounded up and sent somewhere from which there is no return. It's all the same, Lublin or Treblinka. In the course of the morning a large number of SS entered the block. What they will do there and what their plans are – I do not know as yet. Do they intend to hunt down people as they did a few weeks ago during the 'expulsion'? Whom will they take? Will they take the specialist tailors [64] or just anyone? Who can say?

I have heard that for the moment they are removing sewing machines from there. Yesterday they ordered the Jewish authorities to find 15 carts for them, apparently for the purpose of removing the sewing machines from Hoffmann-*Betrieb II*.[625]

People are living in dread of persecutions and new massacres.

My own daughter – 15 years old – has registered with the group of 700 who are to collect the Jewish property and hand it over to the murderers. It hurts me very much that girls of this age have to be involved in this kind of work. Many girls of this age will be employed in this degrading work.

At this moment, 11 o'clock, I have heard that an *Aktion* has begun on Prosta Street at Toebbens'. They require 1,000 people. It is not yet known how much truth there is in this rumour. These reports are from a Jewish policeman who said that he had seen a group of Jews on Zamenhofa Street – among them women and children – who were being led in the direction of the *Umschlag*.

Wednesday, 11 November [19]42

Once again the survivors in the ghetto have lived through an extremely difficult day, a day of fear and trembling. The wings of death have been beating over the heads of the few remaining Jews, and all of us live with fear in our heart. It is hard to describe [65] this feeling. Only someone who is familiar with Russian literature, especially Dostoyevsky, will be able to imagine what kind of life they are living, with the *Umschlag* sword hanging over their heads. There are no precise details about the *Aktion* that was carried out yesterday. We only know that it was carried out in the shops of Hoffmann,

625 (German) Workshop No. 2. In the original, it is Schopman-*Betrieb II*, apparently by mistake.

Toebbens, Oschmann and Brauer. In total 1,000 were taken, according to those who give larger, more inflated numbers, and 600–700, according to those who give lower figures.

Among the rounded up were also women and children. No one knows what all this means. It can be interpreted in various ways: (a) that this is a renewal of the old *Aktion*. Its purpose is to liquidate the small community of Jews that has remained. If this is the case then we have no hope of escaping with our lives. Where can we escape to and where can we hide? H.'s[626] last speech with his threatening words against the Jews ('the few who are still laughing at my words will soon lose the desire to laugh . . .') seems to give credence to the idea that a new extermination of Jews really has started; (b) that this is a punishment for the fact that the tailors were not handed over as they had been ordered. Those who believe this is the case base their argument on the fact that when the SS arrived at Hoffman's they found [66] in two sections instead of 1,000 workers just 42. As a punishment for this sin, they carried out the *Aktion* in all the 'shops' that have tailors or needleworkers: Toebbens, Hoffmann, Oschmann and Brauer.[627] There are further reports that a certain number of people were freed from the *Umschlag* yesterday. According to one opinion the number of those freed was 100. Who was freed? It is hard to say exactly who. One version was that it was the women. The director of Toebbens' drove to the *Umschlag* and took them away. Someone else said that they freed everyone who did not have a skill, and the skilled workers were left there, that is, the tailors.

In spite of the fact that the ghetto has become so small, it is impossible to collect precise information and it is impossible to determine which events really happened and to sort out the truth from the lies, reality from fantasy. At this moment, at nine o'clock, a report has reached me that an *Aktion* is also being carried out today on Leszno Street in the blocks of flats. So, we are therefore dealing with a new 'purge' of the community. We are all in the gravest danger. It all depends on how far the 'purging' will go. Will it include the whole ghetto, or will it be confined to the garment workers' 'shops'? Whatever the case, we are desperate for mercy and for the 'miracle'.

626 Hitler.

627 Hermann Brauer's workshop complex on Nalewki Street 28–38 included units specialised in metalworks, saddlery, tannery, tailoring. It employed approximately 2,000 people.

[67] Yesterday at half past two, 5 or 6 German officers from the army and the SS came to our factory. Their arrival caused great terror among the workers. The people have been alarmed and shocked by the latest happenings in the town. They passed through the factory area, on their way out handing out a few blows across the face to one of the guards from the so-called *Werkschutz*, because an answer he had given them did not find favour with the questioner. According to the factory management, they had come to see which machines are standing idle and are not needed by the factory, and so can be taken away. This visit, which for the time being has had no tragic consequences, shook everyone up very badly. Hoffmann's workers have all fled in every direction. The workshop looks just as if it has been closed down completely. This is a bad sign.

It is said that Hoffmann (a German) had himself advised the Jewish management to hide until Saturday. If they have shut down this 'shop', which was held to be among the safest and most secure (not a single blockade was carried out there, except for the last selection on 6 September, because of the good relations between Hoffmann and the SS commandant – so this particular good fortune has been interpreted), then why should they treat the remaining workshops any better? Very depressing.

[68] This last night was filled for me with nightmares and horrors. I tossed and turned on my bed, my sleep was disturbed, and my torments reached an unbearable level. Nights such as these are endured by those who are sentenced to death and who do not know exactly when the terrible sentence will be carried out. How terrible it is that a whole generation – millions of Jews – has suddenly become a community of 'martyrs' who have had to die in such a cruel, degrading and painful manner and go through the torments of hell before going to the gallows. 'Earth, earth do not cover our blood and do not keep silent, so that our blood will cry out'[628] until the ends of time and demand revenge for this crime that has no parallel in our history and in the whole of human history.

The *Aktion* on Leszno Street, that is, outside the ghetto walls, is continuing.

628 See footnote 564, pt. 1.

Thursday, 12 November [19]42

Everything was quiet in our 'shop' yesterday. The day passed peacefully. But in the town the *Aktion* continues. It involved Schultz's, 'Oksako',[629] Roerich,[630] and perhaps other shops. Again, hundreds of Jewish victims have been taken, among them women and children. [69] In the evening they shut people into railway wagons. They put 60 people into a wagon. According to rumours, all those rounded up were skilled workers: tailors, saddlers and seamstresses. Word has it that no children were taken.

A group of 50 men (among them the young man Senenski) was freed in the evening. The SS commandant, Witossek, tried to persuade them to go voluntarily to Lublin, because all Jews will be removed from Warsaw until December, or in December. However, when no one stepped forward to volunteer to go to Lublin, he set them all free. This group came from Schultz's workshops. On the other hand, they grabbed young girls and women from the groups who are working for the SS at the *Werterfassung*, where Ora is working as well. Overall yesterday was a difficult day.

Terrifying rumours are going round among us that weigh heavily on our hearts and break and destroy our spirits. I have heard that it is quite certain that the children [70] who were rounded up yesterday at Toebbens' were transferred to the orphanages run by the *kehillah* and have been set free, if they had a home or someone to go to. From this it can be inferred that those who were rounded up were not sent to Treblinka to be murdered, but to work, apparently in Lublin.

We know already that there was an *Aktion* today at Schultz's. I was told that they were looking for outsiders there, people not connected with the 'shop'. 7 or 8 people were seized. From today on there will be a guard of gendarmes at the ghetto wall at the corner of Gęsia and Zamenhofa Streets. From now on we really will be shut up inside a tiny, cramped cage.

Friday, 13 November

There was no *Aktion* yesterday. There was some kind of *komisja*[631] at Schultz's – an inspection committee, which arrested 7 people who

629 Oxaco saddlery workshop on Lubeckiego and Szczęśliwa Streets.

630 Kurt Rörich's saddlery workshop at Nowolipie Street 72 or 80; employed approximately 500 people.

631 (Polish or Yiddish) committee.

are to be held by the police (*Nebenstelle*)[632] not for *Umsiedlung*.[633] But the unrest in the tiny ghetto has grown because of the gendarmes, who have filled the streets that used to belong to the ghetto (before the great slaughter).

In the evening rumours were going round that we are to be finished off this evening. Some people didn't go to bed at all and did not get undressed. In the evening people were seized from the groups of workers returning to the ghetto, to work at Fort Wola.[634] This morning on my way to the factory I took a look at the gendarmes. All of them are old with good-humored faces. I felt a little calmer.

[71]

Saturday, 14 November

The tension among the Jews lessened a little yesterday. There was no *Aktion*, and various people were released from the *Umschlag* by different means – by people's intervention or by some other way. A telegram arrived from the group who were sent to Lublin, saying that they arrived there safely. From the *kehillah* circles we hear that they have been invited to a meeting with the SS today. The *kehillah* will be represented by Sztolcman. The meeting was called by the former ghetto commissioner Auerswald. It is not yet known if he will also be at the meeting. In this connection rumours have been going around saying that Auerswald has become ghetto commissioner again, and the situation will be back to what it was before the 'expulsion' or destruction, but these are just rumours and we do not know if they have any substance.

It turns out that the 500 or 1000 new gendarmes have been brought here to work for the *Werterfassung*, to clear out and collect up the booty in the ghetto, the property of our 300,000 Jewish martyrs who died an agonising death in Treblinka. It is said that this work is to be finished in a month. At the moment there are more than 700 men and women working at it (my daughter Ora is also working at this shameful and painful task – how terrible, that I have come to this). [72] I have heard that the SS are demanding another 1000 people for this work, so great is the amount of property that is left

632 (German) branch of an office.

633 (German) resettlement.

634 (Polish) one of the nineteenth-century military forts surrounding Warsaw, in the Wola district.

in the 'dead buildings'. My heart trembles as if it will burst with pain. The people from our 'shop' who were seized the day before yesterday to work at Fort Wola were freed yesterday, as a result of the efforts on their behalf made by the inspector of the hospital where they were working – Holtzheimer.

According to reports that have reached us in roundabout ways there were *Aktions* recently in Białystok[635] and in Grodno.[636] There are reports that the course of the *Aktion* in Białystok was particularly tragic, since it took the form of a large-scale massacre on the spot when Jews resisted. We have no details.

Sunday, 15 November [19]42

I have heard the following account of the meeting that took place yesterday between the representatives of the Jewish Council and the SS. The Germans say they intend to extend the ghetto, that is, to add on buildings and streets, so as to be able to increase the number of inhabitants. Who will they bring here? This is as yet unknown. Perhaps they mean the Jews who are working in the 'shops' [73] outside the ghetto (Toebbens', Schultz's and others) who are living in blocks next to their workplaces, and perhaps those who are still in various small towns – the few stray ears of corn – where Jews are now absolutely forbidden to live according to the latest decree about the ghettos in the '*Gouvernement*'.[637]

If we can rely at all on the promises of degenerate murderers and if they carry out the promises they made yesterday, we will find out who they have in mind for their planned ghetto-extension. Then the Germans promised to give out food cards again for the coming months for all Jews, both for those who have numbers (*kehillah* clerks, 'shop'-workers, SS-employees) and those who do not, that is, those who are not working. The latter will receive smaller rations than those who are working.

This must be seen as a legalisation of all those Jews who have hitherto been considered illegal and who have not been sent away to Treblinka only

635 The reference here is to the murders and deportations in various places of the Białystok region.

636 There were approximately 25,000 inmates in the two ghettos of Grodno. In November 1942, some of them were deported either directly to Auschwitz-Birkenau or to the transit camp in Kiełbasin and from there on to Auschwitz and Treblinka. The final deportations followed in February and March 1943.

637 (German) [General] Government.

because they were hiding in various dark corners. In addition, an amnesty was declared for all Jews who are outside the ghetto among the Poles. They are permitted to return to the ghetto before 1 December without any punishment and may bring all their belongings and property with them. [74] According to what one Jew told me, the Germans put it as follows: from today onwards – that is from 15 November[638] – we have been granted the right to life once again.

These reports spread fast among us and set people to cheer up. In general, though, the Jews – quite rightly – have no faith at all in the promises made yesterday. In fact, most Jews believe that this is a cunning strategy of the Germans, the purpose of which is to gather together the remaining Jews in one place so that it will be easier to annihilate them at some point in the near future. If we recall and consider everything that our mortal enemy has done to us, one must admit that were we to believe these people – the like of whom history has never seen – it would be very foolish of us.

Hitler's latest speech weighs on us heavily when he said that s o o n those Jews will stop laughing who up to now have felt like laughing. In these words, there was an explicit threat of extermination for the few surviving Jews. How can we, after all that has happened, all that we have lived through in the month of July, August, September and after the speech of 8 November, still have any belief in the words that are passed on in the name of the leader and in the name of those who carry out his plans and orders? Only a miracle can save us.

[75]

Tuesday, 17 November [19]42

There are reports of announcements posted up on the walls of Warsaw that concern the Jews. They state that ghettos have been established for the Jews in those places that were listed in the well-known decree. Furthermore, they state that Jews are allowed to enter one of these locations before 1 December and may transfer their property without any form of punishment. Any Jew who remains outside the ghetto after 1 December will be shot. Also, those Poles and G e r m a n s who allow Jews to stay in their homes will be punished with death. From this order it is clear that 'they' are concerned to clear out the Jews from the Aryan side and concentrate the last

638 XII (December) instead of XI (November) in the original text.

ones in the ghetto. For what purpose? In order to destroy us in one go – as the pessimists believe. How horrific!

It has emerged from a telephone conversation with Christians in Lublin that the Jewish community there, which has been uprooted through deportations over the course of the year, with the remaining 10 per cent moved to the suburb of Majdan Tatarski,[639] has now been completely liquidated. A certain woman named Silber (the daughter of the alcohol manufacturer)[640] telephoned there in the presence of comrade 'Water'[641] and asked after her brother and various relatives who were working [76] in different factories in the town. To each question she received the answer that the person had 'fallen ill' the previous week and had left the town. The meaning of such an answer is clear and leaves no room for doubt.

A few days ago, a Jew in our 'shop' said that the Jewish community in Lublin had been totally destroyed and no longer exists. In my heart I have been still unsure and have not wanted to believe the appalling news. Of the 40,000 Jews of Lublin, 3,000–4,000 was spared and moved to Majdan. In the course of time their number grew to 6,000–8,000 and their position was more or less tolerable. And now the end has come for this old Jewish community. Is this not a '*memento*'[642] for all the other Jewish communities in the *Gubernia,* as well as for those in the recently sanctioned ghettos? Who can be certain?

Today the gendarmes raided the cemetery and took away all the goods that they found on the Jews and Poles. The value of these goods runs into hundreds and thousands of zlotys. During this incident two Poles were shot dead.

[77]

Thursday, 19 November [19]42

The last few days have passed without disasters and without terrible incidents in this tiny ghetto of ours. Something even happened that might have reassured the troubled spirits of the survivors and

639 Also in Latin characters in parentheses. The ghetto in Majdan Tatarski, then a suburb of Lublin, was established on 16 April 1942. On 9 November 1942, some 3,000 people were taken from there to Majdanek; see: *Accounts from the General Government,* Doc. 22.

640 *433,434/399 The daughter of Hirsch Yonah Silber, a public figure in the Orthodox community of Lublin, a member of the city council and chairman of the community council.

641 Reference to Hersh Wasser.

642 (Latin) remember!

suggested that we will live a little longer, that our lives will not be under threat day in and day out, were we not familiar with the Germans' methods of dealing with the Jews. Every lie, every strategy, every betrayal and every act of common trickery, if they lead to the extermination of the Jews, is permissible in their eyes. The rule is: one shouldn't believe them and one shouldn't rely on them if they do anything that is supposedly beneficial for us.

Yesterday about 150 women and children were freed from the *Umschlag*. Rumours circulated saying that all those detained had been released. It turned out that for the time being only 150 women and children have been released, but all those detained are to be released by Saturday. So I have heard from a very reliable source. From this one might infer that we are about to see the closing of the *Umschlag* in Warsaw. If this had not happened together with the fierce agitation against the Jews in the German press (in connection with the news of a celebration and blessings with the Torah scroll by the head of the Moscow *kehillah* on the anniversary of the *revolutzye:*[643] in this report, which was drafted by the ministry of propaganda and appeared in all the German press, it is explicitly stated that Jews want to rule the world but the war [78] against them and their extermination is already far advanced), if it were not for this, then one might think that the campaign against us had eased up a little, that the surviving one-tenth will be spared. But now we know not to get our hopes up. Death will always be hanging over us – unless something out of the ordinary happens.

The mood of the Jews, especially those in Schultz's and Toebbens' workshops that are outside the ghetto, is one of extreme gloom and depression. They live in dread of sudden annihilation.

I have been told that representatives of the Warsaw *kehillah* have gone to Łódź to inspect the ghetto and to study its economic structure, so that they might construct our life here on the Łódź model.[644] It has not been confirmed whether this report is true. The tidings of Job are reaching us from various

643 (Yiddish) revolution.

644 That is, transformation of the ghetto into a huge labour camp. The Łódź ghetto was closed on 30 April 1940. It was the second largest ghetto in the occupied Polish territories, operating from February 1940 to August 1944. More than 200,000 people went through it – mainly Jews from Poland, but also from Germany, Czechoslovakia and Austria. Its prisoners were killed in Kulmhof and Auschwitz-Birkenau. See *Accounts from the territories Annexed to the Third Reich*, part I.

places in the *Gubernia* and from the areas incorporated into the Reich. I have heard of the total extermination of the Jewish communities in Mława and Płońsk.[645] These towns belong to the Reich. From Częstochowa[646] have arrived – or more accurately – fled the *shomrim* who said that from the whole of that community (40,000 people) only about 4,500 are left, and the *Aktion* is continuing. They said that the town will be *'judenrein'*[647] by 18 November. That is why they fled to Warsaw. Many of our nationalist[648] and pioneer Jewish youth have perished. There were many youth centres there.

[79]

Sunday, 22 November [19]42

Leahke Tenenbaum, who works with my daughter Ora at the *Werterfassung*, came across the dead body of a Jew in a building on Ogrodowa Street, already in a state of decay. He was lying in a pool of congealed blood. Apparently, the body has been lying there a long time, since the time of the blockades. The girl was terribly frightened. Ora said that she was not afraid of dead bodies and she wanted to go into the dead man's flat where it was lying, to take advantage of the abandoned property and take out some things. But when she went up to the door she was gripped with terror and she too was unable to go inside. These are the experiences of our children who are helping the bandits to collect up the great booty.

A few days ago on the way home from the 'shop' in the evening we found a Jew in Gęsia Street who was wounded in the head. He was conscious. He asked us not to stand next to him because he was pretending to be dead, and not to call the emergency services. I heard that the wounded man is the owner of a rickshaw, and the German who has been his passenger for four months had wounded him. Apparently the Jew knew more than he was supposed to and he (the German) wanted to get him out of the way.

The *Umschlag* really has been closed down in Warsaw. All those detained have been [80] freed. Not only that, but all Jewish prisoners in the prisons of Warsaw have been freed: from the Mokotowskie [Prison],[649] from the Pawiak,

645 Inmates of the Mława ghetto were deported to Auschwitz on 10 December, those of the Płońsk ghetto on 15 December 1942.

646 See footnote 674, pt. 2.

647 (German) free of Jews.

648 That is, Zionist.

649 The prison on Rakowiecka Street in the Mokotów district of Warsaw.

from the special prison on Gęsia Street (60 Jews and 100 Gypsies). The *Umschlag* has been handed over to the control of the *Werterfassung*, in which the former arrestees are now employed. In the ghetto, announcements have been posted up stating that all Jews who are not working must register for work with the *Werterfassung*. Stern measures will be taken against those who have no occupation, beginning 23 November. Word has it that tomorrow the Jewish police is going to round up everyone who is not working. The Jewish police and the members of the *Werkschutz* in each 'shop' have received an order to hand over half of their workers to the WE.[650] It looks like they are concerned with getting Jewish property out of here as quickly as possible. What is the reason for all this haste? No one can answer to this question, but the 'Jewish heart' is deeply afraid and anxious. Those who look through dark glasses say that 'they' want to finish the clearing out with our help, so as to be able to put an end to us suddenly and at one go. This is why they announced on the [81] outside[651] that Jews may return to the ghetto without suffering any form of punishment. Their aim is therefore to concentrate all Jews here and destroy them. Aside from these prophets of doom, there are also reassuring voices, who want to believe that the few remaining Jews will remain in locations that have been designated by them, including Warsaw. They think that a Jewish community will survive here. These are people in whom a spark of hope has not been extinguished, in spite of all the terrible disasters that have befallen us since 22 July, since the mass slaughter began exactly 4 months ago.

Yesterday a rumour went round that the annihilation machine in Treblinka has been halted (this news was passed on to me in Git.'s[652] name). Because of this there is talk that an international commission is to come here to research and investigate and inquire into the Jewish cause. Some people actually connect the latest measures of the authorities with regard to the Jews with the commission that is supposedly about to arrive. The report from Treblinka (that it has been shut down) [82] is also supposed to be related to the 'commission'. It would be possible to believe the news if we had heard that the treatment of Jews had improved anywhere, if we had at least heard

650 Most probably abbreviation for *Werterfassung*, in Latin characters; also further on.

651 I.e. outside the ghetto.

652 Yitzhak Giterman; also on the following pages.

that we have ceased to be lambs for the slaughter, and that they had stopped murdering us systematically and in vast numbers. To our terrible despair, horrifying news has been reaching us from the provinces. Whole communities are being wiped out, torn up by the roots: Częstochowa, Mława,[653] Płońsk, Białystok, Grodno are sad proof that the gloomy views of those who are pessimistic are closer to the truth about our existence. Woe to us!

A Jewish young man, who was a policeman, told me the following illustrative story: Christians are being given packed meat (in cans). We also received a ration. Among the Polish masses there is a rumour that this meat has been made from o u r f l e s h, that is, from the flesh of Jews who have been murdered. Because of this the Poles are revolted by the meat and refuse to eat it. Let this be set down and recorded: this is what the Polish masses thought of the Germans. And it is undeniable that they are cannibals in the fullest sense of the word.

[83]

Tuesday, 24 November [19]42

Yesterday there was a renewed hunt in the streets. The SS stopped people in the early morning and the afternoon. They were inspecting work certificates. Those detained, they handed over to the control of the employment office of the *kehillah* and to the *Werterfassung*. Two people were killed. There are two versions of how they died: one that they were ordered to stand on the spot and they didn't stand, but tried to run away; the second is that they were trading in the streets. Whatever the truth of the matter – after a short pause, fresh victims have fallen in the ghetto and innocent Jewish blood has been spilled once again.

The anti-Jewish agitation is being carried on in the German press with vigour and extreme intensity. The newspapers still continued to write about the return of rights to the Jews of Algeria and Morocco[654] and are using this to spice up their campaign against the Jews. This awakens fear and dread in the Jews. We are living once again between hope and fear. Each day, each hour we ask ourselves: will they let us live or will they suddenly destroy us?

653 See footnote 48, pt. 1.

654 A reference to the restoration of citizenship rights to Jews residing in Morocco and Algeria, after British and American troops recaptured French North Africa in November 1942.

Thursday, 26 November [19]42

Yesterday was another day of bloodletting for our small community in Warsaw. Many victims fell in the streets. How many? From the social activist Git., we were given the number 26, but this does not reflect the true figure. It is possible that there were more deaths than this. On the way to the factory in the morning (yesterday) we came across a dead body at the corner of Gęsia and Lubeckiego Streets and returning home from work at half past four we witnessed another murder. Coming into Miła Street (at the corner of Zamenhofa Street) we heard a dull shot nearby. As we approached the corner of Zamenhofa and Lubeckiego we heard the bitter sobbing of a woman next to [84] the body of a man. We were told that a soldier had been speaking with him and then shot him once, killing him. On our way to work in the morning we could still see the pool of the blood of the murdered man. These murders have hit the morale of the Jews hard and plunged them into bitter, black despair. Are they starting on the *she'erit hapletah* now? Were we not told, just a few days ago, through Git., that the Germans gave assurances to the *kehillah* people that no harm would come to the *she'erit hapletah*, that life in the ghetto would take on a fixed pattern (*stabilizatzya*)[655] and so on? And now suddenly a new slaughter, in miniature. Officially this is explained as punishment for the avoidance of work, especially for evading work in the *Werterfassung*.

Today again – Thursday – I heard that there had been three murders on Franciszkańska Street. The victims were three brothers who sold meat in some kind of shop. One shudders to think of everything that is being done to us. I have heard that the SS have passed on to the *kehillah* the numbers involved in the bloody *Aktion* that was carried out from 22 July onwards. It goes as follows: deported (read: annihilated in Trebl.) 254,000; murdered during the blockades – 5,000; and sent to work in *Dulag* (*Durchgangslager*)[656] – 11,000. In total, therefore, according to the Germans' figures, 270,000 people have been taken from us.

We must assume that these numbers are incomplete and do not reflect the true extent of our losses – the number of martyrs. And these are only the victims from Warsaw, so where are all the other towns, townlets and villages

655 (Polish or Yiddish) stabilisation.

656 (German, abbreviation and the full term; the latter in parentheses in Latin characters) transit camp.

throughout Europe, in which Hitler's avenging sword of destruction has fallen on the Jews? God! How is this possible?

[85] The three brothers who were killed for selling meat were called Suchecki and were involved in smuggling.

Friday, 27 November [19]42

Yesterday the number of victims, according to what I have heard, was six. In addition to the three Suchecki brothers, three other Jews were killed. On their way to work at the courthouse at Ogrodowa Street, the workers from our 'shop' saw two murdered Jews at the corner of Pawia and Smocza Streets. Apparently the three Suchecki brothers were killed on account of slander. They really were selling meat products. The murderers first took a large sum of money off them, about 30,000 zlotys (according to rumour) and then shot them dead.

The chairman of the Jewish Council, engineer Lichtenbaum, has issued a summons to the Jews, stating that everyone between the ages of 16 and 45 must be registered with the employment office and must work.[657] In the main Jews are now employed by the *Werterfass[ung]*.

Walls are being built up around the 'shops' that outside the new, miniature ghetto, and almost all of the 'shops' are located outside the ghetto. In this way each Jewish workshop will be turned into a separate prison. No one will get in or out.

The issue of survival, that is, the question of bread, is very pressing in the ghetto. Those who work in the factories or for the Germans in the *placówki* or in the WE receive a quarter or half a kilo of bread and one or two portions of soup six times a week. A working person can't live on this, especially if he has dependent children or elderly parents who by some miracle have not been killed and have not been deported to Treblinka. What are those Jews who are still alive supposed to do and how are they supposed to live? This is a very difficult [86] and serious problem.

A certain percentage of the Jews are still living on the proceeds from looting during the *Aktion*, when all our property worth millions and millions was abandoned; a certain percentage live from smuggling or from 'trading', that is, from selling things outside the ghetto. They dress up in all kinds of rags and conceal things from the gendarmes. Often everything they are

657 See: *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

taking out or trying to bring in is confiscated, mainly food. Sometimes the Jew is stripped in a search for money or objects of value and made to stand there as naked as the day he was born. But this group still manages to earn something. There are Jews who still have saved clothing and linen. They sell whatever they have left and live on the proceeds. But in addition to all these there are very many Jews (the majority of those left from the Treblinka slaughter) who do not belong to any of the above-mentioned groups and quite simply do not have a crust to bite on. What are we to eat? Even if the murderers do not slaughter us, there still remains the stark question of our daily bread. In our factory, the O.B.W. , there is new talk of dismissals or a reduction in numbers. There are too many people there. The German owners, into whose hands the property of the Landau brothers fell, are demanding the dismissal of 150 workers. They don't need 500. Even 100 would be enough. They perhaps wouldn't have minded, but because they have to pay 7 zlotys a day for each worker, they don't want to carry the burden and waste money. The sword is hanging over our heads once again. What will become of us?

[87]

Monday, 30 November [19]42

Yesterday a political assassination was carried out in the ghetto: Israel First,[658] the head of the economic division of the *kehillah*, and a close associate of the 'royalty', one of the Jews whom the Germans prized greatly, was killed by two shots in Muranowska Street. This Jew was involved in large-scale dealings in partnership with and under the aegis of the Germans. He had certainly become very wealthy. Who killed him? I can't give a definite answer to this question. There are two possibilities. Firstly, the Germans disposed of him in the way they previously disposed of their assistants who became superfluous: Kohn, Heller, Erlich and many, many others. I also heard that Szymon or Szymszon Grajek[659] from Lublin has now been disposed of. Perhaps they also killed First. But there is also a second possibility. He may have been cut down by either a Jew or a Pole, and killed as a traitor, because he had sold his soul to the Germans and assisted them

658 Izrael First (Fuerst, Fürst) (?–1942), head of the Economic Department of the *Judenrat*, alleged Gestapo collaborator, assassinated by the Jewish Fighting Organisation.

659 Szama (Szmaja, Szymon, Szymszon) Grajer (?–1942), Gestapo informant in the Lublin ghetto.

during the *Aktion*. In fact I do not know if he took part in the terrible events of those days, but at any rate he continually associated with them and mixed in their circles. In the ghetto I have heard that the PPS has issued a proclamation, announcing that it has sentenced to death 150 Jews for leading their brothers to their death. Among those who have been sentenced are Lejkin and First. Lejkin was shot dead a few weeks ago, and now First's turn has arrived. According to this version he was shot by a Pole from the PPS or a Jew. This event has made a deep impression on the Jews and has terrified those [88] who do not have a clear conscience and whose hands are stained with the blood of our martyrs. For myself I incline more to the first possibility, that he fell victim to these new Huns, as the modern barbarians are called in England.

Yesterday I met Yakir Warszawski's son, Aaron. He told me that during the events his father, mother and younger brother, Amram, all perished. In Yakir W. I have lost a very dear friend. We got to know each other in 1919 at the Zionist school where we were both working. We became friends. He felt sympathy and kindness towards me, and showed this at various times in my life, like a spark of love that does not depend on anything. I was also deeply attached to him. He was a pure spirit, a man of sensibility and nobility. Hebrew and Jewish literature has lost a talent of perhaps only the second rank, but many of his figures, especially the characters of the Jewish shtetl, who are no longer with us, and who have been captured by Warszawski's stories, belong in my opinion to the pearls of our literature and can take their place at the forefront of our classic literature. His novellas (published under the title *Di Letste*)[660] belong without doubt to our literary canon and immortalise him in the annals of our people.

I grieve for you, my brother Yakir! You have fallen at the hands of degenerates and murderers.

Sunday, 6 December [19]42

The days go by without special incident, [89] but with a deep and stifling gloom. Not a single ray of light can brighten our darkness here and that of the world outside. Almost every day brings a rumour that we are about to see a new expulsion, or a new *Aktion*. Lately people have

660 (Yiddish) The Last. The full title: *Di letste fun mayn hasidishe heym* [*The Last of My Hasidic Home*], Warsaw 1929. Yakir Warszawski (1885–1942), Yiddish and Hebrew writer and journalist, youth Zionist movement activist, teacher.

been saying that it is certain that the *Aktion* will begin on the sixth of this month, and will continue through the seventh.

These rumours have come to the attention of the SS authorities and the commander of the division in Warsaw, Mende,[661] has instructed his officials to inform the chairman of the Jewish Council that there is no substance to these reports and that he should reassure the Jews on this score. Today Lichtenbaum, Czerniaków's replacement, issued a proclamation along these lines. In the announcement he states that he received a telegram from the SS commandant Mende saying that the Germans have heard the rumours that are going round in the ghetto about an *Aktion* or a new expulsion and about changes in the workplaces where Jews are employed (that is, rumours that the Jews' work will be changed around and they will be sent from place to place), and that they even know who is spreading these rumours. They authorise the chairman of the Jewish Council to inform the Jews that the rumours are false, and that they should carry on in complete security.[662]

Of course proclamations of this kind cannot reassure us or calm us down. On the contrary, they increase our fear and agitation. We still remember well how on 19 July, three days before the start of the extermination of the Jews, Commissioner Auerswald assured the late Czerniaków that the worrying rumours were false and that nothing would happen.[663] Three days later the terrible disaster fell.

We cannot have any faith in the promises of these murderers of children, women and the elderly. [90] There are no crimes, degradations and brutalities of which they are not capable. So the *she'erit hapletah* lives on in confinement in the ghetto, literally between life and death. Every day our lives are in the balance.

In the last few days several labour camps at various locations around Warsaw were closed down and the inmates brought into Warsaw. These people are a terrible and horrifying sight. Many are swollen with starvation, covered with sores, black and festering. They wear clothes that are rags in the fullest sense of the word. It is hard to look at these people who have death so close

661 SS-Oberscharführer [master sergeant] Gerhard Mende of the IV B4 Division of the Security Police Office and the Security Service.

662 See *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

663 See *Czerniakow's diary* , entry of 20 July 1942.

behind them. Many of them beg in the streets. Since the streets are busy first thing in the morning as people go to work, one can see these unfortunates as they walk along with each group, begging. In general, people give to them generously. Perhaps because we haven't seen any beggars in the streets for the past two months and the ordinary Jew – a child of the people of compassion[664] – feels the urge flow to fulfil the commandment of giving to charity, and perhaps the terrible condition of these Jews, who are naked and swollen with hunger, has opened the clenched hands of our brothers. Each day, on the way to the factory at Gęsia Street 30, I see these people and my guts churn within me. It is hard to contain oneself. Once again we reflect and ask ourselves: why have they closed down the labour camps and for what purpose have they sent these people here; why this concentration in the ghetto? And now at the beginning of winter? There is no answer to these questions. Even the devil himself could not have hatched a more horrific scheme against us.

[91]

Tuesday, 8 December [19]42

There is nothing new to report here. There has been no change for the better or for the worse. Only a dread of what can come at any moment, and anxiety that weighs heavily on our hearts. Isolated Jews arrive here who have escaped from the field of slaughter of Treblinka. I was told about one of them who arrived the day before yesterday and who had left Treblinka about ten days ago. According to what he says, the annihilation machine there is still working at full throttle. Jews are brought in from Western Europe and from the Balkans, that is, from Serbia, Croatia, Greece, and of course from the various districts of the former *Gubernia* and from various parts of the former Polish territories. News such as this casts a black shadow over us and grinds us down with despair. To judge by Hitler and Rosenberg's[665] speeches, we have to face the possibility of the complete annihilation of every Jew in Europe. Where will help come from? At the moment there is not a ray of light reaching in to save us from any quarter. What human society has ever been through such hellish torments?

Yesterday I heard that in England and America last Sunday two hours were given over to the Jewish question on the radio and in the synagogues.

664 I.e. the Jews.

665 Alfred Rosenberg (1893–1946), the Reich minister for occupied eastern territories.

They spoke of the annihilation of five million European Jews. We should be happy at this 'concern' for our fate, but will it be of any use to us? Will these savage killers pay any heed to public opinion in hostile nations? I very much doubt it.

There is the following strange rumour going round in the ghetto today: the government of the United States of America, U.S.A.[666] has announced that all Jews surviving in Europe are automatically to be considered its citizens and will benefit from its protection. If these Jews are harmed, then retribution will be exacted in a similar manner on [92] Germans in America. I don't know where this fantastic story has suddenly sprung from, among the Jews over whom the sword of destruction hangs day and night. But I can recall that in the summer of 1933 a member of parliament, Lampson-Locker,[667] introduced a bill into the English Parliament similar to the order which the government of America has supposedly issued. The bill stated that every Jew can become and be considered as a citizen of Eretz Israel. And on the basis of this they would be under the protection of the government of England. This bill was passed by the House of Commons on the first reading, as far as I remember. After that they didn't return to the bill. The Jewish press wrote at that time that this was of no use, except as a kind of demonstration, of which there are many in English parliamentary life. It was, that is, a bill in theory but not in practise or, as we used to say at home: 'a law that though prescribed is not necessarily obeyed'. Who started this rumour and on what basis – we cannot know. It seems that bitter despair and perpetual terror bring about all the rumours of this kind, those that tell of imminent salvation following in their wake. How we thirst and long for deliverance!

Thursday, 10 December [19]42

Today I heard the following story from a reliable source: a meeting has been held in Berlin to discuss the Jewish question.[668] Participating were representatives of all the ministries and a large number of representatives of the Party [NSDAP] and the military. Two proposals were offered to the meeting: the first, to destroy the *she'erit hapletah*, the last handful of Jews that have been left scattered here and there. This proposal was

666 Abbreviation in Latin characters.

667 Oliver Locker-Lampson (1880–1954), British politician, Conservative Party MP.

668 *448/412 A reference to a meeting of the Nazi leadership on 22–24 September 1942.

supported by the ministries for agriculture and finance. They took the position that [93] in this way they would get rid of superfluous 'eaters' and a great deal of bread and food in general would be saved. This proposal was opposed by a second: not to kill the Jews who are still alive. This was supported by the ministries for public works and supply. They argued that young Jews are necessary as workers in German manufacture. According to this report, the argument that Jews are useful for the German economy won the day, and it was decided to allow them to live for the time being.

A further report was passed on to me: The *Daily Herald*[669] in London has published a long, two-columned article describing the plan of extermination that is being carried out against us, that is, against every Jew in Europe. This article gives a precise and detailed account of all aspects of the hell that the Germans have constructed for the slaughter of the Jews. Overall, therefore, precise information has reached countries abroad about the appalling catastrophe which has had no parallel in human history. I have heard that Roosevelt gave a speech on this topic, saying more or less the following: we will not follow in the Germans' footsteps and will not copy their actions and their methods, but we too will take counter-measures (repressive measures) against the Germans.

What good is this to us? Will we be saved? Will someone appear and hurry to our rescue and to bring us relief? My God, my God. Why has all this come upon us?

Yesterday I heard that Rysiek Berger was sent to Treblinka during the *Aktion* and that [94] the next morning his mother poisoned herself. Rysiek was a gentle and sensitive young man, very talented in technical matters. Who can know how many fine and talented children Treblinka has taken from us.

Friday, 11 December [19]42

Yesterday members of Hehalutz who had been working at an agricultural settlement outside Warsaw – at Czerniaków were brought into the ghetto (to the Jewish Council at Zamenhofa Street 19).[670] They are about 150 in number. They have been working there a long time, have

669 Title of the daily newspaper published in Great Britain from 1912 to 1964. The article has not been identified. Perhaps it was a reference to the *New York Herald Tribune* of 25 November 1942. See: Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret* (London, 1981), p. 164, n. 14 p. 250.

670 See footnote 452, pt. 1.

been fortunate throughout all the blockades, and no misfortune has befallen them. Their living conditions were not excellent by any means, but in comparison with our conditions in the gloomy crowded ghetto, they were good. First, they enjoyed sufficient quantities of light and fresh air. This is now even more important than bread – which they had in limited amounts. Now all this has come to an end. They will share the bitter fate of the ghetto with us. This also points to the fact that the Jews are being concentrated in one place for some particular purpose. What is the intention? What evil plans and schemes lie behind these orders and actions? Our hearts are filled with dread. Who knows if 'they' are not preparing a fresh slaughter for us?

I have heard a report that the Archbishop of York[671] gave a speech in the English House of Lords concerning the Jews. He gave the Lords all the details of the 'expulsion' and told of all the appalling things that took place. He demanded punishment not only for those who gave the orders, but also for those who put them into practice. [95] At his proposal a committee was set up to deal with this matter. It has already had its first session. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the Polish National Council, members of the Polish government in exile in England. They provided the committee with clarifications and further details concerning the murder and the slaughter of the Jews of Poland.[672] For all the feelings of satisfaction and encouragement that this news awakens in us, doubt continues to eat away at us and the bitter question surfaces in our minds, sapping our strength and will – what will save us? Will we be saved? Will we survive?

Wednesday, 16 December [19]42

In our abandoned little corner of the world there is no news to report, but from various locations around Warsaw there are horrific and terrifying reports reaching us. Nowy Dwór near Warsaw has been emptied of all the Jews[673] who were there, about 6,000 in number. Recently

671 Cyril Forster Garbett (1875–1955), Anglican bishop, archbishop of York from 1942 to 1955. His speech mentioned by Lewin was delivered in the House of Lords on 9 December 1942.

672 A reference to the diplomatic note of the Polish Government-in-Exile on 10 December 1942. The note contained information on crimes against Jews in occupied Poland and was the first official report about the Holocaust taking place in the occupied Polish territories.

673 Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki (Warsaw County). Jews from Nowy Dwór and those of Czerwińsk who were resettled there on 28 October, were deported to Auschwitz between 20 November and 12 December 1942.

the Jews from Czerwińsk[674] were moved there. All the Jews have also been driven out of Płońsk (Plinsk in Yiddish), altogether 9,000. I have heard that they were sent away by train in passenger cars (*pasażerskie*)[675] to Oświęcim.[676] Similar reports have also arrived from Kałuszyn[677] and Siedlce. In these towns the Jewish communities that were there until recently – left behind by the expulsions (the murders) – have likewise been completely destroyed. Kałuszyn and Siedlce were at the top of the list of ghettos that was published a few weeks ago. We thought that they would leave a handful of Jews in those locations. Did they not state explicitly that there would be Jewish communities at these locations and that all those who were displaced or in hiding could go to live there? [96] These facts show that the wild animals have decided to exterminate the Jewish race wherever their power extends, that is, over almost the whole of Europe. And there are no methods that are too base for them, nothing they would not stoop to in order to trick as large a number of Jews as possible and bring them to the slaughter.

Some Jews have fled from Nowy Dwór to Warsaw, but they are members of the Council, about whom people are saying a lot of shameful things.

These reports awaken in us a trembling and mortal terror, which is perhaps worse than death itself. Departing this life is a matter of 10 or 15 minutes in Treblinka or in Oświęcim, and our existence is exactly that of someone sentenced to death, whose appeal for mercy has already been refused, who is waiting in a prison cell for the death that is being delayed for some reason unknown to him. A miracle could happen to save him. Perhaps at certain moments he lives in hope of this, but only for those few moments. For most of the hours of the day and night he tosses and turns in torment and in terror of death. We too are in this position, the few isolated ears of corn, dried out and emaciated, that for the time being remain in the cramped and gloomy ghetto. There is also a tragic report from Lwów[678] about the total destruction of the community there. A telephone call was made from here,

674 Czerwińsk nad Wisłą (Płońsk County).

675 (Polish, in Latin characters) for travelers.

676 Deportations from Płońsk took place on 28 October and 15 December 1942.

677 Kałuszyn (Mińsk [Mazowiecki] County). Deportations to Treblinka were carried out from there in November and December 1942.

678 Probably a reference to the so-called November *Aktion* in the Lwów ghetto: on 18 November 1942, 5,000 Jews were deported to the Janowska concentration camp, and subsequently

from the O.B.W. to the Lwów Jewish Council, but we couldn't get a connection. The telephone exchange reported that the *Judenrat* was not answering. This means that [97] it no longer exists.

Sunday, 21 December [19]42

Life drags on without changes and upheavals of any kind. The same heavy gloom and the same wings of death hover over the remaining few who have survived the murderous enemy. Yesterday a wave of good and unexpected reports swept through the ghetto. According to these reports, Jews in Kraków and Lwów were permitted to remove their Star of David armbands, and in their place they will wear a symbol of their place of employment, and if they are employed by the military, a symbol of the *Wehrmacht* or some other service. The reports go even further. It is said that Jews of Kraków have been granted permission to live together with the Poles, that is, the ghetto has been abolished. Of course, one must approach these reports with deep suspicion and with caution.

There is also a story that yesterday, in Blank's Palace,[679] there was a meeting to discuss the Jews, in the presence of the SD[680] people. Moderate views about us were expressed, for instance that the Jews who remain are necessary as workers for the German economy and that they should be left alive. I have heard that tomorrow, 22 December, protest meetings are planned throughout the world to protest the slaughter that has been and is being carried out against us. The Pope apparently appealed directly to Hitler on our behalf. Are we really about to see a change for the better in these barbarians' treatment of us? The coming few days will show.

Some say that [98] here in Warsaw the ghetto will also be abolished, on the first day of the new year 1943. Where do these stories come from all of a sudden? A certain Jew, Łodyna[?] by name, who had family in Płońsk just told me that despite of all his efforts he failed to save his wife and children. The Poles that he hired and sent there to bring them to Warsaw were not able to get through to them, as the whole town was surrounded by the SS.

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to Bełżec. In January 1943, the ghetto was transformed into a labour camp and the *Judenrat* was disbanded.

679 The eighteenth-century palace on Plac Teatralny, before World War II seat of the mayor of Warsaw; during the German occupation seat of Ludwig Leist, Warsaw commissioner (*Stadthauptmann*).

680 Abbreviation for *Sicherheitsdienst* (German) security service of the Third Reich.

His whole family, numbering about 20, was sent away by train in ordinary (*pasażerskie*)[681] cars and last Wednesday they passed by Warsaw and the train stopped at the Eastern Station.[682] The Jews had not come to the conclusion that they were being taken to their death. They could also have jumped out of the train. The guard was light, but they still made no attempt to save themselves. It seems that there is a strong feeling of resignation among those who are being deported. They are lulled by the mild treatment on the way, by the fact that they are travelling in passenger carriages and not in cattle or freight trucks and by the absence of heavy guard. It appears that they believe that they are being transported to another location where they will have to do hard labour, but that they will be left alive. What unfortunates! They have not yet discovered the true nature of this wild and vicious animal that knows no mercy in its thirst for our blood. God of wrath![683] Avenge our spilled blood, and at any event, allow them no atonement for the blood of our pure children, and the blood of our wives, mothers and elders. May they reap their just reward!

[99]

Monday, 28 December [19]42

Once again day after tedious day has passed without any change in our dark and miserable lives. During Christmas the Jews did not have to work, and the few ghetto streets were filled with strollers. We heard through the Jewish police that this enraged the Germans. How did the Jews dare to walk through the streets instead of hiding in their homes? Rumours were even going round to the effect that the butchers were threatening to carry out a new slaughter because of this Jewish 'impudence'.

The dread of what might happen, of a new *Aktion*, robs us of our peace of mind and leaves us not a moment's peace. The reports reaching us from various towns are so terrible and horrifying that they fill our eyes with gloom and drive the sleep from our eyes, with the simple meaning of these words, not as some poetic imagery.

People who have returned here having escaped with their lives from Treblinka report that the annihilation machine was in operation up to the day

681 See footnote 675, pt. 1.

682 I.e. *Dworzec Wschodni* (Polish), Eastern [Railway] Station.

683 From Psalm 94, 1:1.

of their escape. They arrived in the ghetto about 10 days ago. Recently they were bringing in large groups of Jews from Grodno and other places twice a week. These Jews are held in a concentration camp[684] for three weeks and then are brought to Treblinka where they are exterminated. From the Zamość[685] region come reports that there Poles too are being driven from their homes and are being sent off to unknown destinations.[686] It looks as though they also have evil intentions with regard to the Poles.

About a week ago there was a case of robbery and murder in the ghetto. A Jew was murdered during the course of a robbery. He was thought to have money on him and the thieves tricked him into going into a building (at Miła Street 51) to buy gold. [100] They found a total of 400 zlotys on the dead man. At today's prices this is such a trivial sum that it was not worthwhile for the killers to spill innocent blood for it. The Jewish police arrested five suspects in the murder and handed them over to the Germans. The Germans killed all five men, without carrying out any kind of investigation. An officer in the Jewish police told me that two of the five had absolutely no part in the murder, and the other three hadn't even carried out the murder directly. On the one hand we see our moral decline, on the other – the Germans' savagery and the thirst for Jewish blood. Recently Jews have been caught outside the ghetto walls. The Germans deal with them differently than before the 'expulsions'. Previously, they had sent them to the Jewish prison, brought them up before a special court – *Sondergericht*[687] – and sentenced them to death. Sometimes these Jews were murdered in the prison at Gęsia Street 24. On one occasion the names of the martyrs were published in special announcements in the streets. In the past few days those arrested have been handed over to the Jewish Council to be employed in the *Werterfassung*. Once again we are confused and are unsure about how to solve the mystery. Where has this sudden leniency come from in these savage killers? What kind of evil trick lurks beneath this gracious behaviour? In the past few days 16 such Jews have been brought in. The special authorities that deal with Jews – known

684 Labour camp in Kiełbasin near Grodno.

685 Followed by the name of the town in parentheses in Latin characters.

686 Between November 1942 and March 1943 in Zamość, Hrubieszów and Tomaszów Counties approximately 120,000 local people were resettled, and *Volksdeutsche* and Germans were settled in their place.

687 (German, in Latin characters) special court.

as the *Umsiedlungsdienst*[688] – has announced that they are not involved in hunting for Jews on the other side of the wall. But if Jews are pointed out to them, [101] then they grab them. Incidentally, it is said that a large number of Jews have been employed as agents, their only task being to look for and uncover Jews on the Aryan side. Those who try and justify these Jews say that they only want to get a permit to cross over to the 'other side' and are just exploiting the opportunity.

A strange thing happened recently. They suddenly discovered a Jew in the German army, or a half-Jew or perhaps even a quarter-Jew (rejected by the family). His name is Józefowicz. Mende of the SS ordered that a civilian suit be provided. The *kehillah* supplied him with a suit. This 'Jew' was also handed over to the *kehillah*, with instructions that he should be given some kind of employment. I think that he has become some kind of *kehillah* janitor (*woźny*)[689]. This man served two years in the army.

The day before yesterday at half past two in the morning the scholar and historian Dr Majer Bałaban died suddenly of a heart attack. He was 65 years old at his death but looked a lot older. The remnants of the Jewish intelligentsia came to pay their last respects to the deceased. God! What a tragic and depressing sight the gathering at the funeral made. First, the small number who came. It was plain to see that very few of us are left, just a handful. And second: the appearance of the people! What impoverishment, what gloom, what weariness filled their faces! In this small gathering was expressed our total destruction in its most tragic and appalling form, the destruction of the greatest *kehillah* in Europe. I was shaken to the core, looking at the extinguished and despairing eyes, [102] and the lined faces and torn and ragged clothes. Utter annihilation!

One of the ghetto-jokes:

A small boy asks his father: Daddy, when do they light Hanukkah candles? The father replies, correcting him: We do not say Hanukkah candles, we say *choinka*[690] candles. (The exchange takes place outside the ghetto – in the Aryan section – and in Polish). A kid says: *Kiedy się zapala świeczki chanukowe?*[691]

688 (German, in Latin characters) resettlement service.

689 The last word also in parentheses in Polish in Latin characters.

690 (Polish) Christmas tree.

691 (Polish, in Latin characters) When does one light Hanukkah candles?

The father replies, correcting him: *Nie mówi się chanukowe tylko choinkowe.*[692] New Marranos.[693]

Another joke:

Jews are leaving some Polish or German café or restaurant and a small child, perhaps Jewish, perhaps not, latches on to them. The child is selling newspapers and sticks to them like glue. The Jews approach a tram stop. In their anxiety to get rid of the small pest and, fearing some kind of a trap, they buy a paper from him. The boy seizes this chance and slips a note to them. Unrolling the note, the Jews read the following text: 'Cholent with kishka, kosher, at affordable prices, obtainable at such and such an address.'

On the first day of the Christmas holiday a few Jews were killed on Leszno and Smocza Streets because they were wandering around on their own in the streets. They had left the ghetto to go to visit their relatives who are locked up in Schultz's and Toebbens' workshops. Chołodenko's son-in-law – Bibersztajn[694] – was killed last Thursday at 11 o'clock in the evening in the broom 'shop'. His wife was injured and is in hospital. Their sin consisted in having crossed the boundary of the workshop from one building to the next, from Świętojerska Street 28 to 30. They were accompanying a woman. One of the German supervisors [103] opened fire on them.

An officer in the Jewish police told me a story worth recording for future generations. During the first days of the expulsions, they would select the old people from all the others held at the *Umschlag*, characterising them as *Transportumfähig,*[695] and put them into Kohn-Heller wagons (*konheler-ki*).[696] They were taken to the Jewish cemetery and shot with machine guns. Later they stopped killing the old people here in Warsaw and allocated them

692 (Polish, in Latin characters) We do not say for Hanukkah, but for *choinka* (pronounced: *hoyinkah*).

693 (Spanish, literally) pigs; derogatory term describing Spanish and Portuguese Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity, but practised Judaism in secret.

694 Dawid Chołodenko (1885–1943), Bund activist, member of the Resettlement Committee of the *Judenrat*, Oyneg Shabes contributor. After the *Grossaktion*, he worked as a personnel manager in a brushmakers' workshop. He was shot by a Ukrainian before he managed to enter a shelter during the January *Aktion*. For more on Bibersztajn's death; see: *AŻIH*, 301/2816 (*Efros,* Testimony).

695 (German, in Latin characters) not suitable for transportation.

696 (Polish, in Latin characters); see footnote 165, pt. 1.

the last two cars in the trains that were going to Treblinka. On the fourth day of the expulsion, on Saturday, 26 July, a car drove to the Jewish cemetery and a middle-aged German woman with two young children got out. She took them inside the cemetery and led them to the place where our old people were being murdered. She wanted to show the children how the Jews were killed. A typical illustration of the character of this evil and barbaric people. New Amalekites.

Tuesday, 29 December

The woman who was wounded last Friday before midnight died from her wounds. Her name is Kadiszewicz, the wife of the doctor of the same name. It turns out that Bibersztajn, who was also killed, was accompanying her from one gateway to another in the same courtyard. It was 10:30. One of the German owners of the workshop – Brener – went up to them and shot five times at them. 4 bullets hit the woman, and one struck Bibersztajn. He died on the spot and she a day or two later.

[104] Yesterday I learnt that about a month ago in mid-November, or a few days after, 40 (forty) Jews were shot in the Pawiak. Among those killed was a Jew by the name of Osnos,[697] the husband of a woman who works in the OBW workshop, and a close relative of one of the owners of the factory, Al. L.[698] The dead man had also been working in the workshop since the beginning of the expulsions. At the beginning of August he had been standing in the courtyard smoking a cigarette, and was caught in the act – it is forbidden to smoke in the carpentry shop – by Commissioner Hensel, the man who later caused the deaths of hundreds of us, and he telephoned the SS. The butchers came immediately, arrested Osnos and took away the 'offender' to the Pawiak. There he was held for almost four months and finally murdered.

I have been told that they have recently begun killing the prisoners in the Pawiak who have foreign citizenship and who were arrested a number of days before the expulsion. At that time, it was thought that their lives were safe, and that they had been arrested only for their own security, a sort of protective custody, *Schutzverhaftung*.[699] Among them was one of the leaders of the 'Joint' in Warsaw, Neustadt, and the well-known lawyer

697 A name of a well-known Warsaw Jewish craftsmen and traders' family.

698 Aleksander Landau.

699 (German, in Latin characters) arrest as a protective measure.

Al. Margolin,[700] both of whom held passports of one of the South American countries. Among those arrested at the same time were Herman and his wife Fela Eckheizer, a pupil of mine from Yehudia – as citizens of Eretz Israel (he took out citizenship there). Who knows if they are still alive?

The main ways of making a living, on which depends the greater part of the ghetto community in Warsaw, are described by two newly created expressions or words:

1. *shabreven,* in Polish *szabrować*[701]

[105] 2. *tshukhes* or *ciuchy.*[702]

The first means: taking valuable items (mainly bedclothes and counterpanes) from Jewish flats that have been abandoned and which are being emptied by the Germans, who are taking everything that is left. As is known, there are 4,000 Jews employed in this 'clean' work – boys and girls, men and women of various ages. These Jews take some things for themselves and sell them to those who go to work outside the ghetto (*placówkarze*). From this – looting from looters – large numbers of Jews support themselves. The word is derived – so I have been told – from German, and is frequently used by the Polish craftsmen, the lathe workers, with the meaning: 'scratch, clean off'. A young Jew tried to prove to me that the word derives from Hebrew and consists of two words joined together: *lishbor bar* ('The children of Jacob went down to Egypt to buy grain.')[703]

The second means of earning a living, from which even more Jews support themselves, is from the selling of *tshukhes* (*ciuchy*). This word refers to all kinds of old clothes, and above all bedclothes. Almost all the Jews live by selling what they have whether it is theirs or not. The sense of property, of possession – mine–yours – has become much less definite. A Jew who would never have taken something that belonged to somebody else thinks little today of putting anything that comes into his hand into his bag. Those who do not sell their own things buy *tshukhes* and sell them to others, who

700 *462/425 A reference to Aleksander Margolis, a lawyer with a Honduran passport. See also AŻIH 302/338.

701 (Yiddish, slang and Polish) burglarise, break into.

702 (Polish) informal: clothes, garments; also below in this entry; here and below, Lewin uses the transcription *czuchy,* as he probably pronounced it.

703 *Vayerdu bney yaakov mitsrayma lishbor bar.* An inaccurate quotation from Genesis 42:3.

sell them to the Poles outside the ghetto, and from this a large percentage of the surviving inhabitants support themselves.

The etymology of this word is Yiddish: from the word *tsikhlekh*.[704] The word *tsikhn* was altered by the Poles to *ciuchy* [106] and became widely used by young and old (though there are hardly any of the latter left here) in the ghetto.

If one looks closely at the passers-by in the streets of the Warsaw ghetto, one can see that the overwhelming majority of them are not originally from Warsaw, but are from small towns. They were driven out from their homes a long time ago and saved themselves during the expulsion by hiding out in various dark corners. In general, one sees rough faces and vulgar types from the common folk. Members of the middle classes, intelligentsia, the more educated elements, are not to be seen. Very few have survived from bourgeois and cultivated Jewish Warsaw. Teachers, for example, have been almost completely wiped out. I am the only survivor from my school. Out of all the female teachers, the directress, and the male teachers who were working in the clandestine classroom[705] until recently, none survived. The same situation can be found at practically all levels of Warsaw Jewry.

Warsaw was in fact the backbone of Polish Jewry, its heart, one could say. The destruction of Warsaw would have meant the destruction of the whole of Polish Jewry, even if the provinces had been spared this evil. Now that the enemy's sword of destruction has run amok through the small towns and villages and is cutting them down with murderous blows – with the death-agony of the metropolis, the entire body is dying and plunging into hell. One can say that with the setting of the sun of Polish Jewry the splendour and the glory of world Jewry has vanished. We, the Polish Jews, were after all the most vibrant nerve of our people. In terms of the number of victims, Hitler has murdered an entire people. There are many peoples in Europe [107] who number fewer than the number of our martyrs. The Danes and the Norwegians are no more than three million. The Lithuanians, the Letts and the Estonians have far fewer. The Swedes – six million. The Slovaks fewer

704 (Yiddish) diminutive: pillow cases, blanket covers; followed by the basic word in the next sentence.

705 Lewin uses the word *kompletim*, from Polish *komplety*, literally sets, meaning underground classes.

than two million, and so on. And Hitler has already killed five–six million Jews. Our language has no words with which to express the calamity and disaster that has struck us.

Monday, 4 January 1943

Once again some dark, melancholy and very, very gloomy days have gone by. The few who have survived continue to live their lives, which are filled with bitterness. On the surface everything is quiet and it seems that they do not want to disturb the peace of those who have been left alive. But deep in our hearts is gnawing away the perpetual dread that never lets up for one moment and eats away at us like a moth.

Over the past few days we have been seized with anxiety and with a terrible dread. The cause of our disquiet is the arrival of Ukrainians in Warsaw. I have heard that a group of 600 men – Ukrainians – has arrived here. All kinds of theories have been put forward to explain their presence. The Jews have been walking around in gloom and despair. We were afraid that they had come for us, that we were on the brink of a new liquidation, this time a complete one. There were those who reassured themselves and others. They say that their arrival is connected with the *Aktion* against the Poles that is due to begin shortly. In fact, there are reports of unrest and turmoil among the Poles over the mass expulsions of Poles in the Zamość area. Some also say that the Ukrainians have only been sent here for a short period. They are just passing through Warsaw. Whatever the truth may be, the Jews entered the new year – 1943 – in a depressed and agitated state of mind. I heard today that the murderers have already left town. [108] As to the reason for their short visit: the same source told me the following: they brought a transport of Poles from Słonim and the surrounding area here. The transport was escorted by the Ukrainians. The town of Słonim, which was once a great Jewish centre, is now completely *judenfrei*. All the Jews have also been expelled. What became of them, whether they were taken to a second location and kept alive, or if they were brought to Treblinka – is not known. One must accept and tell oneself the bitter truth that if the town of Słonim has been emptied of Jews, then these Jews have been wiped off the face of the earth.[706]

706 The last remaining inmates of the Słonim ghetto were murdered in December 1942.

The anti-Jewish campaign in the German press still continues and has grown even more intense. Much is written about such countries as Romania, Slovakia and Hungary, and about the 'solution' of the Jewish question in these countries. According to what they write, three-quarters of the Jews of Romania and Slovakia have already been destroyed, nearly one million. Hungary is oppressing its Jews economically, but has not yet followed in the footsteps of the Nazis; that is, they have not exterminated Jews on a mass scale. All the remaining Jewish communities in Europe face complete annihilation. This is the fate of those countries that find themselves under the rule of these Teutonic butchers: France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Germany, Denmark, Poland, Czechoslovakia (Bohemia and Moravia), the Baltic countries: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and the occupied territories of Soviet Russia, as well as Romania and Slovakia. It is to be assumed that about 90 per cent of the whole of European Jewry has been destroyed in the ovens of hell that these twentieth-century Huns have erected.

I was told by a certain Jew that a group of Swiss and Swedish journalists have approached German journalists [109] with the question: is there any truth in the stories about the mass destruction of Jews in German-occupied countries? The German journalists are supposed to have replied that they would give an answer after investigating the matter and researching their sources. A few days later they gave the reply that there had been no mass murders, but that for economic and supply reasons it has been necessary to shift a percentage of the population to the Eastern territories and resettle them. A certain proportion, especially children, women and old people, had been unable to survive the arduous journey to the new locations and had died. The number of dead is put at only 110,000.

It may be that there is a kernel of truth in this report.

In the proclamations that Hitler has been issuing for the new year he repeats the slanderous lie that Jews were responsible for the outbreak of the war, and that it was only through the Jews that an alliance between the capitalist countries and the Soviet Union became possible. His prophecy of the extermination of European Jewry has already been realised. From his words and from the whole campaign of incitement against Jews in the German press we can see that the active war against us has not eased up in the least.

[111]

Thursday, 7 January 194[3][707]

Conditions have not changed here either for the better or for the worse. We are continually consumed by fear and anxiety. We do not know if today will be our last day, if they will come, surround the ghetto and take us out to our death. Contact with other towns has been almost completely broken. We have no precise idea where there are any other Jewish communities or where they have been completely wiped out. Today I heard a rumour that the whole Jewish community of Lwów [110] has been liquidated and the town has become *judenfrei*. However, it is hard to know how much truth there is in this rumour. We do not even know what is happening on the next street. Just yesterday a rumour went around that the Poles were being driven out of Praga and that they are being brought into the streets that have been left empty by the Jews. Similarly, there was also a rumour that at the Eastern Station in Warsaw trains are standing full of Polish children and that many of them (200) died on the way.[708] It is hard to determine how much truth there is in either of these reports. We are locked in a cramped and tiny prison and we have no idea what is happening outside the walls of our prison, except in the form of sickening and confused rumours. Indeed, under present conditions there is no crime of which the Germans would not be capable. They are turning the whole of Europe outside the Reich into a wilderness. I am talking about the populations of these areas. They have almost completely wiped out the Jews, and now it looks as if it is the turn of the Poles. The Russians are being exterminated; the Czechs are being murdered. The Teutonic sword is destroying the peoples of Europe.

When will this nightmare through which we are living come to an end? Whole wooden buildings are disappearing from our ghetto. In the course of one or two days they are dismantled and the wood used to heat the homes. Those who have returned from the labour camps (*obozowicze*) are particularly busy at this. The wood trade is flourishing at the moment in the ghetto. Prices are low, half of what they were a year ago. And it is only thanks to this

707 In the original, 7 December 1942, apparently by mistake.

708 Reference to the children from the Zamość area separated from their parents, transported from transit camps to concentration camps and to the Reich in the winter of 1942. There were no children in the wagons on the siding at the Dworzec Wschodni (Eastern Railway Station).

that we manage not to freeze, and a certain number of unfortunate Jews can support themselves.

[111]

Saturday, 9 January [19]43

Since yesterday renewed tensions can be felt in the ghetto. The day before yesterday announcements were posted on the walls forbidding entry or exit from the old ghetto into the new ghetto, or from the new ghetto into the old ghetto without special permission from the *Sonderkommando*[709] at Żelazna Street 103. This decree, which is signed by the *kehillah* council, is causing great alarm. Once again there is dread of increased persecutions. In addition, the order issued by the local 'governor' Brandt concerning the buildings at the *Umschlag* that in the course of the summer swallowed around 300,000 Jewish souls has awakened a deep and agitated disquiet. According to Brandt's announcement, they plan to make these buildings into a prison or some kind of camp for the Jews who are arrested each day on the Aryan side or on the streets of the old ghetto. These Jews are brought to Żelazna Street 103. Their quarters are very cramped there and they want to prepare more spacious facilities. This whole business makes every Jew's heart beat with fear. Who can believe the words of a German (after the bitter experiences that we have been through)? All kinds of anxieties have been voiced in this connection. Some believe that this is all a trick on their part and that their real goal is to prepare that place of terror for another slaughter. Others argue that they plan to lock up at the *Umschlag* all those who are registered with the *Werterfassung* and who do not report for work. There are many apprehensions and great is the fear and great is the burden that weighs on our hearts and minds.

Isolated refugees who arrive here literally by miracle from Treblinka bring reports that freeze the blood in the veins: the killing machine there never rests. In the past few days Jews from Radomsko[710] were brought there and murdered. News of this kind causes us hellish torments. Has anyone ever described [112] the suffering of someone who has been condemned to death and who is to go to the gallows? Even the Russian artists, of whom the greatest

709 (German) special military unit; here: a headquarter of the *Grossaktion* in the Warsaw ghetto.

710 More than 3,000 Jews still remaining in Radomsko after the *Aktion* of 9 October 1942 were deported to Treblinka in early January 1943.

is Dostoyevsky, have not succeeded in portraying a true description of what transpires in the depths of the soul of an innocent person who has been sentenced to death. When I hear these accounts of Treblinka, something begins to twist and turn in my heart. The fear of 'that' which must come is, perhaps, stronger than the torment a person feels when he gives up his soul. Will these terrible agonies of the spirit call up a literary response? Will there emerge a new Bialik able to write a new Book of Lamentations, a new 'In the Town of Slaughter'?[711]

In recent days there were killings once again in the streets of the ghetto. Yesterday there was talk of a number of victims. One report of a murder on Muranowska Street was confirmed. A relative of the baker at Miła Street 64, Goldberg (the name of the baker), was walking at one in the afternoon to take his shoes to the shoemaker for repair. A car drove by. The driver stopped the Jew and asked him why he wasn't working. The Jew replied that he was ill. The German struck him murderous blows. The Jew fell to the ground and the driver was about to go back to his car. At the last moment he changed his mind, took out his revolver and killed the Jew. I heard confirmation from various sources of the report about the Polish children who were brought to Warsaw from the districts of Lublin and Zamość. They are being distributed among various families. Their parents were taken away to work and the children were brought here.

Monday, 11 January [19]43

On Friday afternoon there was an uproar in several ghetto streets. The Jewish police were frightening people into not wandering around in the streets. At that time – 4:30 – I happened to be on Kurza Street (formerly Kupiecka Street, and later named after Rabbi Meisels). The police were shouting: 'Don't bring disaster on yourselves and on us!' People [113] have been saying that Himmler is in Warsaw.[712] The Jews began to run and to hide in the entranceways. After a few minutes I continued on my way along Muranowska Street (to my sister and daughter) and three elegant cars

711 See footnote 134, pt. 1.

712 He was indeed in Warsaw and ordered the ghetto to be liquidated until 15 February 1943, after the removal of German private companies and the deportation of 16,000 Jewish workers to Lublin on 18 January. This date marked the second *Aktion* (in which Lewin perished), and the first Jewish organised self-defence, which lasted four days.

(limousines) drove past me. It may be that the head butcher actually drove by, in order to see with his own eyes the fruits of his 'work', the destruction of the greatest *kehillah* in Europe. He was no doubt happy with the results.

Someone who knows many people, including those presently at the head of the Jewish Council, told me that there really was a very grave danger hanging over our heads these past days. There was a proposal, or a plan, for a new expulsion of the Jews of the ghetto or of the *she'erit hapletah*. It was to have been carried out at night, when everyone would have been asleep in bed and it would have been impossible for them to take refuge anywhere. This time we escaped disaster because of the opposition of the military authorities, of the *Wehrmacht*. One of the generals opposed the planned expulsion on the grounds that the Jews were working and that their output was necessary at the moment. The opponents of a new slaughter came from the supply authorities, from the *Rüstungskommando*[713] and not from the *Wehrmacht*, as I wrote above. But it is necessary that we recognise the bitter and terrible truth: over our heads hangs the perpetual threat of total annihilation. It seems they have decided to exterminate the whole of European Jewry.

Appalling reports are arriving from the provinces: towns that were designated as locations for Jewish ghettos have become *judenrein*. Among them: Siedlce and Sobolew.[714] This means that as far as the Jews are concerned, no promise is binding, no order. There are in fact no human standards in their treatment of us, and every trick, every lie, every falsification is legitimate if it can serve in the destruction of further numbers of Jews. [114] There are rumours that in Bródno, near Warsaw, barracks are being built which are intended for us . . . If only it was just barracks that they were preparing for us . . .

A report taken from the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*[715] of 22 December made a strong impression on me. The newspaper carries the contents of the declaration (note) of the German government to the statements of England, the USA[716] and Russia on the Jewish question, that is,

713 (German) armament unit.

714 Deportation of the Jews from Sobolew (Garwolin County) took place on 10 January 1943.

715 (Italian) *Evening Courier*, title of the daily published in Italy since 1876.

716 Abbreviation in Latin characters.

on Hitler's extermination of the Jews.[717] The German note states that the Jews were well aware of the Nazis' program with regard to them 10 years before they came to power. The Jews knew full well that according to this program there was no place for them on German soil. The Jews had enough time to leave the Reich and also . . . the other European countries. If they didn't do this – they have only harmed themselves (in Polish: *to tym gorzej dla nich*).[718] Even after the war had broken out, they could have left certain countries and even today they can leave several countries. The end the note mentions the Führer's[719] proclamation at the outbreak of the war that if the Jews cause a new world war, they will be the first to suffer the consequences.[720] It is hardly worth discussing the insanity of this reply: nine million people, men, women and children, were supposed to leave Europe entirely (where, for instance, were they supposed to go?), that is, even from countries such as Yugoslavia where no Germans have ever trod (Greece, the Russian interior, etc.), and if they failed to do this, then they all must die a nameless death, together with their women, children and old people. Words that cut like sharp sword blades, and we can see from them that the murderers have no intention of halting their terrible crimes. This is their answer to the protests of the nations.

[115] Our mood is one of deep despair and depression. Reports from various locations show that this time they are intent on the total destruction of the Jews. They are not leaving even a single Jew behind. This is the fate of Radomsko and other towns. These reports plunge us into black despair. We are terrified of a new *Aktion* here, which will mean the end for us all, that is, for everyone who is left in the ghetto. A few individuals will be saved who have hidden on the other side among the Poles. But the fate of these Jews is also not at all sure, apart from the fact that they live in continual fear, and are liable at any moment to fall into the net of the Germans and of Polish agents. There is also the fear of a special action directed against them. I heard yesterday that Germans were looking through materials in the records of the registration department. It is not known what kind of plan they have in mind: are

717 Declaration of the Allied states of 17 December 1942, condemning German atrocities against Jews in Europe, published simultaneously in Paris, London and Moscow, issued in response to the diplomatic note of the Polish Government-in-Exile.

718 (Polish, in Latin characters) all the worse for them.

719 (German or Yiddish) i.e. Hitler.

720 Hitler's speech delivered in the Reichstag on 30 January 1939.

they going to inspect the new registration of the inhabitants, that is, the Jews, in order to catch them, or do they want to get to know the Polish population, in order to plan something evil against them – the Poles?

In the town, outside the ghetto, announcements have been posted about 200 hostages who have been taken from the Poles because of various acts of sabotage and attacks on German soldiers.[721] Great tension and agitation can be felt in the air. The feeling one gets is that the Germans want to drown the disaster that must come to them in a sea of innocent blood. They began with us and will finish with other peoples: Poles, Czechs, Serbs and many others.

My daughter, who is working for the *Werterfassung*, told me the following story: a few days ago, Polish youths – three boys and two girls – stole into the former ghetto on Leszno and Ogrodowa Streets in order to fill their pockets with Jewish property left there that the Germans are collecting. A German soldier, 19 years old, who was guarding the Jewish workers, shot at the Polish [116] children and wounded them all mortally. They all died that day. This soldier is a terrible sadist. One day – perhaps the same day – he beat Jews savagely, including women and young girls. This soldier was removed from his post at the W.E. in connection with the shooting of the Polish children. But it is interesting to see the reason for his dismissal: not because he shot and killed 5 human beings, but because he didn't shoot properly; that is, he didn't kill them on the spot, since the five children lived for almost a whole day afterwards and died in the evening. This is the reality in which we live and this is the new order that the Germans want to erect in the world.

Friday, 15 January [1]943

The Jews have been living in dread of this day. Many Jews did not go to sleep until very late last night. The fear of a new *Aktion* set them on edge and robbed them of sleep. In the past few days, rumour after rumour has been circulating among us, good and bad. As I have already mentioned, an *Aktion* had been predicted for the 15th of this month. Later it was said that the Germans denied these rumours and the *kehillah* circles reassured the Jews. Do we not recall that on Sunday, three days before the beginning of the 'expulsion' – the slaughter, the commissioner of the ghetto, Auerswald, reassured the leader of the *kehillah*, Czerniaków, that no *Aktion*

721 The announcement, dated 9 January 1943, was posted on 10 January. It was signed by the district commander of the Security Police and Security Service.

would be carried out in Warsaw, but just three days later the tragedy began? We cannot believe the Germans, the servants of savage killers. We can be content that the night passed peacefully, and that today there is no news of incidents or tragic events. But one cannot but be afraid nonetheless, since we will be unable to help ourselves and to rescue the few remaining survivors when the day of calamity[722] comes.

[117] I have also heard that a report or a telegram has come from Berlin saying that the Todt organisation intends to employ Jews in Warsaw. This will lead to increased demand for manpower of Jewish workers, and thus will strengthen the security of the ghetto. It is also said that the working conditions in the Todt units are better than in the workplaces run by the SS or others. It is hard to know if these are just false or fabricated rumours, or if they have any substance to them.

I have been told that yesterday 8 Jews were killed at the Marki Station,[723] 7 men and one woman from the labour camp *Ostbahn*.[724] They were sitting in the canteen when suddenly the SS came in and killed everyone they found there. I couldn't find out if they were caught there during working hours or if the unfortunates were doing business with the Poles at that moment (the selling of *ciuchy* and the buying of all kinds of groceries for the ghetto). Be that as it may, 8 Jews of the few who remain have perished. Our blood is being spilled like water; it flows without respite. Someone who has arrived from Lwów said that during the new *Aktion* that was carried out there a few weeks ago, a thousand Jews were rounded up and killed, c h i l d r e n and old people, as a rule. This was a sort of new *weryfikacja*.[725]

I heard that in the small town of Opoczno[726] all the Jews were called into the municipality with the promise that they were to be registered in order to be exchanged for Germans from *Eretz Israel*, that is, the Opoczno Jews were to go to *Eretz Israel*. The Jews believed this lie and arrived at the appointed hour. Then they were rounded up and herded into railway wagons, which means they were taken away to their death to Treblinka or Oświęcim .

722 The original phrase is *yom shoah*; today, the Holocaust Remembrance Day is *Yom ha-Shoah*.

723 Marki (Radzymin County).

724 See footnote 620, pt. 1.

725 (Polish) confirmation, evidence.

726 On 27 October 1942, most of the Jews from Opoczno were deported to Treblinka.

There is talk that there were arrests among the Poles during the night.[727] There is also word of an *Aktion* taking place today among the Poles: they are being rounded up to be sent away to work. This *Aktion* took place in various sections of the city: Żelazna Brama, Grochów, Żoliborz and in general throughout the town. [118] They informed us over the telephone that the trams are running empty and that the streets are deserted. They – just like us – are hiding from the enemy.

Saturday, 16 January 1943

The day before yesterday 20 Jews were removed from the building at Dzika Street 3 where returnees from the labour camps (*obozowicze)* were living. They were taken to Rembertów[728] to work. Rembertów has already devoured many Jewish victims.

The number of Poles rounded up yesterday is estimated at 7–8 thousand; among them were 16 Jews. We have as yet no idea what will be done with them: if they will be killed or held in prison. There is an additional *Aktion* in the Polish streets today. It is said that the *Gubernia* must supply 300,000 workers for Germany. Warsaw alone – 30,000. Yesterday and today the arrestees were taken into the Pawiak.

Description:

1. ARG II 251a (Ring. II/174), ARG I 512 (Ring. I/1052)
   ARG II 251a – original, handwritten (Ś*), ink, Yiddish, 141×222 mm, 2 sheets, 2 pages.
   ARG I 512 – duplicate (3 copies), handwritten (U*), pencil, Yiddish, 145×218 mm, 9 sheets, 9 pages.
   Edition based on the original, 2 sheets, 2 pages.
2. HWC 31.11
   Original, handwritten (Ś*), ink, Yiddish, 2 sheets, 3 pages.
3. ARG II 251b (Ring. II/174)
   Original, handwritten (Ś*), ink, Yiddish, 155×196 mm, minor damage and fragments missing, 4 sheets, 8 pages.
4. HWC 32.2
   Original, handwritten (Ś*), ink, Yiddish, 3 sheets, 5 pages.

727 On the night of 16–17 January, the German police and SS troops carried out a series of round-ups in Warsaw, resulting in the arrest of several thousand people.

728 Probably a reference to forced labour on the grounds of the defunct munitions' factory 'Pocisk' in Rembertów (Warsaw County).

5. ARG I 431 (Ring. I/988)
   Original, handwritten (Ś*), notebook(s), ink, Yiddish, 184×208 mm, minor damage and missing text, 36 sheets, 71 pages. On p. [1(50)] Hersh Wasser's note: '22 st[andard] pages'.
6. HWC 32.4
   Original, handwritten (Ś*), ink, Yiddish, 9 sheets, 18 pages. On p. [1], Hersh Wasser's note in Yiddish: '18 pages'.
7. HWC 32.7
   Original, handwritten (Ś*), ink, Yiddish, 10 sheets, 20 pages.
8. HWC 32.6; ARG II 251c (Ring. II/174)
   pages [1–27]: HWC 32.6: original, handwritten (Ś*), ink, Yiddish, 13 sheets, 26 pages.
   pages [28–29]: ARG II 251c (Ring. II/174): original, handwritten (Ś*), ink, Yiddish, 1 sheet, 2 pages.
9. ARG II 252 (Ring. II/202).
   pages [[1-12]]: typewritten postwar duplicate of Ring. II/202, Hebrew, supplemented with *Mipinkaso. . .*, pp. 87–101.
   pages [13–118]: original, handwritten (Ś*), ink, pencil, Hebrew, 95×155, 150×195, 104×254, 105×302 mm, 53 sheets, 106 pages; pp. 35–38 written on a stationary: „Kalisz, dnia..193... ul. K. Pułaskiego 11."

   Published in the original: *Mipinkaso shel hamoreh miyehudia. Geto Varsha, april 1942 – yanuar 1943*, ed. Tzvi Shner, Beit Lohamei Hagetaot and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1969; in translation into Yiddish: BFG, vol. VII, No. 1/1954, pp. 42–99; No. 2–3/1954, pp. 210–240; BŻIH, No. 21/1957, pp. 125–137; No. 22/1957, pp. 85–114; No. 23/1957, pp. 71–79; No. 24/1957, pp. 42–55; No. 25/1958, pp. 119–130; into English: *A Cup of Tears. A Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto*, ed. Antony Polonsky, Oxford 1988; into Polish: *Dzienniki z getta warszawskiego*, ed. Katarzyna Person, Zofia Trębacz, Michał Trębacz, Warszawa 2015, Doc. 9; *Dziennik*, ed. Katarzyna Person, Warszawa 2015, pp. 167–289.

Part II

Twenty-one various diaries and daily notes

Introduction

Eight of the twenty-one documents in this section have never been published previously, and only three out of the remaining number have been published *in extenso*. Two texts mention the events of 1939, the majority were written in 1941 and 1942, and two feature brief references to the beginning of 1943. Although documents mainly concern the Warsaw ghetto, extensive fragments also refer to the ghetto in Łódź. In several cases, the published texts deal with the destruction of other Jewish communities, including Białystok and Pabianice. Many accounts refer to concentration camps and killing centres, primarily Treblinka, but also Majdanek and Chełmno-on-Ner/Kulmhof.

The authors of the accounts and journals devote a lot of attention to the terrible hunger, which was often a result of social inequality. They depict smuggling and widespread bribery. They report the process of selection in workshops and street round-ups, comment on rumours circulating in the ghetto and try faithfully to depict the prevailing moods among Jews. The common theme in several accounts is the Great Deportation of summer 1942.

The authors also write about the most important institutions of the Warsaw ghetto: the *Judenrat*, Jewish Social Self-Help and, finally, the Jewish Order Service, painting the latter in a particularly dark light. Probably the role of Jewish policemen in the *Grossaktion* contributed most considerably to this negative image, although their earlier extreme eagerness in fulfilling their tasks also played an important part. There is almost no information about cultural life in the ghetto. With the sole exception of Shmuel Shainkinder, who extensively describes the journalistic circles, other texts contain only short mentions of individual people or events. There is also little information about

religious life. The authors of published reports and diaries were interested in international developments; hence, we find information on the progress of war and the Allies' efforts, as reported in newspapers and on the radio.

Among the authors are well-known collaborators of Emanuel Ringelblum and Oyneg Shabes members, including Yekhiel Górny, Eliyahu Gutkowski, Menakhem Mendel Kohn, Mordecai Schwartzbard and Nehemia Tytelman.

We should look closely at authors' traits and their accounts. Eliyahu Gutkowski, Yekhiel Górny and Nehemia Tytelman were among the closest collaborators of Oyneg Shabes; accordingly, their short biographies appear at the beginning of our descriptions below. The accounts by Menakhem Mendel Kohn, Dawid Graber and Nahum Grzywacz share a clear demand to preserve memory, which is why they are discussed together. Journalists Shmuel Shainkinder and Leyzor Czarnobroda are profiled and highlighted separately. In the case of the former, the literary values of his text deserved special attention, and with the latter – it was the extraordinary emotionality of his message. A fragment of the diary of Margalit Landau, known rather as an active member of the resistance movement, depicts the author from a different perspective, as the account is very personal and somewhat juvenile. We also look at the notes by Anna Grasberg-Górna and Zalmen (Zygmunt) Frydrych. Mordecai Schwartzbard's account is truly unique, which is why his profile closes the detailed descriptions section.

Among the texts whose authors could not be identified, two documents deserve special attention. Their value lies not so much because of their facts, but rather due to their skilful, realistic presentation of events. The first is the report from the cemetery at Gęsia Street from June 1941 (Doc. 9). Its author describes the death of a comrade, the subsequent visit to a morgue and the funeral, in which he tries faithfully to depict the conditions in which the corpse was stored. In this short account describing a small fragment of the ghetto's reality, the whole life of the 'Jewish residential district' in Warsaw can be seen – the hunger which decimated the population, the breakdown of family ties, the disappearance of religious life, and above all the fact that suffering and death became commonplace, which in turn resulted in indifference.

The second document is an account of a woman, a workshop employee, who records her own experience of the selection that was carried out in September 1942 (Doc. 21). This testimony is a condensed description of events

that took place over several hours. The author presents the circumstances of selection, but primarily focuses on people's reactions. She writes about attempts to mix into a group of 'safe' workers and feverish efforts to improve their appearance – 'Everyone wants to look as "workerly" as possible.'

The author of Doc. 11, according to the old catalogue of the Ringelblum Archive, was Ignacy Lipszyc, a Jewish policeman; it is written partly in Polish, partly in Yiddish, and includes important observations made after one year of the ghetto's existence. In Docs. 6 and 7, the author hides behind the nick 'Abraham' or 'Avrom'; he apparently was a very active social worker, associated with the Jewish Self-Help, and describes the most dramatic situations of the displaced people in the Warsaw ghetto.

We have no clue as to the authorship of Docs. 1, 3 and 4. Doc. 1 is from mid-September 1939, and its author is still full of hope. Doc. 3, although the dates are confusing, was written probably in the first weeks or months of the closed ghetto. Doc. 4 is the only example in this volume where the account was recorded by a different person than its unknown author, in this case, by Hersh Wasser, one of the Oyneg Shabes leaders; therefore, we have added his biographical note below.

The accounts, journals and diaries constituting this volume show how diverse were the ways of describing the Holocaust. Some authors tried to make their texts as objective as possible, presenting only specific events (although, of course, their selection was dictated by the author's feelings). Others were unable or unwilling to hide their emotions and sensations, which were reflected in their texts. It is also worth mentioning that some of the presented documents – Shainkinder's diary or the report from a cemetery – have high literary value. These texts do not provide new facts about the history of the Warsaw ghetto nor of the Holocaust in general. These are testimonies of that time, often written on a day-to-day basis, and as such they are undoubtedly of great value; their publication carries out the will of the authors.

Biographical notes on the authors and remarks on their texts:

Eliyahu Gutkowski (1900–1943) – born in the Suwałki region, moved to Łódź in 1914, worked as a teacher, graduated in 1938 from the Polish Free University (Wolna Wszechnica Polska) in Warsaw; he was politically associated with

the Right Po'ale Tsiyon. In the autumn of 1939 he fled with his wife Luba and son Gabriel to Warsaw. He became one of the key members of Oyneg Shabes, did cataloging work, edited bulletins, prepared outlines of documentation works, recorded testimonies and copied documents. He also wrote his own texts on the economic life of the ghetto. He wrote in Hebrew and in Polish, rarely in German.

In his diary (Doc. 15), Gutkowski describes the situation in the Warsaw ghetto between the end of June and the end of July 1942. His text concludes with a description of the day before the *Grossaktion*. He writes about the mood prevailing on the eve of the deportation, about round-ups, carried out also by night, and about rumours that circulated in the ghetto. Many people expected to be deported, others feared a pogrom, and only a few believed that work would save them from tragedy. However, the atmosphere was tense, full of anxiety and depression, including within the *Judenrat*. The mention of intensification of terror against the Polish population is also worth noting.

Gutkowski quotes overheard information about the situations of Jews in other towns: Biała Rawska, Bobrujsk, Hrubieszów, Ozorków, Rzeszów and Tomaszów Mazowiecki. His indignation is especially ignited by the murder of 110 Jews in Babice near Warsaw, who were killed on the pretext of not complying with the occupier's ordinances. The victims included, among others, officers of the Jewish police.

He also comments on the political situation – developments on the Eastern Front and the progress of the Allies in Africa and the Middle East. A radio programme broadcast by the BBC in June 1942 makes a great impression on him. Thanks to reports coming in from occupied Poland, Western politicians and the international community received detailed information not only about the number of murdered Jews, but also about the methods of extermination of entire Jewish communities in various regions of the country.

Yekhiel (Khil) Górny (1908–1943) – before World War II lived in Kalisz; was a member of the Left Po'ale Tsiyon. After the outbreak of the war he escaped to the Soviet Union. As a member of Oyneg Shabes Górny copied documents and transcribed reports of Polish Jewish soldiers, people who had been 'resettled', and inmates of labour camps for Jews. He compiled about 70 documents altogether, in Yiddish and Polish. During the uprising of April 1943 he fought

in the Left Po'ale Tsiyon combat group led by Hersh Berliński, and was killed on 10 May 1943 with a group of fighters who were trying to escape the ghetto through the sewers.

His diary (Doc. 13) covers the period from the end of May 1942 to the end of January 1943 and is the longest document in this part of the volume. Short daily entries, some with titles, contain mainly notes about current events in the ghetto. Górny meticulously records the numbers of the murdered, the dates and circumstances of deaths of particular persons, whenever possible trying to identify their names and surnames. He also provides detailed information about the selections in the workshops and the number of workers taken to the *Umschlagplatz*. He writes about street trade and smuggling, labour in German establishments and supply issues in the ghetto, especially the ubiquitous hunger.

He often reports on street round-ups and the conduct of the Jewish Order Service, including incidents of bribery. However, he is most outraged by the attitude of Jewish policemen during the *Aktion*, to which he devotes a separate, longer passage. He finds no justification for their actions, accusing them of assisting in the murder of European Jews, and imploring for revenge. This is one of the more personal fragments of Górny's diary and one of the longest reflections in the document. The author was undoubtedly shocked by the zeal with which the Jewish police were performing their duties, although information about prevailing moods in the ghetto is given relatively little space in his texts. The detailed description also applies to the *Grossaktion* of July 1942, preceded by a note of rumours circulating in the streets about possible deportations. In this passage personal opinions are also evident: 'Even the times of the Inquisition, pogroms and other persecutions of Jews cannot compare to the last few weeks and to the torments of the annihilation of the largest Jewish community in the 20th century by a nation that was supposed to be Europe's *Kulturträger*'.[1]

His diary also contains information about other communities, including Kalisz, Lublin, Rzeszów, Sandomierz, Tłuszcz and places of destruction. Unlike Gutkowski, he pays little attention to international politics. There are just a few mentions about the situation in Africa and on other war fronts. It is the only document in the collection devoted to the second *Aktion*

1 (German) bearers of culture.

in the Warsaw ghetto, carried out between 18 and 22 January 1943; therefore, it is a source of tremendous value. The author also provides a detailed description of the period which preceded the *Aktion*. Inhabitants of the ghetto, including members of the underground, were taken by surprise when the German operation started. Although the ŻOB members were unprepared, they fired the first shots at the Germans.[2] Górny's account of the operation is dry and succinct, but the author makes sure to convey the horror that filled the period in question: '10 days have passed already since that unexpected Monday, 18 January 1943. Ten days full of nightmares, fear, terror and dread of the unknown tomorrow. Chased out of the ghetto so cramped, and yet known to us, we were broken (. . .). We wander among strangers, like savages, afraid to raise our heads.'

Nehemia (Natan) Tytelman (?–1943) – before World War II he founded the Shtern Sports Club associated with Left Po'ale Tsiyon; in the Warsaw ghetto, he documented ghetto folklore and recorded testimonies for Oyneg Shabes, writing in Yiddish. Tytelman actively participated in the distribution of daily information (bulletins) of the Jewish resistance.[3] He was one of the few who frequently signed his texts.

The preserved fragments of Tytelman's diary (Doc. 8) concern 14–16 May 1941 and reveal the shocking news that reached the Warsaw ghetto, including Rudolf Hess's flight to Great Britain. Tytelman describes in detail the joy and excitement of people commenting on this fact. The author's notes contain information on political conditions and on the situation in Germany, references to events in the Balkans and in Africa, as well as a profile of Mussolini. His emotions are evidenced by numerous exclamation marks. Tytelman presents the latest news from the Warsaw ghetto with irony and humour, but his account also features serious reflection. He realises that only a handful of people are interested in the 'breaking news'. The majority of ghetto dwellers, whom he may soon join, are concerned solely with terrible hunger, sharp cold and extreme fatigue: 'The masses no longer believe in anything! Even the sun

2 As a result of the second *Aktion*, Germans deported about 7,000 people to Treblinka. It was the first instance of armed resistance by ghetto prisoners. See also *A Guide to the Perished City*, pp. 763–766; Yitzhak Zuckerman, *Surplus of Memory*, p. 229.

3 See *Oyneg Shabes. People and Works*, Docs. 47–64.

is not shining for us this year, and even if it should shine tomorrow, I will be already in a dark grave.'

It is very likely that Doc. 10, as well, is written by Tytelman. We find the name (nickname) *Glater* on the first pages of both parts of the document which survived as a duplicate transcribed by Bluma Wasser. It is known that Tytelman used this pseudonym. The document includes entries of 1, 2, 3 and 8 May 1941, and the dates under both parts, 29 and 30 July 1941, respectively, probably refer to the time of their transcription.

Shmuel Shainkinder (dates unknown) – pre-war sports activist and journalist in Warsaw; in the ghetto he kept a diary, wrote essays, recorded and edited testimonies, in particular those taken from soldiers who participated in the Polish-German war of September 1939.[4]

In his diary (Doc. 14) he comments on current events, providing profiles of journalists who perished in the ghetto. They include Chaim Górka, Moyshe Szklar, Roman Fas, Menakhem Kipnis, Herman Czerwiński and Tsvi Pryłucki. Shainkinder devoted a lot of space to Pryłucki, and it is clear that he was particularly fond of him. The obituaries are colourful and cordial in tone. A longing for times past is piercingly evident. The profiles were written in an expressive, often ironic, funny, and certainly interesting manner.

Leyzor Czarnobroda (dates unknown) – journalist, 'Lejzor from Gęsia Street',[5] a reporter affiliated with *Mały Przegląd,*[6] a children's and youth magazine founded in 1926 by Janusz Korczak.

In his account (Doc. 19), Czarnobroda describes the preceding events and the first days of the Great Deportation from the Warsaw ghetto. It is a particularly emotional and moving account, full of exclamation points, question marks and ellipses, packed with pain and despair, which cannot be put into words: 'Our hearts have stopped beating, our brains stopped thinking. We are

4 See '*Nowy Głos*' 1938, vol. 66, p. 6; ARG I 1089 (Ring. I/252; I/496).

5 Another text by Czarnobroda; see *Accounts from the General Government,* Doc. 120.

6 In the 1930s the editor-in-chief was Igor Abramow-Newerly, a Polish writer and teacher. In 1943 he was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to concentration camps in Majdanek, Auschwitz, Oranienburg, and finally Bergen-Belsen. After the war, he was awarded the Righteous Among the Nations medal for hiding, among others, Lejzor Czarnobroda.

like a stone, frozen in suffering and torment', he wrote on August 28, 1942. Analysis of the prevailing moods take up much of the account. Information about work in workshops, the expected blockade and selection is provided as if incidentally, because Czarnobroda focuses rather on the ubiquitous fear, terrible degradation and mutual misunderstanding – especially between older, skilled workers and the members of intelligentsia who attempt to hide from deportation in the workshops. He also recalls old friends and uplifting conversations about literature, theatre and history, which allowed these friends to become 'human beings again'.

Menakhem Mendel Kohn (Kon) (1881–1943) – wealthy merchant before World War II, Zionist; in the ghetto, he served as a social worker and was in charge of finances for Oyneg Shabes: his cash book is an extremely valuable source of information on the inner workings of the Ringelblum group.[7] He cared for many of its members and their families when they became ill. He headed the committee that financed the exit from the ghetto of Jewish activists and their settling in hiding. He died during the ghetto uprising of April 1943.

In his diary from 1942 (Doc. 20) he movingly depicts the situation in the Warsaw ghetto during the Great Deportation. He presents feverish attempts to find shelter for a night, as well as indifference, alienation and even antipathy arising in former friends when faced with an ongoing struggle for life. Within the lines of his text one can sense the loneliness and deadly dread with which man faces such enormous danger. This is a very personal text, written under great emotional turmoil. The passages of the diary about the murdered, including friends, teem with regret and compassion, but also hatred for the perpetrators of the murders. Kohn often uses the adjective 'bloody' when referring to the situation of Jews in the ghetto, and refers to the deportation as 'slaughter' and a 'blood bath', and calls the Germans Nazi killers, beasts, slaughterers, scoundrels, wild animals, bloodthirsty sadists and the officers of the Jewish Order Service 'hounds'.

He is aware of what it actually means to be taken away in an 'unknown direction', and prefers to be shot while escaping than to wait for death

7 It is virtually the only surviving document of an organisational nature which encompasses such a long period of Oyneg Shabes operations, from autumn 1940 to August 1942; see *Oyneg Shabes. People and Works*, Doc. 6.

in a camp. He manages to survive the Great Deportation, but holds no illusions about the future. Uncertainty and fear do not dissipate with the end of the deportation. 'Each survivor lives in mortal fear. No one knows what will become of us in an hour's time.' At the same time, he never abandons hope that a miracle will happen and that not only he, but also the rest of the Jews who survived the deportation, will remain alive. He also strongly feels he is on a mission to tell the world what happened in Warsaw and in other Jewish communities, so the world can avenge the murdered Jews.

David Graber (1923–1942) and Nahum Grzywacz (1924–1942) – students of the Borochov school at Nowolipki Street 68 before the war and workers in a children's kitchen in the same building in the ghetto.

They felt a similar obligation to record the events of 1942: 'We have no personal desire to live, but rather to alert the world' (Grzywacz, Doc. 17); 'We have entrusted and secured our rich heritage (. . .) May the treasure fall into good hands, survive into better times. May it alert the world about what happened in the 20th century' (Graber, Doc. 16). In their accounts, they describe the situation in the Warsaw ghetto before and during the *Grossaktion*. Both helped Israel Lichtensztejn conceal the Ringelblum Archives. This happened on the night of 2–3 August 1942 in the basement of the building, at their school's location. Lichtensztejn and his students packed the materials and buried them in 10 metal boxes.[8]

A description of these events can be found in the notes of Graber and Grzywacz, completed on 3 August 1942, and put into boxes with ARG materials, which they call 'the treasure'. They depict the behaviour of the Jewish Order Service, brutal murders and the powerlessness of the *Judenrat*. They also wrote their wills. In their accounts, the postulate of memory is very strongly expressed, despite (or maybe because of) the fact that they are accompanied by fear of whether they will survive. They are also proud of their work, feel responsibility, and are aware of the risks associated with it, but also of the fact that they are 'creating history'. That is probably why, even though they do not seek expressions of gratitude, they do not want to be forgotten. 'I do not know what will become of me, whether I shall be able to recount what happened

8 The boxes were made of zinc sheet (495×300×147 mm), with separate lids (500×305×40 mm).

to me. Remember! My name is Nahum Grzywacz.' His words remain to this day one of the best-known testimonies from the Warsaw ghetto.

Margolit (Emilia) Landau (1925–1943) – daughter of Aleksander Landau;[9] an activist of Hashomer Hatzair, and soon also of the Jewish Fighting Organisation. In October 1942, along with Eliahu Różański and Mordekhai Growas, Landau carried out the death sentence on Jakub Lejkin,[10] and in January 1943 she was a member of the group commanded by Mordekhai Anielewicz, which carried out the first act of armed resistance against the Germans. She was killed during street combat.

She kept her notes in Polish. Unfortunately, only three entries have survived – each from February 1942. We do not even know if more were written. It seems that their value lies not so much in factual substance, as they are almost entirely lacking in that respect, but rather in their personal, emotional message.

The diary is complemented by a study entitled 'Working Youth', which seems to be a draft intended to present the history of Jewish youth during the war. It provides an interesting insight into the author's internal experiences and serves as a basis for creating a psychological profile of Landau, an important figure of the Jewish resistance in the ghetto.

Anna Grasberg-Górna (1906–1942?) – sociologist, she worked at the Institute for Social Economy in Warsaw. According to Wasser she had a double surname, Grasberg-Górna, but her husband's name was Norbert Grasberg (he was deported from Toulouse to Drancy and then murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau), and her maiden name was Minkowska. Her daughter, Irena Milewska (b. 1938 as Erika Grasberg), survived the war and lived in France. She had published a memoir entitled *[En]quête de famille*, Paris 2020.

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9 Aleksander (Leyb) Landau (?–1944), engineer, owner of a large carpentry workshop in Warsaw from the interwar period. During the war the establishment was confiscated by Germans but he retained the position of director. Consequently, for considerable time a rather large group of people, including social activists associated with Oyneg Shabes and the ŻSS, found protection there from deportation to Treblinka. Landau provided financial and organisational help to the Archive. He escaped from the ghetto before its destruction, but was eventually arrested, sent to Auschwitz and murdered there.

10 Israel Gutman, *Resistance*, Boston–New York 1994, p. 170.

Of particular interest are not so much Anna's daily notes (some of which, written using stenography, could not be deciphered), but the two letters attached to her account. Everything points to the conclusion that they are excerpts from correspondence between Grasberg and a woman hiding Grasberg-Górna's daughter Rika (Irena) outside the ghetto. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the circumstances under which the letters were written or whether they ever reached the addressee. However, they seem to be an important document for researchers studying issues about aiding and hiding Jews during World War II.

Zalman (Zygmunt) Frydrych (1911–1943) – Bund member; Frydrych participated in the Polish-German war of September 1939. He submitted a testimony to the Ringelblum Archive about the Supply Section; see ARG I 412 (Ring. I/464). Frydrych was a member of the ŻOB and helped the first group of fighters to escape through the sewers on 29 April 1943; he was murdered a few days later by the German military police in the vicinity of Warsaw.

A short note written by Frydrych (Doc. 5) corresponds very well with other testimonies of corruption and bribery in the ghetto institutions.

Mordecai Schwartzbard (1896–1942) – before World War II a leader of the Left Po'ale Tsiyon in Łódź; one of the most hard-working members of Oyneg Shabes, he left the largest number of documents, including his own texts and duplicates of various materials. He copied accounts and official documents, and for some that were written in Polish or German he transcribed in Hebrew characters. He also made many copies of Emanuel Ringelblum's notes. His manuscripts appear in nearly 170 documents of the collection. He wrote mainly in Yiddish, sporadically in Polish, usually with an indelible pencil, making a single copy through tracing paper. His manuscripts were marked with various letters and identifying marks that researchers were unable to fully decipher. Although Schwartzbard kept a diary, he specialised in different type of texts – studies, reports, notes.

His texts constitute a separate category in this volume. Entitled 'Pressing events', they cover the period from December 1939 to June 1941. The author mainly describes the situation of Jews in the Warsaw ghetto, although sometimes he also mentions their situation in Kalisz, Łódź and Wieluń. Schwartzbard's notes vary in form. The majority are composed of short notes, usually

focused on specific events in the life of the Warsaw ghetto, the persecutions of the Jewish population: round-ups, beatings, forced labour, etc. Several times he adapts the form of a letter to a friend, but even then the note does not differ in theme and style from regular 'News'.

Among Schwartzbard's notes, it is worth paying attention to those concerning the speeches of Chaim Mordekhai Rumkowski during his visit to the Warsaw ghetto (13–20 May 1941), which the author witnessed. Schwartzbard not only recapitulates the content of the speech by the head of the Jews in the Łódź ghetto, but also provides a critical opinion about Rumkowski. Adam Czerniaków, the chairman of the Warsaw *Judenrat*, shared this opinion, as he saw in Rumkowski a dangerous megalomaniac, blinded by his ideas. It seems that such opinions were not uncommon in the Warsaw ghetto and contributed to shaping the negative image of the leader of the Council of Elders of Łódź Jews.

Hersh (Hirsh, Herman, Henryk) Wasser (1912–1981) – economist, worked as a bookkeeper; member of Left Po'ale Tsiyon, director of the party's library in Łódź; from December 1939 in Warsaw; he became one of Emanuel Ringelblum's closest colleagues, a secretary of Oyneg Shabes; he was also the author of many documents written for the Archive. One of the only three surviving members of the group, he was the only one who knew where the Archive was buried. He joined the Central Jewish Historical Commission in order to organise the searches. After the first part was retrieved in September 1946 he helped to identify the authorship of documents. In 1950 he left Poland together with his wife Bluma and settled in Israel.

Editors' notes

The twenty-one documents in this part of the volume are from the JHI collection; two of these (Docs. 13 and 15) are supplemented with fragments from the Hersh Wasser Collection from YIVO. They are published here in chronological order, based on the dates of their respective first entries.

Of the original texts, sixteen are in Yiddish and four in Polish; one is half-Polish, half-Yiddish. They are translated into English directly from the original. The translations are faithful to the texts as they are written, with clarifications added in footnotes or in the glossaries. Documents are presented in their entirety. All originally underlined, spaced or otherwise highlighted fragments of documents have been retained. Paragraph breaks have sometimes been added to make the texts easier to read. Missing fragments of texts, due to physical or biological destruction, are marked [. . .]. For orientation, the original pagination is provided in square brackets.

Documents contain numerous words or phrases in languages other than that used in the basic text. In most cases, they are transcribed in italics and footnoted; those that repeat in several documents are explained in glossaries. Plural foreign nouns usually take English plural endings, as, for example, in (Hebrew) *minyans,* following their usage in the original documents; we only use a plural specific for a given foreign language if it is in plural in the original, as, for example, (Polish) *placówki* or *taksówki*, and we also use the German plural for *Judenräte* and *Aktionen,* as found in English-language literature on the subject. When the foreign words or phrases are written in a different alphabet than the basic text, we add information in footnotes. The obvious spelling mistakes in any language are corrected without footnotes. Words

or phrases crossed out by authors are marked [x] and footnoted; the removed text is put in footnotes, if legible.

Each document opens with a descriptive heading, providing the following information: date or approximate time of creation of the document, place of its origin, its author (first name and/or surname, or the name of the office, institution, social organisation) – if known (if not known, we use the formula, respectively, date unknown, place unknown, author unknown); the document's subject or title (the latter in the original language and in translation); and a brief abstract. In one case where it is known who among the Oyneg Shabes associates recorded a testimony, his or her name is mentioned, and basic biographical data are put in footnotes at their first appearance.

Below the text of each document is a file number according to both new catalogue (by Robert Moses Shapiro and Tadeusz Epsztein, *The Warsaw Ghetto Oyneg Shabes-Ringelblum Archive,* published in 2009) and the old 1955 catalogue, as well as the technical description of the document. The description includes information on whether a document is an original or a duplicate; the number of duplicates and number of their copies; whether the document is handwritten (including the tool and/or technique), typewritten, or printed. There is information on the language(s) of the document, dimensions, number of sheets, and number of pages of the whole archival unit. Post-war notes attached by Hersh Wasser or other persons are also quoted. Technical descriptions may also refer to documents bearing old file numbers, which comprise one new archival unit. These descriptions are based on those in the catalogue of the collection, sometimes with additions and corrections to dates, names, authorship, etc. resulting from re-examination of documents during the editorial process.

Editors of the English edition have updated footnotes and references, and have introduced a unified system of spelling and extended the bibliography. The material is now presented according to standards established in recent years from works on the Polish edition, completed in 2023. This volume thus provides the English-language reader with an extended editorial apparatus, taking into consideration current research in the field.

References to documents in this volume do not contain additional information, but are cited just as Doc. 1, 2, 3 etc., sometimes with the specific page number of the original in square brackets. References to documents from

the Ringelblum Archive which have been translated and published in this series (including in forthcoming volumes) cite the volume's title and the document number. References to documents from the Archive which have not yet been included in this series cite the file number, according to the catalogue mentioned above.

Names of persons mentioned in the documents have been checked in databases of the ŻSS and AJDC records collections and in the Internet database of the Warsaw ghetto https://new.getto.pl/, and also on websites pertaining to particular towns. Whenever information was found, a short biography is given in the footnote. When determining the dates of Jewish holidays, and the conversion of the Jewish calendar dates to the Gregorian calendar, the website www.hebcal.com was consulted.

Spelling of geographical names is usually standard modern Polish. Exceptions are made for localities or regions that have accepted English names, such as Warsaw[11] or Silesia. Towns smaller than county seats are footnoted, with their county name given. Spelling of names of individuals depends upon the language of a document. Transliteration from Yiddish is adopted from the YIVO system. Hebrew words and phrases are transcribed phonetically in accordance with modern Israeli pronunciation.

There are many obsolete measurements used by the authors; these are recalculated into modern ones and explained in the footnotes. For weights, the only units used are kilograms and grams (where decagrams are used in the originals they are recalculated into grams). In the documents, there is no consistency in writing numerals. They are sometimes cited in words and sometimes as figures. These have not been changed even when they appear differently in the same text. It was decided to unify the writing of dates, so wherever Roman or Arabic figures are used in the original they have been replaced with names of months. The word "Street" is added wherever the name of a street appeared, so as not to confuse it with other place names.

11 However, we use the name Warszawa as a place of publication in the bibliographic information.

1

After 13 September 1939, Warsaw ghetto. Author unknown, "פֿון אַ טאָג־בוך" [From a diary]. Record of events during one day, on the eve of Jewish New Year 5700: problems with buying bread; bombardment of Warsaw

From a diary

13 September. Today is *erev* Rosh Hashana. I have been standing in a queue for bread since 3 in the morning. It is now 10 o'clock, and the queue is still very long. I left my father to keep my place for a while and went home to get some rest, and I am using the time to write these few words. It looks like a beautiful day. There have been no air raids since yesterday evening. The holiday promises to be joyous. It is a little easier to obtain bread, and that is what is most important.

13 September, 3 p.m. I barely got some bread, but I managed. There is joy at home. We are preparing for the holiday and the mood in the house is cheerful. There have been no visitors from the air as yet today, and we don't miss them. We wonder whether something has happened to the *yekkes*[1]. Perhaps they suffered a defeat? Maybe the war is already over? But we are still afraid. I have started to read (there is nothing else to do) *Anna Karenina* by Tolstoy.[2]

1 Germans.

2 Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910), Russian writer and world literature classic; also playwright, literary critic, educator, influential thinker.

4.30 p.m. We can already feel the holiday's presence. I dream that tonight it will be possible to undress and have a decent night's sleep. Until now there have been no air raids, and I think that there won't be any, because night is falling, and they don't come at night. We will be left in peace until tomorrow morning. Today General Czuma,[3] in charge of the defence of Warsaw, issued an order about the state of war. We are allowed to be on the street from 5 in the morning to 7 in the evening. One of my father's customers just came to buy a pair of slippers, a student, a very intelligent young woman. She said goodbye and left, and thus the working day has come to an end.

4.45 p.m. Our joy has been shattered. The rumble of the birds of prey can be heard. We hear the wailing of sirens. Repeated salvos greet them. Suddenly there is a bang, followed by another one. I can hear it in the distance. The explosions come closer. The whistling and the blasts instil in us a fear of death. Everybody in our house is prepared to die. Each loud noise is followed by a terrifying whistle and an even more frightening thud. We all curl up, attempting to make ourselves smaller, almost invisible. People marvel at my patience to write. My hand shakes constantly. This has already been going on for 15 minutes. From the window I can see people running, carrying bundles of bedding and screaming terribly. They are not fully dressed. One is missing a jacket, another a hat, and they all have the appearance of people fleeing from mortal danger. I cannot write any more. My nerves won't stand it.

5.30 p.m. Only now am I taking up my pen again. 15 minutes have passed since the bombing stopped. The glare of the fires in the distance is reflected on our faces. The smoke makes us choke. Heartrending cries are heard on every side.

ARG I 475 (Ring I/1011; I/1330)
Description: duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 148×208 mm, 2 sheets, 2 pages. Annotation on the margin of the first copy by Hersh Wasser (ink): '1939.'
Edition based on the first copy.
Published: *Selected Documents*, pp. 69–72.

3 Walerian Czuma (1890–1962), brigadier general in the Polish Army; from 3 to 28 September 1939, commander of the defence of Warsaw. After its capitulation, he was in German captivity; released in 1945, he spent the rest of his life in Great Britain.

2

After 27 December 1941 to after 14 June 1941, Warsaw ghetto. Mordecai Schwartzbard, "מענינ־דיומא" [Pressing events]. Notes (1) – (18), pertaining mostly to the ghettos in Warsaw and Łódź

(1)

Pressing Events

[1] On 27 December 1939, at 3 in the afternoon, I was seized off the street together with a group of Jews. They gathered us all together and took us to the [Łódź] Kaliska [railway] station, where we met another group, and together we all walked to Karolew,[4] a station on the line before Łódź. When we arrived in Karolew, we were herded into railway carriages of the train prepared for resettled people from Galicia. The auxiliary SS amused themselves with us while we waited for these Germans on their way home; as Łódź Germans they were thus somewhat familiar to us. Since we didn't know what to expect, we imagined all sorts of things. This entertainment went as far as threats: we are to be taken to Kraków and from there to a c[oncentration] camp. We will all be treated appropriately there. With this mind, we are questioned – who we are, what we do – and each person's details are noted down. One of us who said he was a musician (a pianist) was immediately given a broom and told to sweep out the railway carriage in the snow while singing.

It was not until midnight that we saw why we had been brought there. The first group of Germans travelling from Galicia to Germany arrived. They came with their families, their sick and their elderly, and their children, with (hand) baggage, and we had to approach them, take the baggage and load it into the prepared carriages. Some of them did not want to trust us with their possessions. Groups came from Konstantynów[5] where they had spent Christmas in specially prepared barracks. We chatted to the Germans who spoke no German. We could speak Polish, Russian and Ruthenian to them; they knew very little German. When the second group came, their captain the group leader did not permit us to carry the hand baggage, claiming that those

4 Karolew – formerly a settlement outside Łódź, today a housing estate in the western part of the city.

5 Konstantynów (Zgierz County).

lazybones could carry their own baggage, and he ordered us to go and sit in heated carriages. The real work only began at 1 in the morning. Trucks began to arrive with various sorts of baggage. We were to unload it in a few minutes and reload it onto the carriages. In German fashion, this was accompanied with kicks and beatings with clubs. We worked like that until half past seven in the morning. The night work was particularly notable because of the presence of one German amongst those travelling home who sadistically kicked and beat every Jew and allowed no one to rest. Some of the workers had frozen hands and feet. Some fainted. The night work's final scene was played out at half past seven in the morning, when the leaders of the operation arrived, looked at the clock, saw that it was already late and that the train had not yet left, and ordered the train to leave within 2 minutes. When they were informed that 7 more trucks with baggage were still due to arrive, he [?] began to shriek, shooting into the air to signal that the train should depart. At that moment, 3 trucks with baggage arrived. The train had not yet left. With pistol shots, kicks and beatings, we threw the baggage from the trucks into the carriage in a very few minutes. One of our co-workers, a legal intern, was left bleeding from the blows he had received.

An interesting conversation took place with a *Volksdeutscher* from the SS auxiliaries. After the night work, at 9 in the morning when he had given us our work certifications, we spoke with him about the whole night's work in such a frost, in an open field without any warm water. He told us that he too had not received any. 'You Jews wanted the war.' One of our people replied, 'If we Jews had had sufficient power, the situation would be reversed.' His answer was a smile, like someone who doesn't believe what he says. After we finished work, a number of us went to bed.

(2)

[2][6] Clean-shaven

Litzmannstadt, 24 October [19]40

My dear ones,

First of all, when you have the chance to sell something, do it before the circle closes. It will have no value later. You should buy wood, coal,

6 This document is also included in *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Third Reich*, Doc. 42.

fat to for seasoning and foodstuffs. Here we have a police force, a post office and housing administrators. We also have electricity – and gas. This doesn't mean that the institutions are located in the ghetto; there are merely offices which carry out business. We also have schools, hospitals and the like here. We have money marked as Jewish.[7] All the institutions are run by our city's Jewish Elder. We also have a Finance Office which collects taxes from shops and rent from everyone. The only people who pay are the shop owners. The *kehillah* has the right to transfer those who have not paid their rent into less agreeable living quarters. Up to now this has not happened. The *kehillah* has the right to sell luxury items of clothing belonging to the residents, such as fur coats and other costly items like jewellery, etc., but this does not help. The masses do not pay, only the private shop owners. The *kehillah* also has a Provisioning Department which provides everyone with food: cornmeal, honey, salt, sugar (little), soda, grits, oil (black), onions, oat-flakes and a coffee mixture. Children up to age 3 have a special card and every day receive ¼[8] [. . .] and once a week 30 grams of butter. The sick receive from their doctors a special voucher for milk, butter (60 grams), wheat-flour fruit cake, one egg, one lemon, etc.

We do not have ration cards yet, but they are expected any time. Food distribution takes place as follows: the *kehillah* informs us what products will be distributed, and then people have to pay the required cost within a certain period. The house committee informs the residents. Those who pay are registered in a special book in the *kehillah* and later receive their products from the shop which distributes them. Those who don't pay are out of luck. We have no division into tenants or sub-tenants: we are all tenants and we pay the *kehillah*, which itself is not mandated to reduce the rent nor has taken advantage of it. From 20 September every unemployed person is given a subsidy: children up to 14 – 7 Marks, people from 14 to 60 – 9 Marks, and those over 60 – 10 Marks a month. Those on support are relieved of rent payments. The *kehillah* employs up to 5000 Jews, and they do very well.

Yours.

7 See *ibidem*, Doc. 31.

8 Probably: a quarter litre of milk, see *ibidem*, Doc. 30 B2.

(3)

[3] Clean-shaven

26 December [19]40

My dear!

They say that because of the *kehillah*'s directive, all the house registration books must be turned in to them. The '13' handed over the books from its own houses as well. But the *kehillah* did not want to return the books, and the 'Leszno 13' institution wavers. The Office to Combat Usury is now in a weak position, and people say that everything could fall apart. Yesterday and today there have been further terrible beatings. They recur every day at around 2 in the afternoon. At that point a car full of Germans drives down Leszno and Karmelicka Streets to Pawiak, beating people savagely along the way. They jump out of the car or stand on the running-board as it moves and beat people ferociously, etc. Yesterday a truck and a taxi filled with Germans stood in front of Elektoralna Street 21. They conducted searches and checked the passers-by. It seems that smugglers were reputed to live there. An argument broke out among them, and one of them simply denounced the rest.

The *kehillah* has ordered that baked goods made with white flour be removed from the shop windows: challahs, cakes, biscuits and pastries. People found a solution: they put up big signs saying that baked goods were available inside the shops. Others were even more adroit: they laid out the goods on a table which they pushed in front of the window.

There are regular meetings in the *kehillah* about work for the *ashkenazim*[9] in the ghetto. However, nothing concrete has come of it up to now, and people are already saying that nothing can be achieved without a bribe. There is talk of changes in the *kehillah* in connection with the corruption found in various departments. Names are cited of councilmen who will be dismissed. There is even supposed to be pressure from the authorities on the chairman and the like.

The latest news from Italy has raised Jews' spirits. Typically each time that such news is received, various sorts of jokes and witticisms appear. That is the case now as well. 1) Mussolini has changed his name to *mu nasolili*.[10]

9 (Hebrew) Here meaning: Germans.

10 (Polish) idiomatic: he was given a hard time.

2) 3 dignitaries are driving along in a car and a donkey blocks the road. One of them gets out to drag the donkey out of the way, but he cannot. A second man gets out and is equally unsuccessful. Then a third man gets out, and the donkey itself moves away quickly. 'What did you do?' he was asked. He answered that he had murmured into the donkey's ear that it should enter into a Tripartite Pact.[11] There are many other such jokes.

[5] Clean-shaven

29 December [1940]

My dear!

They say that some time ago all the Jewish workers at Okęcie[12] were assembled and ordered to come the next day in their best clothes. People were very frightened, but they came the next day in their holiday best. They were brought into a room where tables were laid with the finest foods. Everyone sat down at the tables in the following manner: a Jew and a pilot, a Jew and a pilot, and so on. When everything was set up, a film crew with a movie camera came in and filmed it.

There is a lot of smuggling from the other side. A military vehicle drove up on Bonifraterska Street and in one minute unloaded several sacks. At the same time, a car with a Red Cross drove up on Muranowska Street. Porters were waiting for it. They emptied it immediately, after which it drove off quickly. Rumours are circulating that a second camp will be built in Falenty[13] and that more people will be seized.

People also say that in February there will be many round-ups for forced labour camps. This rumour is said to have come from the *gmina* people.

Terrible news has come from Łódź: an epidemic is raging. People swell up and in one day 350 deaths were registered. Food products are very expensive. In addition, it is very cold because there is no heating, and most people live in wooden buildings.

In advance[?] people have been rounded up for Falenty.

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11 The tripartite agreement signed in Berlin on 27 September 1940 by representatives of the Third Reich, Italy and Japan. The so-called Berlin Pact strengthened cooperation between the signatories.

12 The Okęcie military airport was the main Warsaw military facility that employed Jewish workers. From March to August 1944, up to 2,000 people worked there every day.

13 Falenty (Warsaw County). A labour camp for Jews was situated there; its prisoners worked in road construction.

Today a terrible thing happened. The infamous car filled with *mesim*[14] which drives past every day to change the guard, drove up Karmelicka Street. There they got out and began to beat everyone horribly with clubs, using the metal part on peoples' heads. 3 men, of whom 2 were coachmen, were badly wounded and lay there with severe head wounds.

About a *placówka* run by the SS they say that they are talking among themselves: 'We won't stay here after all. We'll leave. We have won the war, but it won't end according to the Führer's plan.'

On Gęsia Street, in the square next to the post office, a Jewish policeman was on duty. Today a private car drove by and stopped there. A German got out. The policeman remained standing there and saluted as usual. The German called him over and asked him, 'Aren't you my comrade?' The Jew answered that he was obliged to salute, whereupon he was immediately slapped. Once again he was asked why he saluted. The Jew answered that those were his orders and that he was obliged to comply, whereupon the German beat him again until he fell down. The German continued to beat him heavily and asked him sharply from whom he had received his orders. The Jew answered, 'From the authorities.' At this point the German ordered him to leave quickly and not to show his face again.

[6] Clean-shaven

30 December [1940]

My dear!

Today more robberies were carried out at Orla Street 4 and 6, at Karmelicka 15 and 18 [?] and at Żelazna Street 85. For the most part they were searching for fur coats and, needless to say, they took them immediately.

There is a lot of bread smuggling on Plac Parysowski. Today a very poor Jewish woman smuggled through 2 loaves. The Polish policeman stopped her and seized the bread. When the German noticed this, he took both loaves of bread, returned them to the woman and allowed her to go on her way.

The Jewish policeman on Chłodna Street ordered Jewish passers-by not to doff their hats and not to acknowledge him.

A guard commander from their police said that the G[erman] gendarmerie were to leave after the New Year and that the guard would be run by the Polish and Jewish police. He immediately added that he did not know

14 The author uses the Yiddish word *mesim*, corpses, most probably to mean the Germans.

if it would be better or worse for the Jews, but in any case it is better that the Germans will be away from the guard.

Today on Tłomackie Street the guard allowed a rather large group to leave the ghetto. The German gendarme told them right then and there that they were only allowed 15 minutes and that all of them had to return.

People say that during the recent event with the car on Karmelicka Street, Kupczykier,[15] a member of the *Judenrat*, immediately sent a telegram to Kraków to inform them about it. Today was actually quiet.

Almost all the house watchmen are elected by the house committees. In very many cases the *gmina* is now sending its own watchmen, disregarding those already elected. In every known case, this has not been successful. Those elected did not give up their posts and those who had been sent, left. It is typical of the disorder reigning in the *gmina* that in one house on Nowolipki Street, 3 people presented themselves on one day, each with a notice from the *gmina* authorising them to take over the post of house-watchman.

There are strong rumours once again that Fonia[16] is coming. Letters from there mention this as well, but people already don't believe it. There was also a canard saying that the *Völkischer Beobachter*[17] had published an article claiming that if the Germans were to leave the province, it would be for political rather than strategic reasons. Since the *Völkischer Beobachter* is not available in the ghetto, the information cannot be verified, but it appears to be false, because the newspaper is available in various places and Jews do read it.

People are saying that the Jewish guards are supposed to receive a salary from the 1st [January?]. A thousand people are to be paid and 750 will work as volunteers.

15 Leopold Kupczykier (1891–1943), manufacturer, social activist, member of the *Judenrat*. He was the head of the Social Welfare Department and Order Service Department. He died in Majdanek.

16 I.e. Russians; popular nickname.

17 German newspaper published in 1920–1945, the official newspaper of NSDAP.

(4)

[10] Pressing Events

On the evening of 8 January 1941 after 9 p.m., two German policemen entered the flat of the Hering family at Grzybowska Street 5 and seized two packages of manufactured goods. Mrs Hering and her daughter were terrified and made a scene, calling out: 'Bandits !' The Germans left. Some time later, they came back and sacked the Hering family's flat. They took linen and other valuable items, and arrested Mrs Hering and her daughter.

On Friday 10 January 1941 around midday, a group of Jews were working on clearing away snow on Karmelicka Street between Nowolipie and Leszno Streets. A Jewish boy walked down the street carrying challahs, whereupon the street cleaners fell upon him, took his challahs and ate them on the spot.

(5)

[9]

13 January [19]41 Pressing Events

Someone related: 'I was walking down Żelazna Street. A G[erman] approached me, said that I looked suspicious to him, and demanded that I show him my papers. I went with him to the [ghetto] border, and we went in a gateway. There he demanded that I take off my fur coat and hand it over. When I refused, he called over the German from the guard post, and they both compelled me to surrender my fur coat. They searched me and took everything, leaving me 40 groszes. I went to the Polish police to report the incident. They told me that there was nothing they could do and sent me to the German police station, where I was told that everything would soon be put right.'

Today there were a series of robberies in a row of houses on Sienna Street.

There is talk of mass arrests in the city outside the ghetto. Rumours circulate, saying that a German was shot there. A tram employee said that many tram employees and conductors have been arrested. Many are being shipped to Oświęcim.

A new car showed itself this evening on Karmelicka Street. It came from the police. The street pavements are very narrow and therefore pedestrians have to walk in the middle of the road. The car drives straight through

the people. Its trajectory is serpentine: the car drives repeatedly back and forth from one side to the other, right on top of the people. The edges of the pavement are piled high with snow, and there is no room to escape. People jump onto the snow in order to avoid falling under the wheels of the car.

The post office on Zamenhofa Street was not accepting letters today. People say that it is the last day that the Poles will be working at the post office. The postmen and the post office in general are being turned over to the Jews, and the Poles will not be permitted to enter the ghetto. [. . .] the Germans who savagely beat those passing through [. . .] for six thousand zlotys [. . .] was waiting a bicycle-car with a Jewish driver. [. . .] from the porters who brought the leather [. . .] about a slaughter. Over the Jews in the ghetto there was [. . .] a demonstration took place [. . .] should open the cellars of the wealthy and distribute [. . .] called the Gestapo who [. . .] many dead. As it turns out [. . .] is big.

There are no heating materials in Łódź at all. Flats are not heated. People chop up everything they can that is made of wood. People are allowed 300 grams of bread a day, but you can't buy it because it is expensive. An order has been issued for Jews to surrender their fur coats, and it is also being implemented. There is a great shortage of heating in the city outside the ghetto as well. Many Jews are signing up for work. They are being sent into the Reich for various types of work.

(6)

[7]

5 February [19]4[18]

Pressing Events

Following Hitler's speech,[19] the attitude towards the Jews became harsher, and Jewish workers were heavily beaten at all of the German *placówkas*. An interesting event occurred at one SS *placówka* where the attitude towards Jews was not terrible. A while ago, following Frank's visit to Warsaw,

18 In the original, the date is below the entry; as here, we moved it to the beginning of the following entries.

19 Reference to Hitler's speech in the Berlin Sportpalast on 30 January 1941. He said, among other words: 'I would not like to forget to repeat the advice that I gave before the German Reichstag on September 1, 1939: namely, the advice that should the outside world allow itself to be plunged into a general war by Jewry, then all of Jewry will be finished in Europe! They may still laugh about this today, just as they earlier laughed

Jewish workers were discharged and replaced by Polish workers. The SS men made an effort to ensure that Jews be given permission to leave the ghetto in order to keep on working, but their efforts were unsuccessful. So they take a few Jews without permission with them in the car and drive them to the *placówka*. In the evening, they drive the Jews back into the town. All of a sudden this changed. A large group of SS men with clubs ran out and began to beat all the Jewish workers. Typically, one of the SS men had come out earlier and told the Jews to hide because they would be beaten. Later, the same man himself came out with a group and beat them. All of this was seen to have been carried out under orders.

A terrible occurrence took place at the hands of a policeman from the Jewish *Ordnungsdienst*. Classes are still being held in the Konarski school[20] on Leszno Street. It had always been a strongly antisemitic school. The students have passes and come into the ghetto for their lessons. They mercilessly beat Jewish passers-by on their way back home. This took place once again: they fell upon them savagely. The Jews called the Jewish police, who arrived immediately in large numbers from two police stations. They fell upon the attackers who were quite bruised. Some of them got across the border on Leszno Street while a second group remained, unable to cross. One of the attackers was hurt more than the others, and they called the gendarmerie, who then arrested a Jewish policeman and took him to Pawiak. There he was tortured and died. Rumour has it that his body was bitten by dogs. According to the rules of the Jewish police, the family did not receive any reparation from the *kehillah*. The dead man left a family for whom the police collected money so that they would at least have something.

Smuggling in the ghetto is blooming. It is perhaps the only way to obtain provisions. The three sets of watchmen who stand at the border all benefit. One day at one border point, two Polish policemen made off with 460 zlotys in earnings, collected from the Jewish misery from which people also make a living.

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about my prophesies. [. . .] And I hope that those who are at enmity with us today will one day recognise their internal enemies and form one front with us: a front against international Jewish exploitation and corruption of people!' Quoted from: Max Domarus, *Hitler. Speeches and Proclamations*, vol. 4: *The Years 1941 to 1945*, transl. Mary F. Gilbert (Wauconda, Ill., 2004), p. 2367.

20 The Michał Konarski 1st Municipal Craft School at Leszno Street 72, at that time within the ghetto, not far from the gate from Żelazna Street.

(8)

[16]

26 February [19]4[21]

Pressing Events

The following event took place last week: several military men knocked on the door of the flat at Nowolipki Street 23. The flat had two entrances. The owners had a good idea what such a visit portended and ran out of the second door. The guests broke a glass panel in the door and let themselves in. When they came into the flat, they took the eiderdowns from the beds and seized from the bedroom a large quantity of groats belonging to the house committee. They then left and went to a second flat to seize more eiderdowns.

Another event took place on Leszno Street: a group of Germans went to a Jewish flat. They met a Jew on the stairs and took him with them. They knocked on the door, and when someone inside asked who it was, they forced the Jew to answer that the person inside should open the door. When the door opened, they kicked the Jew whom they had brought with them, pushed him down the stairs and went into the flat.

The SS car is driving again down Karmelicka Street. When you walk down the street between one and four in the afternoon,[22] the nervousness is immediately palpable. People run in order to cover that little stretch of road as quickly as possible without meeting the car. The police warn people not to walk in the road and force them to walk on the pavements. The narrowness of the pavement makes it very difficult to walk, and movement is often impeded. Today an SS man and a gendarme appeared on the street, both of them with whips, and began to beat anyone they met.

There is a very strong rumour going around that the ghetto will be closed on 1 March on the model of Łódź.[23] Speculation in foodstuffs has begun in connection with this rumour. Potatoes which cost between 90 and 95 zlotys per 100 kilos[24] now cost 130. The prices of other foodstuffs have

21 The date added by Hersh Wasser.

22 Ringelblum wrote: 'From one to 3 (. . .) They say they drive there every day to beat the prisoners.' See ARG I 448/2 (Ring. I/506), p. [2].

23 Reference to the strict separation of the Łódź ghetto from the rest of the town.

24 In the original, it is 'per 1 metre', a popular name for a hundredweight.

risen proportionately. People have already made their reserves. However, information has already been circulating that travel permits will continue to be issued until 1 April, and only then will the ghetto be closed. This means that from 1 March the Polish police will have left the ghetto entirely, and guards made up of G[erman] gendarmes are to replace them. How much of this is true only remains to be seen. Usually such rumours, which originate with the merchants, circulate at the end of each month.

More terrible news comes from Łódź. People are simply dying of starvation. They are falling dead one after another. Steps are being taken to enquire about the possibility of sending food parcels. It appears that the Jewish Elder Rumkowski[25] will under no circumstances let food parcels in. No food parcels are allowed in either from the General Government or from the Reich. This appears to be the result of a direct intervention [18] by Rumkowski, who will under no circumstances accept parcels. All post offices have received orders not to accept packages for Łódź.[26] If this seems minor, recently a more terrible tale has surfaced, based on the example of Łódź, in which the goal is said to be the elimination of the entire Jewish community in Łódź. What this might mean is beyond all comprehension. There is a desperate shortage of coal in Łódź. There is literally no fuel with which to heat and to cook. The Jews have simply frozen the entire winter. Everything has been broken up and used for heating. People are said to have torn out the planks from the floorboards. The town of Sosnowiec sent Rumkowski a message that they wanted to send coal to Łódź and that he should accept it. Rumkowski did not respond to the message. After some time, Rumkowski was approached by telephone regarding this matter of coal. In response to the question about why he had not replied to Sosnowiec, he said that he didn't need the coal. When asked for his reasons, he said that he was not obligated to answer anyone. With this the conversation came to an end, and the Jewish population is once again condemned to perish because of the arbitrariness of one person.

25 Chaim Mordechai Rumkowski.

26 The first of Rumkowski's regulations that introduced the ban on sending parcels to the Łódź ghetto were in spring 1940. The appeals were repeated in subsequent years, but they did not bring about the desired effect. Parcels arrived throughout the entire period of the existence of the ghetto in Łódź.

The expulsion of Jews from the district[27] has been exploited by everyone and has produced a wave of shady individuals. The Jews are being robbed by various people along the way. The packages sent by train are stolen. This is a very specific occurrence which is repeated whenever people are expelled. Let me mention only one event. A wagon arrived from Łowicz[28] loaded with people and possessions. The journey to Warsaw took 14 hours. When the wagon arrived at the border of the ghetto, a Polish policeman approached and immediately asked how much pay-off he would receive from the wagon. If there wasn't any, he would take it per head. People began to chat with him, whereupon the German guard approached and the Pole stepped a bit aside. The German guard asked whether everything had already been settled with the Polish policeman. While they were talking, a second wagon appeared, loaded with Jews. The G[erman] went over to that one, and the Polish policeman came back to the first one. When he asked what the situation was, he was told that everything had been settled with the G[erman] guard. At that the entire wagon was immediately let through.

(7)

[12]

13 March [19]41 Pressing Events

The following happened at the border on Bonifraterska Street: a boy of about 12 ran towards the border into the ghetto with a small sack of potatoes on his back. The gendarme who was posted at the crossing point seized him. The boy began to struggle with the gendarme, trying to free himself from his grasp and to save the potatoes. He even began to tear the gendarme's coattails. The gendarme pulled out his dagger, hit him over the head and wounded him. The boy nevertheless managed to flee, but as he ran, the sack overturned and the potatoes spilled out. A woman who was standing nearby ran up and picked up the potatoes. The gendarme picked up his rifle and shot the woman on the spot. Her body lay on the street for a long time.

27 Reference to the resettlement of Jews from small towns of the Warsaw District to the Warsaw ghetto in January–March 1941; see: *Accounts from the General Government*, Introduction.

28 See *ibidem*, Doc. 122.

Today forms were distributed in all of the houses which all the main tenants had to sign, confirming that a Jewish woman by the name of Zofia Sidorow was not present and had not lived in their flat. The reason for this search by the authorities is unknown.

Today it is rumoured that the *kehillah* is to be dismissed and that Leszno 13 will assume authority. This rumour circulates from time to time, giving the impression that someone is spreading it.

The Jews are talking about the murder of Igo Sym.[29] 'Thank God we are in the ghetto. Imagine what we would go through were it to occur before the ghetto? It would all end up on our shoulders.'

14 March. Prices are going up constantly. This morning potatoes were a bit cheaper and cost only 125 zlotys per 100 kilos. In the afternoon the price rose to 150 zlotys per 100 kilos. Rye bread has already gone up to 4 zlotys a kilo and this bread is not edible. The situation is very difficult. The Joint's kitchens are closed for the second day and nobody knows when they are going to open again. The poverty is unimaginable. We don't see a way out.

Few products are coming into the ghetto now from the other side. All exit permits are not being honoured and the border is being strictly guarded. People are afraid to leave the ghetto because of the great tumult on the other side connected to the murder of Igo Sym.

15 March. It is rumoured that a million kilos of flour were brought into the ghetto today and that from Monday bread will be distributed for ration cards. A large quantity of products are supposed to have been smuggled in with the thousand tons of flour. In general it has become a little easier with products, because the passes are usually recognised.

29 Igo (Julian Karol) Sym (1896–1941), film actor, *Volksdeutscher*, appointed by the Germans as the director of Warsaw's theatres. On 7 March 1941 he was shot by the Home Army for his collaboration with the occupier. In retaliation, the Germans imprisoned several hundred Poles, and executed a number of them.

(9)

[15]

18 March [19]41 Pressing Events

In Kalisz there was an old age home in which recently there were up to 180 elderly men and women. Last week all of the aged inhabitants were assembled and taken to the village of Rajsków,[30] three kilometres from Kalisz. There they were herded into rooms. The gas was turned on them, and as a result all of them perished.

The groups expelled from Kałuszyn[31] have to undergo the customary quarantine. Recently there was such a quarantined group. At night, one of the deportees, a woman, had a gallstone attack. This was reported to the guard. One of them, an SS man, immediately went up to the woman, took out his revolver and shot her on the spot.

Groups of deportees are arriving constantly from all of the towns in the Warsaw district, as well as from other towns. The group from Gdańsk aroused enormous interest. The Jews from Gdańsk and surrounding areas had been expelled.[32] They were given half an hour to prepare themselves for departure and were told that they were travelling to Palestine. And so, under this pretext, they were taken as far as [. . .] they were told that they were being taken to Warsaw.

All the Jews keep fleeing from Głowno.[33] A refugee who arrived from Głowno today said that there had been an announcement saying that any Jew who remained in the town until 12 noon the next day would be marched out on foot under guard. People were driven from one house to another. My informant had to move six times. A group of Jews were seized on the street, loaded into a vehicle and sent to Warsaw. They were so terribly cramped that one woman suffocated and died. The most appalling scenes took

30 Rajsków (Kalisz County), now within the city limits.

31 Kałuszyn (Mińsk Mazowiecki County). See: *Accounts from the General Government*, Doc. 132.

32 See: *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Third Reich*, Introduction and Doc. 101.

33 Głowno (Łowicz County). In May 1940, the Germans established a ghetto and rounded up more than 5,600 Jews, including 2,700 from Aleksandrów Łódzki, Brzeziny and Konstantynów Łódzki. In March 1941, all were expelled to the Warsaw ghetto. See: *Accounts from the General Government*, Docs. 123–125.

place. The chairman of the *Judenrat*[34] had to travel to Warsaw with twenty sick people.

(10)

[20]

17 April [19]41 Pressing Events

A refugee from Kałuszyn relates the following: 'We have survived terrible persecution. It is inconceivable what people are capable of. In Kałuszyn men and women were herded together and driven into a room. They were forced to strip naked and to scratch themselves until they bled. While so doing, they were photographed in order to prove that Jews are dirty. From Kałuszyn we were sent to Warsaw. We arrived under guard and were then quarantined. That night a woman was taken ill with a gall-stone attack. She was in great pain. A G[erman] in a black uniform went up to the woman who was groaning in pain. He took out his revolver and shot her on the spot.'[35]

The number of beggars is growing constantly. It is no longer possible to walk down the street. The amount of children begging is enormous; you frequently see four-year-old beggars. The number of corpses on the street is also increasing. Every day I come across a number of people lying dead from starvation. It is not clear whether they are pretending or if it is real. I noticed a child who used to beg on Zamenhofa Street. One morning I saw the child again. In the afternoon, he was lying on the ground. Usually a corpse is covered with paper.

Smuggling continues to be the only way to obtain food in the ghetto. Various methods are used. Recently, more people have been shot while smuggling. Children play a major role in smuggling, and more of them are being shot. Every day we hear that people have been shot and killed at the borders. Despite this, smuggling goes on heartily. The German, Polish and Jewish police are in partnership and have an agreement on the spoils. [22] The money collected by a Jewish policeman is shared with his entire unit. Smuggling is carried out openly on the trams. There is a Polish policeman on every one

34 Most probably Abram Rosenberg. See *ibidem*, Doc. 124.

35 The same account in the entry of 18 March.

and the conductors too have to ensure that none of the Aryan passengers jumps off the tram while it is travelling through the ghetto. However, this is done with great skill. When the tram turns into a street, people jump off. The Christians run quickly into a gateway and put on an armband with a Star of David on it. Later they step out with their smuggled package free as a bird. Another way: the Christians stand on the running board of the tram and Jews wait on the street. As the tram passes through the ghetto, the Christians quickly toss the smuggled packages down; the Jews catch them and run quickly through a gateway or into a shop. It is only later that the smuggled goods are carried away to their destination. A third method of smuggling involves going through the border points. Entire wagons pass through there. Everything is properly arranged: the wagons wait at a specific place, and on a signal they drive through the border.

(11)

[24]

5 May [19]41 Pressing Events

On 2 May a car with two Gestapo men appeared on Grzybowska Street. At the corner of Żelazna Street, they fell upon the Jewish policemen and began to beat them heavily. They headed to Waliców Street and on the way, on Krochmalna Street, they knocked over all the street stalls. On the corner of Żelazna and Krochmalna Streets they attacked a 60-year-old Jew, threw him to the ground and beat him in an extraordinary manner. I have never seen anyone beaten in this way. A Jew who had been shot was lying on the corner of Grzybowska and Waliców Streets. People said that 3 men had been shot in this same incident.

The situation of the Jews in the Reich is totally different from that of the Jew in the Gen[eral] Government. Only Łódź represents a separate chapter. There is a ghetto in Wieluń, but it is not sealed. Jews are not allowed on the streets on Sundays. The Jews work illegally. They earn 1.50 Marks a day. Foodstuffs are very cheap. 2 kilograms of bread cost 0.70 Marks. Potatoes cost 4 Marks a *korzec*[?],[36] 15 eggs cost 0.70 Marks. All the Poles have been expelled

36 Probably *korzec*, an obsolete measure applied usually to dry goods; the equivalent of approximately 4 bushels.

from Wieluń.[37] The town is inhabited by Baltic, Bessarabian and Wolhynian Germans. The town suffered greatly at the beginning of the war, and the Jews all fled. With time they returned and have remained in the town. They live principally from illegal work.

2 topics preoccupy the Jews in Warsaw: labour camps and hunger. The police continue to seize people for the labour camps. They come with orders and take people directly from their homes. The news from the camps is frightening. There is much talk of the high number of dead there. The greatest afflictions are said to stem from the Ukrainian *Lagerschutz*. When the new lageristn arrive, their shoes are immediately taken from them, since shoes are the most important item in drainage work. [26] People are greatly harried. Accordingly to information received, hundreds of people are suffering in the camps. Terrible news is arriving from the camps in Garwolin[38] and Skierniewice.[39] Typically, only the very poor end up in the camps. In general, it is the residents of the refugee points who are ordered to go, but one can buy oneself out. Bribery is blooming, *szafa gra*[40].

Hunger is the second dreadful apparition of the present moment. In one day, 6 dead bodies, people who died from starvation, were removed from a house on Muranowska Street. Everywhere you turn, people are collapsing from starvation. I witnessed a terrible event. On Nowolipki Street I saw a woman standing on the verge of collapse. Her face looked terrible.

37 The information was probably based on news about forced expulsions of Poles from Wartheland. However, not all Polish residents of this city were resettled. Wieluń had approximately 4,200 Jews in 1939, one-third of the total population. In the first days of the war, most of the Wieluń area was destroyed by Luftwaffe air raids. Most of the Jews of Wieluń were murdered in August 1942 in Chełmno on the Ner (Kulmhof).

38 On 30 July 1941, a penal labour camp for Jews was established in Garwolin. It had 50–70 prisoners. They worked at removing debris and cleaning the town. Conditions in the camp were very harsh. See: *Forced Labour Camps* (forthcoming).

39 Most probably the reference pertains to labour camps established in 1940 in the Kampinos Forest, where prisoners were forced to perform drainage works. No camp existed in Skierniewice, where the headquarters of the German company was responsible for carrying out drainage works. See *ibidem*.

40 Szafa gra (Polish) – the wheels have been greased. A popular expression used in the ghetto to describe the bribery-based methods that the *Judenrat* administration, and particularly the Order Service, used towards the population. Jerzy Jurandot mocked them in his revue *Szafa gra* (1941), staged in the Femina theatre.

No one needed to say a thing, because you could see that she was fainting from hunger. Two children were holding her up and crying, 'Mama, mama!' The words tore out of their throats. They consoled her and looked with pleading eyes at the bystanders. But nobody turned round. Each person went on their way as though nothing had happened on the street. Dead people lie on the streets and no one even notices them. Nobody stops, the situation is quite clear: today it's him, tomorrow it's me. [29] Karmelicka Street makes a terrible impression. Everywhere you turn, there are pastry shops with their display windows full of cakes and pastries. People lie unconscious beneath the shop windows, almost or actually dead. It seems as if the pastries are mocking the poverty on the street.

Another problem is the snatching of food parcels. They are seized out of people's hands and immediately gobbled up. Unfortunately, this is becoming a profession. There are now those who steal food parcels constantly. On the other hand, people steal from the stalls and baskets in the street where poor women stand selling their wares. The small roll which is snatched is possibly the profit from an entire day of sales. The shop windows with their cakes and pastries remain untouched. The mortality level in Warsaw is very great. I have seen corpses being carried on stretchers. There are not enough carts. People talk of two hundred dead a day. Warsaw is dying out.

Recently people have begun to flee Warsaw. They go wherever their feet take them, just to leave. Everybody hopes that life is easier in the provinces and that it will not be so difficult to get by. Old and young alike, even children, are leaving. Parents send the children out into the world with barely a penny. A father sent his 12-year-old son out of Warsaw. He accompanied him as far as the border and waited [31] until the boy was across. When asked how a father could send his own child off in such a way, he replied that he could not watch his child die of starvation: 'If he is fated to die, I don't want it to happen in front of my eyes. If my child leaves Warsaw, there is still perhaps a hope that he will stay alive. In Warsaw there is no hope.' People take almost nothing with them, counting on finding help in the first town they reach. Many are leaving with passes, but even so they don't show them when they leave the ghetto. You have to pay to cross over. When they do show a pass, in many cases it has happened that the guard [. . .] to pay.

(12)

[33]

13 [14] May[41] *[19]41*

Pressing Events

Today there was another round-up on the streets. The Jewish police asked young men on the street for their papers and detained them. On the 14th of this month at 3 in the afternoon, a group left for the camp in Krosno[42] (Galicia). The gmina stated that they had been promised that the situation in the camp would be excellent. They would work for the *Wehrmacht*, and the guards would consist of Jewish policemen only. They would have soldiers' rations and would work 8 to 10 hours a day for 50 groszes an hour. However, people didn't believe all the promises. A typical letter arrived from Wilga[43] near Garwolin: 'Dear parents! We have already been in the camp for nine days. Imagine what we are going through, since we have almost no food, we haven't yet got out of our clothes, we are beaten terribly and the work is very hard. Imagine our situation, when we see death before our eyes. Save us however you can to get us out of here. If not, I do not know if we will see each other again. A kilo of bread costs 16 [?] zlotys here and it is unavailable. Our money was seized when we arrived, and in general we have been left without a penny. Dear parents! Rescue us so that we can see each other again, so that my child does not become an orphan, and so that you are not left without recourse.'[44]

A second letter: 'My dear ones! I cannot yet use the post, so I am sending news through someone who has been freed from the camp. I have been here for 5 days already. Our work in the Kampinos Forest consists of felling trees.[45] The work is good. My dear Father! I was not able to choose this place, because from Leszno Street[46] they sent us to Szymanów.[47] We are barracked

41 The original date is the 13th, but the third sentence of the entry mentions the 14th; in the original it is March (III), but the contents point out May.

42 Several forced labour camps were located near Krosno; the inmates were employed in road works.

43 Wilga (Garwolin County). A labour camp there employed 800 prisoners on average at a time. See: *Forced Labour Camps* (forthcoming).

44 The same letter, with slight differences in the text; see: *ibidem*.

45 Rabbi Chitowski submitted to Oyneg Shabes his account of the labour camp in Kampinos; see *ibidem*.

46 I.e. from the Labour Department of the *Judenrat* at Leszno Street 84.

47 Szymanów (Sochaczew County).

in Piekło,[48] not far from the German border.[49] I am comfortable here, because [35] I am here with my fellow volunteers: G e d a l i a Rosenberg (read it as 'hunger') and Selig Wolfowicz (read it as 'death').[50] The conditions are good, and I foresee a bright future. A man from Łódź sleeps with me; his name is Moyshe Kapoyer.[51] Dear Father! Please go to Uncle Pinkert[52] and get the voucher that I left with him before my departure. Don't forget to register in the shop at Grzybowska Street 26.[53] Hurry up and take care of this as quickly as possible, as it can't be returned later. Send me a duvet because I am freezing, and I need rubber shoes because mine are falling apart. I miss you, I send you a big kiss and beg you, dear Father, to take care of this.

Your son and brother.[54]

The round-ups on the street are terrible. In general, this is a very dark chapter in the history of the Jews in Warsaw. A woman is walking down the street with her son. A policeman approaches and detains the son. The mother begins to weep, saying that he is her only son and that she has no one else. She throws herself upon the Jewish policeman and kisses him. Instead of being pacified, the policeman grabs his rubber truncheon and hits the woman over the head. Corruption is flourishing because of such cases. A number of policemen have told me that they find their work very distasteful. They have taken numerous steps in order not to take part in the round-ups. On the other hand, other policemen are terribly keen to do the work. It is very lucrative. The Ukrainian camp guards say that they will kill the Jews because the Jews

48 Piekło (Sochaczew County); the meaning of the name is 'hell'; there was a forced labour camp in Piekło (see *Forced Labour Camps* – forthcoming), but in view of the further lines of the letter, it might refer to the local conditions.

49 I.e. the border of the Warsaw District and the *Regierungsbezirk Zichenau,* annexed to the Reich.

50 Both phrases in parentheses have the copyist's remark: 'added above'.

51 In Yiddish, *kapoyer* means backwards, or upside down; the original Moyshe Kapoyr was a character created by the columnist B. Kovner, who had a humour column in the *Forverts*; Moyshe would always do exactly the opposite of what one would expect a person to do in a given situation.

52 Most probably Mordekhai (Motel, Model) Pinkiert, owner of the funeral home Netzach-ve'emet [Eternity]; nicknamed the King of the Deceased; warning of the danger of death.

53 I.e. at the *Judenrat*'s main office.

54 The same letter, with slight differences in the text, see *Forced Labour Camps* (forthcoming).

killed Petlura.[55] The camp detainees who manage to flee tell about how well they were treated by peasants along the way. The peasants had been ordered to detain every Jew and to hand them over to the authorities. Nonetheless, the escapees are treated very well, are given a place to spend the night, are given food, and are shown the road to take in order to avoid possible patrols.

On the subject of corruption amongst the *gmina* clerks, I heard a *gmina*-employee [37] respond to a question about that: if Czerniaków[56] himself wants to arrange something in the *gmina*, even he has to pay a bribe.

'Leszno 14' (Kohn and Heller)[57] has the license to import fish into the ghetto. The story of Sachsenhaus[58] is linked to the subject of fish. Some time ago, he extorted money from everyone who imported fish into the ghetto. Once he stopped a wagonload of fish whose driver did not wish to pay up. It turned out that the proprietor of the wagon was a *Volkdeutscher* who immediately reported the incident. Sachsenhausen was arrested and sent to Oświęcim.

This week an interesting incident took place involving Kohn. Near Leszno Street 14, a Jewish policeman stopped a boy who had stolen some bread. The policeman began to shout and beat the youth. A man came out of the crowd and gave him a tongue lashing. Immediately a police officer approached and remonstrated with the man who had intervened. The latter shrugged it off and merely [. . .]. In response to the question of who he was, people on all sides said that it was Kohn. On hearing this, the policemen fell silent and immediately withdrew.

'Leszno 14' recently acquired a license for bus transport in the ghetto. The *kehillah* had fought for this but was not successful. For Kohn and Heller it was much easier. In general, the Jews of Warsaw are dependent upon wretched individuals, not to mention the corrupt examples in the *kehillah*. 'Leszno 13' is headed by Gancwajch,[59] who had been an operator in the provincial

55 Shimon (Symon) Petlura (1879–1926), Ukrainian politician, between 1919 and 1926 (from 1921 in exile) president of the Ukrainian People's Republic. Killed in Paris for his attributed responsibility for a wave of pogroms, which resulted in the death of about 100,000 Jews in the years 1919–1921. The assassin Sholem Schwarzbard was acquitted by the court.

56 Adam Czerniaków.

57 Moritz Kohn and Zelik (Zelig) Heller.

58 Sachsenhaus – a German Jew, the Gestapo informer.

59 Abraham Gancwajch.

government and other regional administrations. Sternfeld[60] had managed a Small Business Association in Łódź and had become an operator in the tax office. Kohn had worked as an informant in the flying brigade[61] in the Tax Department. The mission of the gang from 'Leszno 13' was to make money of Jewish misfortune. A crowd of underworld characters work there, former operators from the tax offices, fiscal lawyers who were more power-brokers than jurists and other such types.

[39] One of them,[62] Nebel[63] from Toruń, showed up at Karmelicka Street 5, having been brought by another from 'Leszno 13'. They went into Jewish flats and robbed them. They took anything they could. The addresses were known to them. Whoever knew his way around the place gave a sign to his Jewish companion and for a certain amount of money (for example two hundred zlotys) people bought themselves out. Whoever who did not understand, suffered severe consequences. They even seized junk. Their *hutzpah* reached such heights that a few days later, the courtyard committee[64] there organised entertainment for the courtyard, and the aforementioned Nebel attended.

Hunger keeps growing in the city. A white loaf costs 15 zlotys, a rye loaf costs 10.50 zlotys. People are constantly dying of starvation. It has reached the point that nobody looks at the dead any more. At the corner of Zamenhofa and Kupiecka Streets, a dead man lay by the cigarette-stand. He was taken away, but the next day [. . .] lay at the same spot [. . .] looked [. . .] on Karmelicka Street. The street is full of confectionary shops. The display windows are full of pastries, and the dead are stretched out on the ground next to them, along with those who have fainted from hunger. People are beginning to smash the pastry shop windows. A window was smashed on Więzienna Street. The same thing has occurred in other places. There is talk of banning the baking of white-flour goods in the ghetto. People feel strongly about it because almost all of the pastries come from outside the ghetto, and therefore the money goes outside the ghetto as well. It appears, however, that this notion would present a real problem. As soon as baking were to be banned,

60 Dawid Szternfeld.

61 I.e. mobile control team; the term repeated in Polish in parentheses: *lotna brygada*.

62 I.e. Germans, throughout this entry.

63 Most probably Juliusz Nebel, a Gestapo operative.

64 The same as house committee.

there would be a riot and the prices of foodstuffs would rise even further. This would only be possible if prices should fall and life become a little easier.

[40] A senior Gestapo official responsible for Jewish affairs is working in the *kehillah* with a group of employees. He receives his 'confidants' there, people who have also not received permission to leave the ghetto. He also deals with other matters: anything that arises in the *kehillah* building is communicated to him, as well as anything to do with Czerniaków.

On Friday and Saturday the 9th and 10th they had a lot of fun on the Jewish streets. They drove by in cars and shot from the windows. At that time, the streets were full of people, and there was a terrible stampede. This was repeated time and time again. Another amusement takes place on the trams and in cars: we see them driving by holding cameras in front of their faces. They photograph the ghetto, the people lying on the street, unconscious or dying. People say [. . .] through the flats and make a list of Jewish pianos. People speculate that this is the same as what happened in Łódź. The pianos will be handed over to them in exchange for provisions.

As regards the dead lying in the street, it is said that in fact the majority died in their homes. The *kehillah* demands 20 zlotys for a burial. The poor leave the dead on the street, because they cannot pay.[65] This too is typical of the *gmina*.

A document has surfaced which indicates that both 'Leszno 13' and '14' are in the service of the S.D. The task of 'Leszno 13' is, among other things, to provide information about the Jews in the ghetto: the attitude to them, to the ordinances, about their mood, and so on.

(13)

[42]

16 May [19]41 Pressing Events

From Saturday the 10th until Wednesday,[66] 130 corpses were collected from the streets and the [refugee] points. The authorities decreed that the dead must not be left to lie more than 15 minutes. That is of no help, however! A cart circulates and collects the dead. In order to make the work easier,

65 The poor threw the corpses out on the street in order to avoid paying for burials.

66 14 May 1941.

they drive to all the [refugee] points and ask whether there are any corpses. Not even once was the question in vain.

On Wednesday a terrible event occurred at Zamenhofa Street 38. A dead girl lay on the pavement, already covered with a piece of paper. Next to her, her mother stood with 2 more children and with heartrending cries addressed the crowd: 'At least help the two children. They too are dying of hunger.' You can't walk the streets in peace. Dead people lie everywhere covered with pieces of paper, and those who are dying look like rags. [. . .] nobody sees them. People are dying before our eyes.

The prices of foodstuffs have reached a high: potatoes 4.20 to 4.30 [a kilo], buckwheat 19.50, white bread 14.50, and so on. Prices outside the ghetto have also risen sharply and are not so far off from the ghetto prices. The prices in the countryside are also rising constantly, supposedly because of a shortage of products due primarily to the soldiers billeted in the province.

Terrible news continues to come from the camps. A list of those tortured there has reached us : 1) Meir Flint, 2) Aron Yosef Fajngeld, 3) Alter Krawczyk, 4) Israel Gutweter, 5) Moshek Nabożny, 6) Abram Zusholc, 7) Leyzer Tusgartn, 8) Sheves [?] Dworecki, 9) Pinkus Chanachowicz, 10) Baruch Najhoz, 11) Fayvel Tozleger, 12) Bernard Bojmajl, 13) Shloma Cukerman, 14) Gershon Mordenfeld, [43] 15) Abram Artman, 16) Waldberg, 17) Chaim Funtowicz.[67] The last ones had no documents.

Today, the 16th, I was at a meeting with Rumkowski, the Jewish Elder from Łódź. He wanted to present the situation in Łódź.[68] Certain people from Łódź were present. He said: 'It was going badly in the ghetto, whether it is good now I do not know. I did not want to take this job. It is not for someone my age, my education nor my health. I prepared myself to go into the ghetto and announced my trade slogan: Everyone has to work in the ghetto, and implement my well-known five slogans: 1) work, 2) bread, 3) care for the sick, 4) supervision of children, 5) peace in the ghetto. The most important slogan is the last one: peace in the ghetto. I set up factories and there is work. I [created]

67 In the original, family names are written before the given names.

68 Rumkowski was in the Warsaw ghetto from 13 to 20 May 1941. The main purpose of his visit was to bring back to the Łódź ghetto the specialist doctors, who had previously left Łódź. See: *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Third Reich,* Docs. 47, 48.

a *Beirat*[69] which advises and I act. My authority [. . .]. It is not a ghetto, it is a work city. The authorities have the fullest confidence in me, because I will neither deceive them nor lie to them.

I wanted to give the workers a few rights, such as to choose delegates and the like. I agreed to listen to them and their counsel and later did what I thought best. People don't give away power. They did not want to make an agreement with me, and the same old problems began to rear their head: unrest, demonstrations, outcries against me. At the same time that they were protesting against me, I was preparing a prison for them.[70] I closed the factories. They decided on an 'Italian' strike:[71] they barricaded themselves inside the factories. I sent in my men against them. They broke in and [44] arrested people.[72] I led them away to prison. The workers called upon the Germans to appoint a commissioner. They discussed this in my presence. The Germans, who had confidence in me, questioned me. I told the workers in the presence of a senior German official: 'Get out, you vermin. Everything belongs to me and that's all there is to it.' I have my own secret police.[73] You can find such people today: everyone is hungry, and for food and money people are available. They attend every meeting and inform me immediately. Meetings are allowed, but in the presence of my people. They have the right to dissolve the meeting if inappropriate topics are raised. 400 grams of bread are distributed every day. The workers demanded more bread from me. I explained to them that I was willing to take it from the rations

69 (German) advisory council.

70 The Central Prison at Czarnieckiego Street 12–18. Inmates were sent there by Jewish courts and on the orders of German authorities. The prison also served a temporary assembly point in preparation of transports for work outside the ghetto and during deportation to killing centres.

71 Form of strike involving meticulous performance of duties, which significantly extends the working time.

72 The first protests against Rumkowski took place on 26 June 1940, then at the turn of August and September. The author probably refers to the strike in the carpentry department of 23 January 1941, when the Jewish police was called in to remove them. See: *Kronika getta łódzkiego,* vol. 1, eds. Julian Baranowski, Krystyna Radziszewska, Adam Sitarek, Michał Trębacz, Jacek Walicki, Ewa Wiatr, Piotr Zawilski, Łódź 2009, p. 82.

73 It was established on 28 February 1940 on the orders of the German police chief Johannes Schäfer, and started operating on 1 March 1940, with Leon Rozenblat as its commander.

of the Jewish population and give it to the workers [. . .] in writing. I had absolutely no [. . .]. I wanted to obtain signatures in order to discredit them and later I would do as I wanted. In addition to their normal rations, twice a week the workers receive meat and sausage.

There are two types of ration cards: one for bread and one for foodstuffs. Every child who is born receives 2 cards. Children up to the age of 3 are given a special food allowance. Midday meal can be eaten in the soup kitchens, in private restaurants and at home. All soup kitchens and private restaurants make one and the same soup in order to control the process. Those who cook at home receive the same amount of ingredients as those used for soup in the soup kitchens. Apart from that, you can cook what you like in the private kitchens. More expensive ingredients are on offer there. [45] The foodstuffs on the street come from people's rations which they are selling. Butter and spirits are also smuggled in. I have created 4 kosher bakeries where *cholent* is available on the Shabbat. People do not receive fats on a regular basis: this depends on when I receive them. I distributed matzot on Passover, made of corn flour because I was unable to acquire wheat flour. I already had a permit for wheat flour, but Poznań did not approve it.[74] People receive very little food – not enough to live on but enough to keep them from dying. There are no beggars. If there is one beggar in the cemetery he has a license. Those without an income receive assistance and are exempt from all payments and rent, except for 50 pfennigs which are deducted for health expenses. When someone on support falls ill, he is given medical care and medicines free of charge. This is also [. . .] the family. Assistance payments [. . .] not handed out in the courtyard but inside the home, so that it does not become public knowledge. The amount of support received is dependent on age. I also distribute supplementary support payments. As well, there are people who receive support for reasons unknown to others. I write a 'D' (Discretion) against it, the money is distributed through a special fund and the names are not made public. My secret police ferret everything out.

I get money from two sources: 1) from work – I receive the full value of the work carried out for the Germans; what is left over after I pay the workers, I keep; 2) from extortion – I take money from the rich by force. I have

74 Probably a reference to lack of approval from the administration of Wartheland, with headquarters in Poznań.

a bank which buys up valuables[75] [46] which are evaluated, and I pay a portion of their value for them. Everything in the ghetto belongs to me, even the property of the *Volksdeutsche* which has remained here. Only equipment for which I have no use is taken away. I do not believe anyone. I am a Litvak, I believe myself. I received 3 million in credit as a loan and repaid it in 6 weeks. On 20 April, I owed 5,300,000 Marks. The ghetto is a commune, a prison – a closed ghetto. I 'free up' all of the hidden merchandise in the city, even that belonging to *Volksdeutsche*. I pay in instalments and the merchandise goes into my factories. I have set up a fur factory. The *kehillah* has had seven thousand employees between 1 January and 30 April and I have received twenty thousand job applications. This is not sustainable. However, there are people who have to have work. [. . .] jobs. They receive 2/3 of the regular [. . .], and if anyone works more than seven days in one month, they receive their entire salary. People also go out of the ghetto to work. I give the family 12 Marks[76] a week on their account, and they do not have to pay rent. Everything is done through the post. I have my own Jewish police, but they are the same as in Warsaw – the worst. My hospitals had 1000 beds and now they have 1200. There will be another 500 in two weeks. There is a special sanatorium for children. There are 2 dietetic pharmacies and three more will be built.[77] I take care of children's health and administrate everything fairly. Children go to school:[78] 14,000 children in elementary school, and 1800 in middle school and high

75 Valuable Items and Clothing Purchase Bank, established on 12 August 1940. Its main task was to buy foreign currency, gold and other valuables, which the ghetto residents had to dispose of under threat of severe penalties. The list of items subject to forced sale was constantly expanded: from December 1940 it included furs, pellets, fur collars, and from November 1941 – cameras, clothes, paintings, porcelain sets, etc. The currency used for trade were ghetto marks.

76 The currency Rumkowski mentioned was introduced in the Łódź ghetto on 28 June 1940 as 'mark receipts' (German: *Markquittungen*), nicknamed "chaimeks" or "rumkis" by the inhabitants of the ghetto. They had no value except in the Łódź 'closed district'.

77 Distribution Points for the Infirm, where patients and obstetricians received milk, butter, eggs and sausages. Food ration cards were issued upon medical prescriptions. In addition to those entitled to these cards, many healthy people also received them through patronage. The stores name had a letter 'r' – for 'rehabilitation'.

78 There were 36–40 primary schools, including four religious, two special and two junior high schools in October 1941. Altogether around 14,800 children attended schools at all levels.

school. Only children are to be found in the summer camps in Marysin,[79] which has 3 doctors, 2 dentists and a pharmacy. [47] A sanatorium for weak children is being built there. The children are short of nothing. They learn Yiddish, Hebrew and religious studies at school. I appoint the teachers. There is a theatre[80] which offers concerts six times a week, and Ryder[81] conducts the orchestra. Everything is closed on Shabbat. I am setting up a music school. Painters receive a salary and paint. Thefts abound and I have created courts[82] and recently summary courts.[83] I mete out punish by hard labour. Some detainees lie in chains in my office for a whole day, unchained only at mealtime. I have my N.I.K. (*Najwyższa Izba Kontroli*),[84] 84 factories, 12 tailoring workshops, tanneries, raincoat factories, iron and brass factories. There are no cafés or cabarets in the ghetto. The authorities wanted to bring me to Warsaw, but I am tied to Łódź.

[. . .] so I must not be afraid. [. . .]'

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79 Marysin – a village in the north-eastern part of the ghetto. Its wooden houses served as summer flats for ghetto dignitaries, and also as schools, orphanages and holiday homes for officials and workers.

80 Most probably the House of Culture (Dom Kultury) on Krawiecka Street 3, in the building of the pre-war cinema theatre that could accommodate 300 people. It started operating on 1 March 1941, with Kiwa Siennicki at its head. It was de facto an independent institution with an orchestra and outstanding professional artists.

81 Teodor Ryder (1881–1944), conductor and pianist. He co-founded the House of Culture, conducted the orchestra, accompanied and taught music and singing. He perished in August 1944 in Auschwitz.

82 The court and prosecutor's office were established in 1940. Earlier, the Order Service imposed penalties for criminal offences. Due to the specificity of the situation, it was necessary to develop the principles of criminal and civil law, both substantive and procedural. The judiciary was not independent and, like other institutions in the ghetto, was subordinate to Rumkowski.

83 The Summary Court was established on 15 March 1941. It proceeded cases without prior investigation, and neither the accused nor the defendant participated in the trial.

84 Abbreviation for Polish *Najwyższa Izba Kontroli* (which follows in parentheses), the Supreme Audit Chamber established on 6 November 1940. It replaced the previously existing Central Audit Office. Its most important tasks included the ruthless eradication of all types of economic crimes and abuse of power. It conducted inspections of the activities of departments and agencies of the ghetto administration, and had the authority to immediately dismiss officials, perform personal searches and search offices and apartments.

Rumkowski answers questions about the death rate. 'In winter the death rate rose to 1200 and is now 900. Tuberculosis is an enormous plague and the number of those affected is extremely high. The local population numbers barely 150,000 Jews.' Another question is asked about the situation of the Jews. Rumkowski does not wish to reply. He becomes very angry. A series of other questions are not imparted to him by his secretary.[85] Rumkowski says that he needs craftsmen in the ghetto, and he invites discussion about this topic. With this, the conference ends.

[48] Today 'Leszno 13' distributed bread and coffee. There was a huge press of people trying to get some. A rumour spread that it was being filmed.

On the 13th, when the information about Hess[86] was published, the mood on the Jewish street changed completely. Immediately rumours circulated about the imminent end of the war. People were already calculating how long it could last. Jokes began to make the rounds: 'The miracle of Hess will get us out of this mess',[87] 'Look, he's really Moses Hess's[88] grandson', etc. The most bizarre rumours are coming from the other side as well.

Hunger is also rampant on the other side. Reports from there state that people have pillaged food shops. There are announcements that people should not directly [. . .] supply shops.

(14)

[49]

20 May [19]41 Pressing Events

The death rate continues to rise. The number of funerals from 1 to 15 [May] is as follows:

85 Most probably: Dora Fuchs (1914–?), head of the Central Secretariat, Rumkowski's confidante, translator of his conversations and correspondence with the German authorities. Fuchs survived the ghetto and the camps. After the war, she emigrated to Israel, then to the United States.

86 Rudolf Hess.

87 Literally: Hess is dead, a miracle happened.

88 Moses Hess (1812–1875), German writer, philosopher, sociologist and socialist of Jewish origin, precursor of theories of Zionism and socialist Zionism.

Date	Number	Men	Women	Children up to 15 years		Abandoned	Dead
				Boys	Girls		
1.	81	55	21	3	2		
2.	147	108	36	1	2		
3.	Shabbat	--	--	--	--		
4.	96	59	33	1	2	1	
5.	110	63	38	3	6		
6.	109	72	30	4	3		
7.	152	99	43	4	4	2	
8.	117	55	37	14	11		
9.	163	107	56	--	--		
10.	Shabbat	--	--	--	--		
11.	111	84	27	--	--		
12.	192	110	66	8	4	2	2
13.	120	76	43	1	--		
14.	141	102	33	2	3	1	
15.	178	128	46	3	1		
Total	1717	1118	509	44	38	6	2

There have not been any deaths in the refugee point at Nowolipki Street 25. They have survived all of the epidemics without casualties. On 18 May, the bodies of 3 people who had died from starvation were removed. Another five are on the verge of death, all from starvation. A woman lies in her bed, very weak. She is suffering from tuberculosis. [51] The house committee decided to feed her. The woman calls out: 'It's a shame. Give it to my children. I am beyond help. Maybe they will stay alive.' A whole row of people lie in beds in the refugee point on Sapieżyńska Street. They are all candidates for death from starvation. It doesn't seem that any other city could care so little for its poor. At the same time, people are attending balls and lack nothing. The streets are full of people lying unconscious on the pavements and passers-by don't give them a glance. People are accustomed to the sight and also to indifference.

All of Warsaw Jewish society was interested in Rumkowski's arrival. His report and conversations indicated clearly that we had a sick man before us. He's a megalomaniac and, content with his office, does not want to change his position. He maintains that if a few more houses are made available to the ghetto and if the provisioning improves slightly, then we have an ideal situation for Jews. How low can a man fall! He spent his entire time here fraternising with the people from Leszno 13 and 14. He stayed at the Hotel Britannia,[89] and Leszno 13 organized a guard of honour for him. He was accompanied everywhere by people from Leszno 13, all for the sake of 'publicity'.[90] He is working on setting up a branch in Warsaw, dedicated to working for him and furthering his popularity. It is said that Rumkowski and his secretary ate at the restaurant at Leszno Street 48. For midday meal he paid 50 zlotys. He spent 5 zlotys at the barber's.

His attitude to the Łódź *landsmanshaft* with which he wants to keep in contact is peculiar. [53] When he gave his report, he indicated that he wanted to speak with a smaller group. A certain person spoke with him, and it was suggested that Rumkowski support the Łódź refugees. Rumkowski took out the money he had brought with him and said: 'I have 800 zlotys here, but it is not right to give such a petty sum. I will give you ten thousand Marks. That is a drop in the ocean given my budget of more than four million.' His brother-in-law[91] who acted as his representative said that the money would be paid, but that he [Rumkowski] wanted to have influence over its distribution. And that is how the matter has rested for the time being.

At the same meeting Rumkowski said that he needed craftsmen and could take qualified ones with him. Naturally, the entire city knew at once that Rumkowski was going to take craftsmen with him. People said already that there would be a lot of interest. At a later meeting, he specified that he could take only workers with him to Łódź, not master craftsmen and no families. To this effect, everyone had to apply to him, and he would check to see whether a license could be granted in the ghetto. It appears that this is

89 At Nowolipki Street 18.

90 In English in the original.

91 Reference rather to Chaim Mordekhai's brother, Józef Rumkowski (1884–1944), an industrialist, administrative director of the Health Department of the Łódź *Judenrat*, from 6 September 1940 a member of the presidium of the Supreme Audit Chamber (NIK), later of the Professional Control Department. Perished in Auschwitz.

meaningless as well! He has come in particular for doctors, but they are in no hurry to leave.[92] Rumkowski has threatened to force the doctors to go to Łódź. One thing, however, must be acknowledged: R[umkowski] has a certain course of action in mind, and implements it, while in Warsaw people saw only rashness and confusion. R[umkowski] has said he does not tolerate anybody to be employed for more than a year. He is afraid of competition.

[55] Dr Szykier[93] headed the Health Department[94] in Łódź. He was Rumkowski's assistant in all areas. Recently we learned that Rumkowski had sacked him and replaced him with Dr Miller,[95] who was unknown before the war. Rumkowski could not send Dr Miller to recruit doctors in Warsaw, because nobody would have talked to him. He had to come himself.

On 18 May the Jewish police held a meeting at which it was decided to refuse to take part in the *łapanki*.[96] They are going to apply to the commandant to absolve them from this. Many of them disagreed with the decision, because it netted them a tidy income, but they could not get out of it.

More terrible news is coming from the camps. Rusek, the director, arrived unconscious from Drewnica.[97] He was diagnosed with an internal haemorrhage. He died in hospital. This is the consequence of beatings from which even the director was not immune.

A refugee from Sierpc smuggled himself back home. He was detained at the border of the Reich and arrested. He remained there for two days. He was asked why he wanted to enter the Reich and why he was leaving Warsaw. He replied that he was looking for work and that there was none

92 In the end, thirteen specialist doctors decided to go to Łódź.

93 Leon Szykier (1894–1972), a physician, internist, member of the Elders' Council; from January 1941, deputy of Rumkowski and head of the Health Department. As a result of Szykier's conflict with Józef Rumkowski, in June 1941 the first was dismissed from both positions.

94 The Health Department was established on 16 October 1939. Its headquarters was in the building of the former Obstetric Hospital at Łagiewnicka Street 34/36. The department was headed by Dawid Helman, Leon Szykier and Wiktor Miller, subsequently. Its administrative director was Józef Rumkowski.

95 Wiktor Miller (1899–1944), an internist, head of the Health Department from 7 May 1941 until August 1944.

96 (Polish) round-ups.

97 Drewnica (Warsaw County) – labour camp for Jews in Ząbki near Warsaw, established in 1941. On average it employed 160 forced labourers at water and drainage works.

in Warsaw. They asked him a few more questions and finally allowed him to cross the border into the Reich. The news spread amongst the local refugees, and people prepare themselves to do the same thing.

The Hess affair exhilarated the Jews and completely changed their mood. Might a new era be about to dawn? People greeted each other in the street and kissed each other for joy. At the same time other rumours began to spread that more generals had fled, as well as the most senior officials. After it turned out that the news about Goering was not true, [57] people's mood changed. It was known that Hess had left Germany on 10 May, the exact anniversary of the beginning of the offensive against Holland. Jokes circulated. The morning that Hess's flight became known, people said: 'Hess is dead'; then 'The miracle happened with Hess'; and still later, 'Look, he's really Moses Hess's grandson!'

Authentic news was also passed around saying that the commanders of the local Gestapo had produced a report to its central command indicating that the ghetto in Warsaw had not fulfilled the mission assigned to it and that they regarded the ghetto as superfluous. When Czerniaków visited the district office,[98] he was told that they were aware that the situation of the Jews in the ghetto was untenable and that they should do something to alleviate it. All opinions concurred that the situation of the Jews was in the process of improving. People wanted to connect this to Hess's flight, which had also had an effect on the local senior officials. Others wanted to interpret this as a consequence of the growing conflict with the Soviet Union.[99] They wanted to prove this on the basis of the following facts: Żyrardów is working on Ukrainian flags. Ukrainian money is being used on Miodowa Street.[100] *Hetman* Skoropadski[101] has come to Kraków.

98 The office of the Warsaw District was in Palais Brühl.

99 The Third Reich started the war with the USSR on 22 June 1941.

100 Żyrardów, not far from Łódź, used to be a centre of the textile industry. It is not clear what institution on Miodowa Street in Warsaw Schwartzbard has mentioned. The reference is probably to the Ukrainians' preparation to create their state, which OUN then announced on 30 June 1941 in Lwów. Thanks to Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe for this insight.

101 Pavlo Skoropadski (1873–1945), a Ukrainian politician and military officer, from April to December 1918 he exercised power as *hetman* (from Czech: head of the army) of the Ukrainian state, a German protectorate; overthrown by Symon Petlura. Information on Skoropadski's visit in Kraków in 1941 is not confirmed, neither is it clear in what capacity was he supposed to come there.

Since Friday, Leszno 13 has been giving out a small piece of bread with coffee. People queue from dawn and everyone is given a portion. While this is going on, Gancwajch circles, like a king.

This morning the prices of foodstuffs fell. In the afternoon, loudspeakers announced that the *Bahnsperre*[102] is still operative. Immediately the prices went back up and everything is expensive again.

(15)

[59]

25 May [19]41 Pressing Events

To add to the usual starvation reigning in Warsaw there has been a terrible price hike. The price of everything has risen since Saturday. It has reached the point where potatoes cost 9 zlotys a kilo and buckwheat 40 zlotys. Cigarettes and other monopoly items have risen enormously. Matches cost 30 zlotys a box. A kilo of rye bread costs 28 zlotys and it's inedible. There are various reasons for this. News has come from the towns in the provinces that the price of foodstuffs has risen hugely. It is said that soldiers are given up to 36 zlotys to buy food. Agents circulate in the villages and buy up foodstuffs, paying any price that is asked. The money allotted to the soldiers has resulted in inflation. On the other hand, the enormous quantity of foodstuffs consumed by the army must have an effect on the market. It must be borne in mind that according to current information, there are more than 3 million soldiers billeted in the General Government. It is easy to imagine what effect this has on the Jewish population. The death rate is climbing constantly and it gives one the impression that all the Jews in Warsaw are condemned to die from starvation! The carts of the funeral parlours are seen everywhere in the city. Prices have also risen on the Aryan side, but are far below those in the ghetto.

Today 'the 13' began to intervene. They took over shops and sold buckwheat. This was done in their usual manner. First they took bribes from the shops and then they sold 2 to 3 kilos of buckwheat. The remainder stayed in the shops which were better at hiding it. They sold up to 100 grams to each person at a profit of 2 zlotys per 10 grams, i.e. 20 zlotys a kilo. Needless to say, this price had no effect on the fall in the market price. [62] While the products

102 (German) railway traffic blockade.

were being sold, the shop owners stood outside and cursed the customers. They think they own the Jewish street. At Nowolipki Street 28 [?], a shopkeeper called out to those waiting for their 100 grams of buckwheat, 'You'll get hell here, no food!' This is the general attitude of that sort of person to hunger. Even this situation has not prompted the welfare institutions to make them intervene. Nothing has been done to improve things even slightly.

Recently Auerswald[103] was appointed commissioner of the ghetto. He had previously been active in the Council of the Welfare Department (*Wohlfahrt*)[104] of the District. A Jew, a Pole and a Ukrainian were also members. Needless to say, no meetings of the Council were ever held. Lawyer Wielikowski[105] was the representative of the Jews and as such became acquainted with Auerswald. When Auerswald became commissioner, he asked Czerniaków if Wielikowski was industrious, after which Czerniaków appointed Wielikowski to the *Judenrat* and assigned him the post of deputy mayor. The previous week Auerswald, Czerniaków and Wielikowski had visited Fischer,[106] the governor of Warsaw. They were apparently given a favourable reception. Fischer greeted them and invited them to sit down. He didn't offer his hand, but this was not customary. Among other things he said that it wasn't the intention of the authorities to starve the ghetto; they want the Jews to work and not to starve. He said that for three months the supply of provisions would be difficult and that the authorities would help provide the Jews with food. He will improve food supplies in the ghetto by increasing distribution. For this he is prepared to make products available in order to enable 120 thousand midday meals a day to be served. Therefore, oats have been stored for distribution to the Jews. One half will be distributed free of cost and the remainder will be sold for 40 groszes. [64] In this manner, oats will be distributed. People have to start organising the distribution mechanism.

103 Heinz Auerswald.

104 (German) Social Welfare Division of the Population and Welfare Department (*das Referat Freie Wohlfart der Abteilung Innere Verwaltung-Bevölkerungswesen und Füsorge*) in the General Government cabinet – the office that exercised control over the activities of the AJDC.

105 Gustaw (Gamzai) Wielikowski.

106 Ludwig Fischer (1905–1947), between October 1939 and January 1945, governor of the Warsaw District of the General Government, sentenced to death by the Supreme National Court and executed in Warsaw in 1947.

At the same time, Fischer said that he was ready to make improvements in the ghetto. The delegation asked several times about how the improvements might consist, and they were told that the changes were still in the planning stage and would be internal. They had the impression that this involved changes where the ghetto adjoined the Aryan side. Whatever the case may be, the impression was left that the attitude towards the Jews was changing. The follow-up to this visit was very typical. People said when Czerniaków came back to the *kehillah*, Lichtenbaum,[107] a well-known member of the *kehillah* society, called out to him (they were on familiar terms), saying, 'Why did you take Wielikowski with you?', to which came the answer: 'What could I do? I had to take him with me.' The change in the attitude towards the Jews was evidenced in two facts. First of all, Meissner,[108] the head of the Gestapo in the labour camps, wrote a report in which he mentioned the *schutz-lageristn*.[109] It turns out that the appointment of Ukrainian and Polish *schutz-lageristn* comes directly from Rosenberg.[110] Meissner affirmed that the worse elements were being recruited into the camp guards: thieves and criminals whom the authorities were seeking. Some of them were excluded even during training. The camp guards are not high in the hierarchy. The food is wretched. In one camp, between 5 and 9 May there was no food at all. The second fact is as follows: [66] During one of Czerniaków's visits to the District, he was told that the ghetto had not met its expectations and were it not for its prestige, it would have been liquidated.

The telephone office on the corner of Tłomackie and Przejazd Streets has been cut off from the ghetto and walled in. A lot of smuggling went on there, in which the Germans participated. On Saturday 24 May, I was walking down the street. Two Germans were standing there watching people smuggle through the wall. The next day, Sunday, I saw two people in plain clothes crawl through. It turns out that these were the same two Germans now dressed in civilian clothes. They went to enjoy themselves in the Melody

107 Marek Lichtenbaum (1876–1943), civil engineer, member of the Warsaw *Judenrat's* Health Department, from 23 July 1942, the *Judenrat's* chairman.

108 Meissner, captain from the German police.

109 (German-Yiddish) camp security guards.

110 Alfred Rosenberg (1893–1946), one of the most influential Nazis, author of the most crucial racist theories of National Socialism and the Reich minister for the occupied eastern territories.

Palace.[111] A lot of smuggling was organised through them. They had their own taxi. They commandeered a couple of potatoes from each sack, and 5 kilos from larger sacks, which they took for themselves.

Somebody related: 'I wanted to leave Warsaw and go to the provinces. We had already passed the guard post and were in the Aryan side of the city when a group of Polish youths set upon us, shouting, "Look, Jews!" and beat us terribly. They then handed us over to the police. They robbed us, took our last pennies as well as an overcoat, and sent us back to the ghetto.' On the other hand, other people fleeing Warsaw give favourable accounts of how they were treated along the way. The peasants behave kindly towards them. A man who had come from Bychawa[112] related that he had been there with a daughter and had returned for the rest of the family, leaving his daughter with a peasant. Relations were very good and the peasants treated him very well on the way. Everybody from the provinces says the same thing.

[67] The previous week there were once again attacks on the Jews. A car drove back and forth on Leszno and Żelazna Streets. Suddenly the soldiers got out and began to walk around. On a signal from a non-commissioned officer they scattered and began to beat the Jews savagely.

A fact: On Leszno Street when [they were] taken [. . .]. There was a car standing there, and the German inside chatted to the Jews who were standing around. He spoke in a very friendly fashion. The Jews sensed that he was someone to whom they could talk and asked him his opinion about the war. He answered as follows: 'The chances up to now were 50-50, but now America has begun to supply war materials. How many we do not know. Now it is 25 per cent against and 75 per cent for the enemy.' Upon hearing this, Jews asked what had occurred with Hess. At this the German put his finger to his lips, said, 'Be quiet!' and terminated the conversation.

There was a department of the Gas Company on Zamenhofa Street. Every day the midday meal was supplied in a field kitchen for the employees. At the same time the kitchen also provided meal for poor Jews. Very often [. . .] while they were travelling on military wagons loaded with coal, the convoyed Poles would throw coal onto the road for the Jews to pick up.

111 Cafe on Rymarska Street 12, a venue for concerts and other artistic events.

112 Bychawa (Lublin County).

(16)

[70] My dear!
Pressing Events
The funeral of Attorney Wajcman[113] was held on Wednesday 4 June. He was the chairman of the Central Craftsmen Association[114] and the leader of the Folkists[115] in Poland and in Łódź, where he lived. He died from *angina pectoris*.[116] Naturally, the funeral was organised by Leszno 13.

People say that immediately after Wajcman's death, the owner of the flat where he lived came to an arrangement with the well-known Kupczykier who was a personal friend of Wajcman and shared his convictions. He was also a former official of the Folkist Craftsmen Association. Kupczykier made short shrift of the whole matter as if it meant nothing to him, whereupon the flat owner telephoned Leszno 13. Two messengers arrived immediately and said that they were taking charge of the funeral. And so it was. Gancwajch was the first to speak at the graveside. He said that the deceased had been very effective in furthering peace between Leszno 13 and the *kehillah*. The process was almost complete, which would be the best thing for the Jews of Warsaw. The work was historically significant, etc., etc. This was made even clearer by a second speaker who delivered the funeral oration, Itche Meir Bialer,[117] a Łódź activist in the Mizrachi Party and a former member of the Łódź city council. He was currently working in the houses run by Leszno 13. He said that a few weeks previously, he had met Wajcman at Leszno 13, where the latter was striving to establish peace between Gancwajch and the *kehillah*, a process which is now being brought to fruition. Gancwajch can bring salvation to the Jews of Warsaw.

113 Józef Wajcman (1893/4–1941), lawyer, member of the Folkist Party, councillor of the city of Łódź, chairman of the *Judenrat*, chairman of the Central Craftsmen Association.

114 The Central Craftsmen Association of the Polish Republic – a social organisation of Jewish craftsmen, established in 1921 to defend the interests of its members in craft chambers, apprenticeship departments and guilds, to organise the cooperative movement and credit unions, and to provide legal assistance.

115 Popular name of the activists of the Yidishe folkspartey, democratic party whose goal was cultural autonomy for the Jews of Poland.

116 A heart disease caused by ischemia and hypoxia of the heart.

117 Yitzkhak (Izaak) Meir Bialer (1886–1943), industrialist from Łódź, a long-time city councillor in Łódź on behalf of Mizrahi. For many years, a vice president of the group.

Bialer made him out to be something of a Messiah who could do anything. Dr Herszfinkiel,[118] a leader of the Łódź Folkists, also spoke. However, he made no mention of the deceased's relationship with and endeavours on behalf of the '13'. Nor did he say that it was not true or attempt in any way to whitewash the reputation of the deceased. [72] The matter has yet to be clarified.

The subject of peace between the '13' and the *kehillah* has captured Warsaw's entire Jewish population. It is talked about everywhere. The agreement is already in place. Gancwajch is once again the deputy mayor of the ghetto and Szternfeld is once more the Commandant of the Jewish police. Gancwajch will take over the Provisions Department,[119] and he is promising blessings for the Jews. There are other rumours that Gancwajch will assume control of the Labour Battalion[120] with the camps. This is apparently connected to the change in attitude towards the Jews.

Smuggling plays a significant part in ghetto life and is also of economic importance. Smuggling on a grand scale passes through the so-called *meta* on Koźla Street. There are underground passages there that lead outside the ghetto. Holes have been made in the walls connecting Jewish and Polish flats. Smuggling milk is very common. There are no cows in the ghetto,[121] but milk is nevertheless available in the ghetto and is sold there. The milk arrives in the following manner: a rubber hose is pulled from a Christian flat into a Jewish one.[122] Milk poured through the hose flows into the Jewish home. Everybody knows about this – the Jewish, the Polish [police] and even the '13' – and bribes are paid to close people's eyes. Smuggling on a grand scale takes place in the trams. A tram drives on Gęsia Street near Zamenhofa Street, and a package is thrown out. The package is immediately grabbed by a Jewish boy who quickly disappears. A Polish policeman notices this, and together with a German who appeared from somewhere, gets on the tram

118 Most probably Yekhiel Herszfinkiel (1896–?), a paediatrician.

119 Most probably the Supply Unit, established in December 1940, headed by Abraham Gepner, responsible for the food supply to the ghetto by approving shops' orders for imported articles. Initially, it functioned as an agency for the *Judenrat*, in September 1941 it became a separate institution.

120 The Labour Battalion – an institution of the *Judenrat*, created on 19 October 1939, where workers were recruited for forced labour.

121 There were cows in the ghetto; see Doc. 9 in Part I, entry of 8 August 1942.

122 See: *Warsaw Ghetto. Everyday Life,* Doc. 37: Milk and Grains from the Wall.

[73] to check up. They both get off after a few minutes, having found nothing suspicious which might be smuggled into the ghetto. The tram moves off, and at that moment people begin to throw packages from all sides. The policeman is already convinced that nothing is amiss and doesn't pay attention. German cars are involved in a large part of the smuggling. A car carrying potatoes regularly drives down Nowolipie Street. The gate is closed, nobody is allowed in, and in the blink of an eye the car is unloaded. The potatoes are tossed out, along with a few sacks of flour and other items among them.

While speaking with a rabbi, I asked him why there had been no cases of *Kiddush Hashem* amongst rabbis who had come to terms so easily with trampling Torah scrolls and ripping and burning holy books. He explained that in general the rabbis had a poorly developed social instinct. Only in rare cases were orders not carried out. In Konin, the local rabbi Yakov Lipszyc[123] was ordered to burn a Torah scroll. He did not want to and refused. He was terrorised, beaten [but] left alive. Another event occurred in Zduńska Wola.[124] There the Germans took out the Torah scrolls, spread them on the street and forced the Jews to dance on them. They seized a water-carrier named Avrom Menashe – his surname is unknown – and he too was forced to dance. He refused and was shot on the spot.

Hunger, poverty, death on the street, the typhus epidemic – everything has increased. It seems that Warsaw Jewry is condemned to death, and no help is to be found. The mood of resignation among the Jews is growing constantly. People feed on the rumours which revolve around Russia and America.

(17)

[75]

14 June [19]41 Pressing Events

Hunger and poverty in Warsaw gnaw at everyone. The streets are still full of collapsed, swollen bodies. A Jewish city is dying and there is no

123 Rabbi Yakov Lipszyc (Liebschütz) (1867?–?), son of Halel, the famous Talmudist, was born in the Kovno *gubernia*, received his education in Germany and Russia. Beginning in 1906 he lived in Konin. In 1927 Lipszyc became the head of the board of the Jewish Community. He was deported to Józefów near Lublin in 1940 and murdered there in July 1942. See: *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Third Reich*, Doc. 63.

124 Zduńska Wola (Sieradz County).

one there to care. I am standing in the courtyard at Leszno Street 14. A young man of about 18 is standing by the rubbish bins, eating out of them. This goes on for a long time. After about two hours I pass through the courtyard again and the young man still cannot tear himself away from the rubbish bins. I continue along Zamenhofa Street. A dead body is lying on the pavement. A young man of about twenty passes by. The corpse blocks his path. He doesn't think twice and jumps over the corpse. The people around him stand and gape. What is going on? A violinist comes into the courtyard on *Muranowska* Street and starts to play. Suddenly, while he is playing, his violin falls out from his hand and he collapses on the ground. People gather round him. He lies in a faint, the fiddlestick on one side, the violin on the other. [. . .] People give him something to eat and drink, and he begins to come to himself. This is sufficiently typical of Jewish life in Warsaw and enough for one day. A *feldsher* tells me: 'I was called to a sick person at Nowolipki Street 30-odd. I took my equipment with me, thinking that I would find a patient with typhus. I enter a shabby room. A dead man is lying on the bed. I look at him. This is no typhus victim. I pull down the coverlet. He has died of starvation. I look around the room and notice another corpse on the floor, also dead of starvation. I have had enough of this and go into the kitchen to wash my hands. Suddenly I notice another body lying there. I observe him. He is already in his death throes. Only now do I see someone with typhus. That is and that's how it is in the ghetto.'

[77] The escapes from Warsaw for the provinces occur more and more frequently. Jews flee wherever they can. They travel by tram, they pass through the guard posts. Even those with *przepustki* do not show them to the guards, because the German guard will tear them up on the spot. There is only one solution: to bribe oneself out of the ghetto and to take out the *przepustka* when you are safely on the other side. A good many people return to Warsaw to fetch their families. They all say that they were treated well by the peasants on the way. One man said that he had gone to Sarnaki[125] and returned later to fetch his family. They were stopped by the Jewish police outside Siedlce, taken into custody, handed over to the authorities and sent back to Warsaw, to the ghetto. They came the whole way back by foot. The peasants treated them very well along the way: they gave them bread, butter and milk to eat and drink. Near Siedlce the peasants said: 'Get out of here back to Warsaw.

125 Sarnaki (Siedlce County).

You don't feel that everything is burning, that the war is starting up every minute and that everything that we possess will be destroyed. You will at least stay alive in Warsaw, even in the ghetto. We here are doomed to be annihilated.' [The man from Sarnaki said,] 'while we were being sent back, the Germans behaved well towards us. They gave us food and chatted with us. In general, the attitude of the Germans in Siedlce was bearable. The Germans stroll with Jewish girls along the streets and, all in all, the atmosphere is tolerable. Local people explain that these are soldiers from the front, and the comportment of the Wehrmacht is completely different, as is that of the various party groups.'

The beautiful side of smuggling is the frequent use of German cars. A military vehicle crowded around with Jews is standing on Elektoralna Street. [79] The Jews part with each other, kiss each other goodbye, and the Germans stand around amusing themselves like merchants. A police car is driving along Nalewki Street. It stops suddenly, and a Jew approaches it with a large suitcase that he can barely drag along. The back door opens immediately, and the Jew jumps quickly inside. The door slams and the car drives off. The Jewish police in particular play a major role in smuggling. On Nowolipki Street a young man is smuggling goods through. However, he has not paid off the Jewish policeman, who grabs him by the collar and demands his payoff. The youth tears himself away, but the policeman grabs his hat. The youth darts away quickly to sell the few potatoes brought from the other side in order to buy back his hat. On Przejazd Street, people are crawling over the fence. The Jewish policeman makes sure that everything is going as it should. He suddenly spots a Polish policeman, starts to shout and throws himself upon a smuggler. The Polish policeman runs up, takes out his rubber billy-club and starts to beat the smuggler. People stand around and smile. It is immediately apparent that all this shouting, hitting and running is play-acting. It is done for show. Everyone has already been paid off.

It appears that the peace-making between Leszno 13 and the *kehillah* has come to nothing. Everything remains as before. People say that negotiations are still going on.

(18)

[81] Pressing Events

The subject of rounding up for the labour camps has totally absorbed the Jewish society. All other matters have been put aside, and at every step you hear people talking about the forced labour camps. At the beginning, there were rumours saying that the situation was not so bad there, but terrible letters began to arrive, especially about beatings. Conditions are particularly bad where the guards are Ukrainians. Their behaviour is far worse than that of the *ashkenazim*[126] guards. Current news replicates that of the past: insults, beatings, poor food, and the like. There are two kinds of camps: tree felling and water drainage. Conditions are much better for workers in the woods. Initially the forced labour camps were in 3 places to which people were sent from Warsaw: Skierniewice, Łowicz[127] and Mordy.[128] The round-ups for forced labour present a sorry picture which [. . .] black words about the Jewish police. For Jews it is understandable that the Jewish police might take a bribe for letting a smuggler through. People earn money that way, and the police risk their lives letting the smugglers through. Why shouldn't they make something from it? It is a different story in the forced labour camps. They take advantage of the situation to line their pockets. It is rumoured that some policemen make several thousand zlotys a night while terrorising the Jewish population and forcing them to hand over money. Obviously, not everyone is like this. There are examples of honourable behaviour. The police are under orders to detain all people aged between 18 and 40 and to take those selected for the forced labour camps to an assembly point, from which they would later be sent away. [83] The Citizens' Committee of the *kehillah* has maintained that no distinction be made between rich and poor and that everyone without exception share the same fate. It is forbidden to buy one's way out. Thus the police were obliged to take everyone. Surely, it was entirely different in practice. The patrols went out at night and searched the houses for men. Obviously, no one slept in his

126 (Hebrew) Here meaning: Germans.

127 See: *Forced Labour Camps* (forthcoming).

128 Mordy (Siedlce County); the labour camp was established there in 1941. Prisoners, both Poles and Jews, constructed the road on the Mińsk Mazowiecki-Janów Podlaski route. See *ibidem*.

own home, or they hid themselves there. For example, a search was carried out in the building at Leszno Street 14 where there was a refugee point. The police had a list of names of thirty-odd men. As it turned out, they did not detain a single person. Surely this cost [. . .] money. The police then entered the refugee point and detained 41 men there, 2 of whom were released [. . .] Commission. They showed it to the police, but they were totally disinterested, so all were led out to be taken to the assembly point. They found a solution: the woman together with a sick man's child began to scream loudly in the street. It was half past twelve at night, and the police got afraid because they were screaming about taking bribes and such. To prevent this protest from spreading, they freed the sick man on the spot. They went back with the detainees into the bar 'Kvik'[129] in the same courtyard, and in front of everyone, they divided amongst themselves the money that they had taken in the original courtyard. They had a good meal, gave some food to the detainees and left.

This is not an isolated event. [85] In many cases, the house committees were able to arrange things with the police. The matter was settled for hundred zlotys. In other cases the police did not want to enter into an arrangement, because they would profit more on a one-to-one basis. I know of a case where the Jewish police went into a house on Zamenhofa Street, into the home of a Jew over fifty, and simply gobbled up 50 zlotys. When asked why he had paid while knowing that only people up to 40 could be detained, he replied that he had been terrorised and was very frightened. They went into many houses, and very large ones at that, and did not remove anyone. In order to produce a certain number of people, they seized them on the street. This happened at Nowolipki Street 27. Other episodes have taken place there as well. The police went to Nowolipie Street twenty-odd to search for forced labour workers. The neighbours were very frightened. The police explained that they knew that men had [. . .] not to search, but requested that the courtyard supply men voluntarily and that would be sufficient for them. There was a refugee point in the courtyard, and people volunteered immediately to go to the labour camp. The policeman told people to give the volunteers clothing, money and food and to be ready for him at dawn when he would return. The volunteers asked for 50 zlotys and, if possible, some old linen and clothing. It goes without saying that if they were not to present themselves,

129 Perhaps the name was 'Quick'; the place was not identified.

the courtyard would have to pay a large bribe. Everybody said that this was fair, but when the police left, no money or clothing was able to be collected. When the police returned and ascertained that the residents had not kept their word, they left, saying that they would come later to resolve the matter.

ARG I 462/1–18 (Ring. I/1040)

Description:

(1) ARG I 462/1: original or duplicate, handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 148×208 mm, 1 sheet, 1 page.
(2) ARG I 462/2: original or duplicate, handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 148×208 mm, 1 sheet, 1 page.
(3) ARG I 462/3: original or duplicate (entry of 26 December 1940 in 2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 148×208 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 4 sheets, 4 pages. On top, note in Yiddish [ink] by Hersh Wasser or MS*, 'cleanshaven'; at the bottom: '1, current events'. At the entry of 29 December note (ink): '5'; at the entry of 30 December: '6'.
(4) ARG I 462/4: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×207 mm, 2 sheets, 2 pages. Edition based on both copies, each one 1 sheet, 1 page.
(5) ARG I 462/5: original or duplicate, handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×208 mm, major damage and losses of text, 1 sheet, 1 page.
(6) ARG I 462/6: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×207 mm, 2 sheets, 2 pages. Edition based on the first copy, 1 sheet, 1 page.
(7) ARG I 462/7: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×207 mm, 2 sheets, 2 pages. Edition based on the first copy, 1 sheet, 1 page.
(8) ARG I 462/8: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 148×208 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 4 sheets, 4 pages. Edition based on both copies, each one 2 sheets, 2 pages.
(9) ARG I 462/9: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×207 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 2 sheets, 2 pages. Edition based on both copies, each one 1 sheet, 1 page.
(10) ARG I 462/10: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×207 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 4 sheets, 4 pages. Edition based on both copies, each one 2 sheets, 2 pages.
(11) ARG I 462/11: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×207 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 8 sheets, 8 pages. Edition based on both copies, each one 4 sheets, 4 pages.

(12) ARG I 462/12: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×207 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 10 sheets, 10 pages. Edition based on both copies, each one 5 sheets, 5 pages.
(13) ARG I 462/13: original or duplicate, handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×207 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 7 sheets, 7 pages.
(14) ARG I 462/14: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×207 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 10 sheets, 10 pages. Edition based on the first copy, 5 sheets, 5 pages.
(15) ARG I 462/15: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×207 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 10 sheets, 10 pages. Edition based on both copies, each one 5 sheets, 5 pages.
(16) ARG I 462/16: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 148×208 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 6 sheets, 6 pages. Edition based on both copies, each one 3 sheets, 3 pages.
(17) ARG I 462/17: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×207 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 6 sheets, 6 pages. Edition based on both copies, each one 3 sheets, 3 pages.
(18) ARG I 462/18: original or duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×207 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 6 sheets, 6 pages. Edition based on both copies, each one 3 sheets, 3 pages.
All documents were kept in a binder.

3

After December 1941, Warsaw ghetto. Author unknown, two versions of an account: "פֿון אַ טאָג־בוך" *[From a diary];* "אַ בינטל איבערלעבונגען אין דער מלחמה־צייט" *[A bundle of experiences in war-time].*[130] *Notes from 19 October to 26 December 1940. Everyday round-ups, beating and tormenting the Jews in Warsaw*

[1] From a diary

19 October [19]40.

At 2 p.m., while I was at my daughter's, two German officers carrying revolvers came in and ordered us to leave the apartment immediately. We were forced out under pressure of being shot, leaving everything as it stood. When the mother of a three-month-old child asked permission

130 Versions are slightly different.

to take the child's linen with her, they threatened to shoot her. We all left the apartment.

21 October [19]40. I was seized for forced labour on Nowogrodzka Street. I was beaten, dragged into the post office and made to carry heavy containers full of bricks, clay, and rubbish, until I collapsed with a nosebleed. I was released after seven hours and lay in bed for five days, terribly ill. I remained at home for 14 days, suffering severely both physically and mentally. Only then was I able to go out.

10 November [19]40. As I was walking along Marszałkowska Street, along with ten other Jews, I was dragged through the gateway of No 127, and we were given the honour of carrying heavy cases full of tinned food and tea from the fourth floor. They beat us terribly with sticks in the process. Some of us were left bleeding. Miraculously, I got out in one piece. After a few hours, they took most of the group with them in their truck. Nobody knows what happened to them. I was among the lucky ones who were released.

22 November [19]40. At noon, about 300 Jews were seized, myself among them. We were led outside the city into a square and ordered to sing and dance. We were then ordered to dig the damp clay with our bare hands. We were forced to dig until our hands became swollen. Late in the evening, we were beaten. Many of us had our overcoats taken and were chased back into town. We had to run as fast as we could, singing all the while. Whoever did not sing was beaten murderously. Many of us came home lame.

26 December [19]40. When I was on my way to tram No 3 accompanied by my friend Rozen, we were seized and taken to Królewska[131] Street 49. At the rear of the courtyard stood a barracks. There we had the honour of heating the ovens. We had to remove the ash and carry it out in our pockets. The work was not very difficult, but the mental humiliation was unbearable. When the work was finished, they led us out of the courtyard, took two zlotys from each of us, released everyone and immediately seized other Jews. This was simply a business deal. They made money from collecting the two zlotys.

131 In the original, Karolewska; Królewska Street was part of the route of tram No 3.

1 January [19]4[1][132]

This was a day for beating Jews. As I was walking down Franciszkańska Street, I noticed from afar that Jews were being beaten murderously with guns. Hoping to avoid the blows, a few other Jews and I ran into [2/1][133] a coffee house and quickly ordered a tea. Hardly 5 minutes had passed when 8 thugs carrying guns came in and beat everyone viciously. I was struck hard on the head with a revolver and fell unconscious to the ground. They worked in this manner for a good 20 minutes, then went out onto the street again and continued to beat and torment Jews. I will not forget that day. I will remember [2/2][134] the blow because it left marks.

3 November [19]4[1]

This happened as I was coming home at 8.30 p.m. As I reached the gate of my courtyard, two German pilots suddenly appeared out of nowhere. 'Where are you going?', they ask me. I reply that I am going home and that this is my gate. '*Nein*',[135] they shout, 'You must come with us to the local headquarters.' My pleas are of no avail, I have to go with them. There was no longer anyone on the streets, since Jews were only allowed to be out until 9 p.m. I walked along in fear of my life. Even they didn't seem to know where to go. Threatening to shoot me, they led me about two kilometres outside of the city, where they stopped me, searched me and took everything I had. They pulled off my overcoat and ordered me to run home and bring more money. They gave me 10 minutes to do this. I ran in fear of my life, because I could have been shot if the goons spotted me running on the street after the curfew. Nobody noticed me and I reached home safely.

ARG 483 (Ring. I/1026 (1345))
Description: 2 slightly different duplicates each one in 2 copies, handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 148×209 mm, 8 sheets, 8 pages. On the margin of the first duplicate there is a Hebrew character: 'ה'. On the margin of the second duplicate there is a Yiddish character: 'ו' as well as a symbol: triangle (▽) with a dot in the centre. The dates of the last two entries are unclear. Documents were kept in a binder.
Edition based on the first duplicate, 2 sheets, 2 pages (with some references to the second duplicate in footnotes).

132 Mistake in the original.
133 The second page of the first duplicate starts here.
134 The second page of the second duplicate starts here.
135 (German) no.

4

After January 1941, Warsaw ghetto. Account "צוויי בילדער פֿון געטטאָ וואַרשע" *[Two pictures from the Warsaw ghetto], recorded by Hersh Wasser*

Two pictures from the Warsaw Ghetto

[11 January 1941] The following event took place on Shabbat, Torah portion *Vayechi*, 5701.[136] A Jew was walking along with his *tales* hidden under his coat. Unfortunately, a small part still showed from under his coat. A military vehicle was passing by. An S.S. man jumped out, grabbed the Jew, dragged him into the nearest gateway and forced him to take his coat off. He rips out the *tales* in which a *Chumash* is wrapped. He forces the Jew to burn his belongings and waits until everything is burnt. He beats him up and drives away.

2. *Shabbat* 18 January 1941. Two young girls were walking along Leszno Street carrying a *cholent* from the baker's. Because the road was very slippery, one of the girls fell. The *cholent* pot fell out of her hand and broke into pieces. Big chunks of potatoes fell onto the dirty cobblestones along with beans and meat. Before the horrified girls could collect themselves, a gang of beggars fell upon the food, some half-lying down and some completely, and licked it all up down to the last drop. And the cobblestones once again perfectly clean.

ARG I 468 (Ring. I/491)
Description: original (2 copies), handwritten (H.W.*), pencil, Yiddish, 150×210 mm, 2 sheets, 2 pages. Attached is a note by Hersh Wasser in Polish and Yiddish: '1941. Warsaw. Original and duplicate. Two pictures from the ghetto. Occupation customs in the Warsaw Ghetto. Recorded by H. Wasser.'

136 Genesis 47, 28–50, 26; 12 of Tevet 5701 = 11 January 1941.

5

After April 1941, Warsaw ghetto. Zygmunt (Zalmen) Frydrych, "פֿון אַ טאָג־בוך" [From a diary]. Relations in the Provisioning Unit, profiteering and thievery increasing before Passover; prices of basic foodstuffs in the ghetto

3 April 1941

From a diary

It is a good thing that workers are not being given armbands in the office, because they could get beaten up on the street. Wherever you go, people say the same thing: 'There is thievery and robbery going on. The *Gmina* grabbed the "eggs" (tin boxes in the Ż.S.S.)[137] and made off with the money.' 'They've taken money (50,000 zlotys) from the potato wholesalers so that there will be no potatoes obtained with ration cards to be found for the Holiday. The wholesalers have set aside a reserve stock which they are going to sell for a very high price.' 'Usually, they are seen going home drunk every day from the *Hala*."[138] 'They divided among themselves the coal, of which 10 was supposed to be allotted to each person at 10 kilos a head. The people who got the coal were the bakers, the restaurant owners and even those who don't have restaurants, who grow fat on bread speculation.'

'The owners of the craft workshops somewhere on Mariańska Street sell coal by tons on the street. They obtain it without a receipt from the Coal Committee.'

—

These stories are the product of the terrible pre-Holiday stampede on the street.
Coal costs 1.50 zlotys a kilo.
The worst potatoes cost 2 zlotys a kilo.
Onions cost 5 zlotys a kilo.
Bread has begun to rocket up to 4.50 zlotys a kilo.

137 In Latin characters.

138 Most probably Hala Mirowska, the largest covered market in Warsaw, built at the turn of the twentieth century.

There is a long queue in front of the Glikszer bakery at Leszno Street 31, which is selling thin little loaves for 4 zlotys. The shop is doing a roaring business.

ARG I 412 (Ring. I/464)
Description: original [?] (handwritten, ink, 220×288 mm, minor damage and losses of text), duplicate (2 copies, handwritten – U*, pencil, 145×208 mm), Yiddish, 3 sheets, 3 pages. In the original [?] at top, handwritten information – U* (pencil): "Frydrych." On p. 1 (duplicate, first copy) notation by Hersh Wasser in Yiddish (ink): "Frydrych. 109-1942/1 January." Attached is a note by H. Wasser in Polish: 'Warsaw 1941. Notes of Zygmunt (Zalmen) Frydrych on dealings in the Provisioning Unit for the Jewish District in Warsaw.'

6

16 and 21 May 194[1], Warsaw ghetto. Avrom,[139] *an entry of a diary [?]* "אַ בילדל" *[A little scene]. Conflicts resulting from quartering the homeless (refugees) in the ghetto*

[1] A little scene

16 May

I moved into the flat of the Bramingers and Baziaks at Gęsia Street 49, Apt. 49. With 10 people plus myself, entry involved a lot of pushing and shoving. Mrs Baziak is a midwife by profession. When she heard what was at issue, she wanted to jump out of the third-floor window. I grabbed her straight away and restrained her, and she calmed down. I divided the group into two: 8 with the main tenant and 3 with the sub-tenant. I sent for food for everyone and obtained a kilo of bread and 100 grams of marmalade for each person, 150 [grams?] for midday, and coffee with saccharine. Meanwhile Mr Baziak arrived looking extremely angry and declared, 'You can stay here

139 A name or a nickname; probably a person involved in the activities promoted by Yitzhak Giterman, such as forcing relatively wealthy people in the ghetto to help especially the refugees; it could have been e.g. Dawid Chołodenko; see AŻIH, Collection 302, No. 302, notebook 1, p. [43]; see also Doc. 7.

for a whole month. I will not give them 5 zlotys.' After an hour I found out that negotiations had taken place and that he was ready to give 500 zlotys.

[2] During the time that I spent here, I had a good look at how these people lived. At 6 a.m. they were already frying meat on the stove, at a time when thousands of people would have been grateful for a little soup. After midday meal they had coffee and cake. Obviously I took note of all this. We stayed there for 6 days. They came to an agreement and I disbanded the group. The proprietors were content. I am relating this merely for information purposes.

Avrom

[1] A little scene

[1]

21 May

Together with the Goldwasser family of 7 we moved into the flat of the Fajerman family at Nalewki Street 38, Apt. 2. The flat consists of 7 rooms. I occupied the connecting room, to the displeasure of the family. Mrs Fajerman told me that she would not allow me to be there, and I replied that not only I was going to be there, but that I was going to sleep there. Her husband and son arrived after an hour, called me aside and offered me a certain amount of money. I refused, and immediately a quarrel arose. The son told me that blood would soon flow if I did not leave. Needless to say I scoffed at this. We sat down to supper, the masters of the house calmed down a bit, and I had [2] a good look at what they were eating. Even today they were still eating boiled chicken, as well as milk and sweet [rolls?] in the morning – and this in such difficult times. I had a chat with Mr Fajerman, saying that in today's times it's no crime for the rich to contribute money in order to sustain the poor. And Mr Fajerman explained to me that he would not sell neither the 'h a r d' nor the 's o f t'[140] or diamonds. He wasn't interested in money, but that on Tłomackie Street there was a group of swindlers who went into the bars on a nightly basis and spent around 1000 zlotys. Needless to say, I gave this (argument) my full attention. I explained in the course of 2 hours that there were people who devoted all of their efforts to helping society and that the stories about squandered money were a common

140 In Warsaw slang: 'hard' – gold dollar coins, 'soft' – dollar notes.

lie.[141] [3] The son, Chaim Fajerman, said that he would report the whole matter to the Germans. I explained that for such a rich person 2000 zlotys can't play an important part: thousands of people dying every minute would not sit well in his eyes when such an amount of money would sustain the kitchens. He replied that he would make enquiries. During this period a child fell ill with m e a s l e s and I sent for a doctor, for which Mr Fajerman paid. We lived together quite comfortably. On the fifth day he went to do some business and was successful. He came to see me very content and thanked me for the information that I had given him. And we left the apartment.

Avrom

ARG I 403 (Ring.I/1031; 1350)
Description: original or duplicate, handwritten, pencil, Yiddish, 98×297, 117×297 mm, 4 sheets, 5 pages. Numbers of pages in Roman characters.

7

After 5 June 1941, Warsaw ghetto. Avrom,[142] an entry of a diary [?] "אַ בילדל" *[A little scene]. Attitude of the well-off ghetto inmates to the poor deportees and refugees*

[1] A little scene

On 5 June 1941 at 9 in the morning, together with 8 refugees I moved into the flat of Mr Płatowski's family, Rynkowa Street 1, Apt 7. The people with me were starving, having eaten no bread for a long time. Among them was a very young poet, Szymański, generally speaking a very fine chap. We entered the flat accompanied by 2 policemen and immediately occupied the transition room. I noticed immediately that wealthy people lived here. They immediately ran to the manager of the building, an Aryan, and he informed me that I had to leave the flat. I replied that I would not leave, because the matter was not dependent on me. This greatly annoyed the owner's wife, and she said that she was going to send for porters who would give us a good thrashing.

141 Accusations toward the members of Jewish Social Self-Help.

142 See also Doc. 6, probably written by the same person, at roughly the same time.

The rich always sing this refrain when we occupy their flats. People treated us like dogs: they locked the toilets. They did everything to provoke us, but I did not lose my nerve. The owners lived in great luxury. They were still eating rolls with butter and had eggs and the like when thousands of people could no longer even imagine this. They ate at the table where the hungry refugees were sitting, and this vexed me greatly. I turned to the owner's wife and told her that I was not demanding anything of her, but I was requesting her not to make fun of them, because these were hungry people who had been living in human conditions themselves until recently. However, she simply laughed at my words. The two serving girls in the apartment demonstrated their base character. They came in every minute with white bread and butter and ate in front of us as we sat there, provoking us. This did not [2] last long. We were brought a kilo of bread and marmalade, coffee with saccharine. I quickly told the people to sit down at the table and eat. And so our people were a bit uplifted. Meanwhile the owners went to arrange things and we received a message that the matter had been settled. We immediately left the apartment that same day in a very orderly fashion, at 2 in the afternoon.

Avrom

ARG I 404 (Ring. I/1009 (1328)).
Description: duplicate, handwritten (MS*), pencil, Yiddish, 148×209 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 4 sheets, 4 pages. In the margins a symbol (ink): circle in a circle.

8

May 1941, Warsaw ghetto. Nehemia Tytelman, diary [?] entries of 14 and 16 May 1941. Radio broadcast news on Hess's escape and on Mussolini; ghetto jokes; scenes from the ghetto police station

[1]

14 May 1941

A sensational day of the highest order. It began already yesterday as I was walking in the street. The newspaper vendor whispered as quietly as possible: 'Buy a newspaper! It's worth it. Hitler has lost his right-hand man!. . .'. In the newspaper (in Polish) I found a discreet notice

in small print in the margin stating as follows: On Saturday, Hess, the leader of the National Socialist Party, flew off on a trip, and given that as of today he still has not returned, he should be regarded as lost.

I jump for joy and shout, 'Thus shall thine enemies perish.'[143] I feel that I have to share my excitement. Since there are few newspapers brought into and read in the ghetto, I consider it my duty immediately to tell anyone I meet and I run to find acquaintances and friends.

For many the news is like a precious balsam. People's faces, which have long forgotten how to laugh, begin to smile. 'Well, very good! He is losing his best pilots and his best naval officers, perhaps he is beginning to lose the leaders themselves? May it continue!'

After the excitement has calmed down a bit, people start using their perspicacious Jewish brains and think, what does it mean, simply lost? If it were in a military action, why doesn't the High Command communicate it in the daily report? Or if it happened privately, since when is Germany such a wasteland or a jungle that airplanes with leaders can disappear without anyone knowing? [1a] It can't be anything else: Hitler has dropped another bombshell. A Bartholomew night for the Nazi leadership – like in April 1933.[144] This is really worthy of a toast!

Today the sensation reached its climax: all the German newspapers have published an official communication from the Nazi Party saying that Hess has unfortunately lost his mind, that he had taken a crazy idea into his head – God forbid – that he could convince the English leaders, his friends, to make peace, and for that reason he has flown to England. There is also a brief English report of Hess's arrival. The city seethed with excitement, in particular in the large building of our public works offices. There the best and finest of the political, economic and cultural representatives of Jewish Warsaw work, act and come together, along with the *she'erit hapletah* of the Jewish intelligentsia from all of Poland. They are all in a spin: they talk, discuss and comment upon what has occurred.

Naturally, each person has his own opinion. The sworn pessimists who never doubted a German victory now shout the loudest that they had predicted

143 From Judges 5:31.

144 The author probably had in mind rather the 'Night of Long Knives' of 29/30 June 1934, when the SA leadership, accused of actions against Hitler, was destroyed by the SS.

that Hitler would meet this end. Those very people who only yesterday maintained that it was necessary to prepare the winter assistance programmes have now become the advocates of a belief that peace talks will begin [2] no later than tomorrow. Of one thing everyone is sure: the imminent decline of Hitler who has recently donned the laurel-wreath of victory over Greece, Yugoslavia and the entire Balkan region.[145] There is common agreement on one issue: Hitler, who has consistently shouted that Germany did not suffer a military defeat in 1918, but rather that the catastrophe had been caused by the great divisions and differences amongst the German people, would now be unable to defend his conviction of certain German victory, that is, after the 'Hess affair' caused a huge breach, a giant split in this powerful edifice! In addition, Hitler, the modern Pharaoh, has declared himself God and as such can make no mistake; now his crown prince, his best and most trusted representative, has revealed himself to be either a lunatic or a traitor!

The crowd jokes about the state of the world. Inexhaustible Jewish humour tosses out aphorisms on the spot and everyone agrees: 'The miracle starts with Hess, Hitler the mangy hound will end up under ground.'[146]

I leave the office in a cheerful mood, but unfortunately the change that has occurred is not visible on the street. The 'street' in our walled-off ghetto is still muddy and cold, windy and miserable, just like the people who constantly move about with faces black as earth and drawn like yellow parchment. Nobody is capable of instilling in them a sense of hope and belief.

[2a] Hunger presses and torments ever stronger and more fearfully. Most people have not eaten their fill of bread for a long time, and many of them have not even tasted it for what seems like forever. The masses no longer believe in anything! Even the sun is not shining for us this year, and even if it should shine tomorrow, I'll be already in a dark grave.

To top off our luck, a new affliction shatters our cheerful day; the Jewish police, following the example of the Nazi military, have begun to chase down young Jews in the middle of the day for the forced labour camps. Entire streets

145 The German plan to invade Greece was developed in spring 1941. After Yugoslavia's protest against crossing its territory by the German army, the conquest of this country was included in the same plan. The Third Reich was joined by Hungary and Bulgaria. The military Balkan campaign started on 6 April 1941. Yugoslavia capitulated after 11 days, and Greece after 17 days.

146 Literally: 'Hitler the dirty dog will croak.'

are closed off, especially Karmelicka Street, which is the only through street. Once again people run like hunted dogs. Women and children on the street show them where to escape and where to hide.

I walk along with Erlich from 'Yugnt',[147] the same man who came with me exactly a year ago today from the Soviet Union. He tells me that he has no more strength from his lack of sleep at night, from sleeping in attics and shops, trembling and terrified. The previous night, policemen, those scoundrels, broke into the little room where he lay hiding and he had to pay several dozen zlotys to free himself. Now he wonders whether the woman and her son who are supposed to hide us could be part of the scoundrels. They could grab us in order to extort money from us once again, or deliver us into the hands of the hooligans to be tortured to death. [3] I try to calm him down: 'You are going with me. They won't dare to approach us. You won't be forced to pay a ransom, nor will you incur further debt on your mortgage account.'

In his fear, Erlich, however, has no faith in my strength. As he runs away, he tosses out the following: 'Why doesn't Szachna work for his friends! Why does he sit there amongst that band of thieves, swindlers and blackmailers and lay waste to our long-established, hard-won revolutionary tradition!'

Home again. Hardly had I crossed the threshold when my sister-in-law Andzia falls upon me with a wail: they've snatched Avremele and taken him to a police station. Help! On the street she sobs and relates the following: 'Ele (my brother) is ill. His legs are swollen from undernourishment or simply from having nothing to eat. Last week they worked very hard at the trade (leather goods) and earned in all 30 zlotys, so they had to fast every other day. Shimen (her second 18-year-old son) has been freed by the commission. The doctor said that if he does not leave Warsaw or obtain treatment, he risks catastrophic cardiac problems. If they take Avrom who earns a little on the street from time to time, what will become of us?'

In the police station. Avremele is in a separate, isolated courtyard of the large former military prison.[148] About 30 young men stood there

147 Probably Eliahu Erlich, leather worker, member of Yungbor [Borochov's Youth] and Yugnt [Youth] (the latter affiliated to Left Po'ale Tsiyon, LPZ), and the sports club Shtern; in the uprising in April 1943 he likely fought in the LPZ group of the ŻOB. He perished during the general Warsaw uprising of 1944, together with Hirsh Berliński and Pola Elster.

148 See footnote 17, pt. 1.

surrounded by some 100 policemen. Every minute [3a] another policeman sidles up to me and apologises, saying: 'If only he had said that he was your nephew, we would not have detained him – *panie prezesie*![149] Now we can do absolutely nothing because the Commissioner is here.'

The Commissioner, a short, fat individual with a bandaged eye and a cap with two stars on it, is to be addressed as *mecenas*.[150] (He is the lawyer Lande, a soon-to-be convert with a reputation as a highwayman.) He shouts and screams like a warden in a synagogue; the chaos is like what you find in a Hasidic prayer-room. It seems that he is not capable of controlling his bribe-taking louts because every minute the number of detainees diminishes. Perhaps he is upset at not getting a piece of the pie? I muster my courage, draw myself up and tell him curtly that he is to free him, i.e. my nephew, or I will have to appeal to Zundelewicz.[151] Upon hearing the name, he tells me peremptorily: bring a note from Attorney Zundelewicz and I will release him.'

There is nothing more for me to do here. Upon leaving, I loudly pronounce a soldierly blessing on some of the policeman and toss out a few choice words in clear barracks lingo.

As I was unsuccessfully attempting to reassure Andzia, two policemen led out Avrom. It seems that the Hess affair has been beneficial to me this time. The louts are looking for help . . .

[4]

16 May 1941. 'I can assure you that spring is coming', shouted that greatest of poseurs and demagogues of our time, Mussolini, in March of this year. As if children in their first year of school or, excuse the comparison, cats in a cellar and birds on the rooftops, don't feel or don't know in March that spring is coming.

That loudmouth on his platform demonstrated that he was the greatest ass in politics. Over the course of 20 years, he has driven his people from one war to another. His greatest achievement was to ensure that the world slaughter would come to pass, thanks to a classic, political betrayal, the first in history, and the most repulsive at the time, precisely against Germany,

149 (Polish) Mr Chairman. Reference to Tytelman's position in the Shtern sports' club.

150 (Polish) [Mr] Attorney.

151 Bernard Zundelewicz.

Italy's ally. He also effected a continuous, mean, ugly and vile betrayal of his own working masses from whom he sprang[152] and from whom he drew his strength. He carried this out in order to grow into a world power and empire and in order to be able to deceive the masses in their continual search for work, bread and peace – all of this in order to compete with communism and to deny the masses the power to decide their own fate. And finally after much speculation and cogitation about whom to fool next, and after having auctioned off at length his time-tested 'betrayal', he finally became entangled in a war against his own masters and teachers from whom he had learned and forgotten all of the above. In his stupidity he didn't see that in this respect, he would definitely not be able to overcome England.

[4a] In the shimmer of Germany's victories, *Il Duce*,[153] like every other coward, forgot for a moment that war against England is not like war against Abyssinia[154] and that the Italian soldiers can sing beautifully and shout, '*Avanti!*'[155], but like their leader himself, they are not very efficient at 'marching forward'.

And in fact the Italian army was simply ridiculed. Of their famous fleet only remnants are left and of their air force, there is nothing. They survive only by the grace of their big powerful partner on whom Italy became dependent from the very beginning.

And as if to spite him, on 16 May, which is *Lag ba'omer*[156] in the Jewish calendar, there is no sign of spring. The sun is playing tricks in Turkish, or rather in Greek, and to spite *Il Duce*, it refuses to show itself. On the contrary, today a heavy snow fell for almost an hour. It is wintry not only in nature, but also in politics. Everything is not going well with the partner, either. Something is beginning to crumble and tremble, some sort of Hess-like affair. How can you not feel a cold shiver?

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152 Probably a reference to Mussolini's membership in the Italian Socialist Party in 1901–1914; he was expelled in 1914 for his active war propaganda.

153 (Italian) leader, dictator; the title assumed by Benito Mussolini in 1926.

154 The war between the Italian Kingdom and Ethiopian Empire, 1935–1936, ended with Italian victory.

155 (Italian) Forward!

156 (Hebrew) the 33rd day of the *omer* – a minor festival on which the abstinence rules in force during the other 48 days of the period between Pesach and Shavuot are relaxed; a traditional day for outings from schools.

It is no wonder that irrespective of having taken (not I but we) Greece, Yugoslavia and all of Europe, having retaken Libya and invaded Egypt,[157] that *Il Duce* hears nothing at all! You can really go mad! Let Hess speak! Churchill has found his voice and threatens a great revolution! Resolve[?]! So won't spring come? But what about our spring, the spring of the masses and not of the masters?

[5] After the snow, the sun burst out, shining in all its splendour, and suddenly a rumour spread as well. Nobody knows from whom and from where people on the street heard that Goering had died[158] from wounds he had sustained. Everyone asks if this is possible. Each person relates exactly how he heard of it from a reliable source. There can be no doubt. People are saying that the Russian radio had announced it the previous day. There is general commotion everywhere. We stop work. Today there is nothing to be done! How can we be calm? This is surely a revolution. Some people maintain that the Red Army will certainly come to Poland. They will not let the English control Red Berlin. Somebody else shouts, 'Let's hope that Kerenski's[159] lot don't come!' People wonder why anyone is working in the *aleynhilf* when it is no longer necessary. The institution no longer has justification for its existence. I cooled down the hothead and explained that in the last war Hoover had to conduct his relief operation for a starving Europe for a whole year after the armistice.[160] Let's hope it won't go on for 2 years this time!

Meanwhile, innumerable stories spring up constantly. Some people comment and say that they are going to see whether the German gendarmes are standing at the gates of the ghetto. Others come from the street and say that the Germans are walking about with crestfallen faces.

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157 Libya was a colony of Italy before World War II. The Italian attack on Egypt commenced in September 1941.

158 For the same erroneus information see e.g. Ringelblum's entry for 18 May 1941, ARG I 446/11 (Ring. I/504).

159 Alexandre Kierenski (1881–1970), Russian politician. In July 1917 appointed Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, then Commander in Chief. Deposed by the Bolsheviks after the October Revolution, he left for France, and then for the United States. Here probably: contrrevolution.

160 Probably reference to the American Relief Administration, providing humanitarian aid to Europe, including the USSR, after World War I. Herbert Hoover (1874–1964), later the U.S. president, was the program director.

[5a] I wait impatiently to run out into the street, but once again the street does not look any different. Once again I have to walk through a corridor of all sorts of poor people. In front of my eyes there is a procession of the lame and crippled: people without hands and feet, entire limbs frozen and putrefied. It is true that individual groups stand and chat with secretive looks, but they are lost in the general grey appearance of the enormous marching masses. I stop the first worker that I know well and ask, 'Have you heard anything?' 'No', he answers, and 'even if I did', he adds, 'you know that I no longer believe that things will turn out well! What do I need your stories for? Hess isn't useful, I need a mouthful! Goering is not easy. Goebbels is not Nobel(s)[161] and every Nazi is a sadist. As long as a German soldier remains in the world, these high, dark walls will remain which turn the brightest day into the darkest night!' That same day, vehicles full of German soldiers rounded up Jewish youth for forced labour. And as usual, some of them were badly injured. Some were made to take part in the game of cutting beards. On that same day they shot some people by the ghetto gates and victims fell once more, victims of our great destitution and suffering.

ARG I 463 (Ring. I/248)
Description: original, handwritten (Ł*), ink, Yiddish, 160×200 mm, 5 sheets, 10 pages. Attached is a note by Hersh Wasser in Yiddish: 'Notes written on 14 and 16 May 1941 by Mr Nehemia Tytelman associate of Oyneg Shabes. Active participant in the distribution of the daily bulletins of the underground, already in 1941 he organised political groups together with Natan Ostrowicz. They entered into the makeup of the combat fives of the Anti-Fascist Bloc.'
Published: *Selected Documents*, pp. 73–78.

161 The meaning could be also: noble, or: from nobility.

9

1–2 June 1941, Warsaw ghetto. Author unknown, fragment of a diary [?], account of death of a Comrade Chmielnicki and of the burials at the Jewish cemetery at Gęsia Street

[1]

1 June [19]41. Comrade Chmielnicki has died. When Chil visited him yesterday, he did not think that hunger had grabbed him by the throat to such an extent that a few hours later it would carry him off completely.

Chil says that when Comrade Chmielnicki gave up the ghost, news reached the house that his eldest son had been lying dead in the hospital for 4 days, having been brought in badly beaten and unconscious from a forced labour camp. Chmielnicki did not die of hunger. He had eaten a lot of soup in the soup kitchens, and he had often received several dozen zlotys in welfare and, on occasion, food parcels. He had no peace at home, his wife and children tormented him and even hit him. In short, his troubles at home laid him low.

I restrain myself from giving vent to the scorn and curses which are on the tip of my tongue: poor idiot! Don't the thousands of homeless people and refugees get soup? Why do hundreds die every day? And what about Kuperman? He was a young man! And what happened to Comrade Geyer[162] and dozens of other comrades? And what about your often being swollen, which is the first greeting of death from hunger? Why does your wife faint frequently? Don't you see how your children look? Don't you get the same support that Chmielnicki got, and despite that won't you have to end up selling off your most indispensable possessions? How long will you be able to hold out?

Chmielnicki lived so many years with the wife who bore and raised children for him, [2] and lived to have grandchildren. Occasionally alone, but often with his wife and children, he had fallen ill and suffered. He laboured hard and bitterly for a piece of bread. He was an honest man, looking after business in the worst of conditions, went on commercial trips, was trusted by his boss with all of the latter's worldly goods. Either in the union[163] as a member of the board or in the Party as a member of the Warsaw Committee, he was

162 Perhaps a relative of Zelig Gejer (Geyer), one of the leaders of Hashomer Hatzair.

163 Perhaps a trade union.

always calm, measured, upright and sensible in work matters. He earned trust and devoted a good thirty years to his work, always as the most honest and finest of men. And suddenly, the dark cannibalistic age arrived. First Chmielnicki was turned into a thief and money-grabber, and after his death people mark his family members with shame, brand his wife as crazy and his children as patricides.

Why are you doing this? Isn't your conscience bothering you? How despicable this is on your part, you who call yourselves comrades! Even if everything that you say were true, you should keep silent, bite your lips until they bleed, even if your heart should break, and be silent! Because who, if not you, should show common sense and realise that only hunger brought this about, that his father's condition touched his son to the quick, and the other way round. Even more to the point, when you know full well that even the physically strong Chmielnicki, who was able to move walls could not hold out any longer from the watery soup and the few worthless banknotes that you get once in a blue moon with which you buy a few kilos of potatoes!

[3] Perhaps the motive for this is a pretext to get rid of his wife and children? What about the support – whatever comes even after the person has died, does it have to be cut? That would really be vile on your part, Comrades!

2 June [19]41. At the cemetery. A really nice day for a holiday (*Shavuot*), but there are very few people here, fewer than before the war on such a day. So, have people stopped dying? A member of a *khevra Kadisha,*[164] by way of greeting, soon relieves me of my intentionally mistaken idea: 'It's the same every day. The number of dead buried every day is much greater than the number of mourners who accompany them to pay their final respects. Even Warsaw natives do not have big funerals. We have become accustomed to death as well! There is seldom a *minyan* of mourners to say *kaddish*.[165] Let's hope,' he says with a bitter smile, 'there will be enough Jews left to bring us to a Jewish cemetery.' 'How many people have died today?' I ask. 'Almost two hundred. You can see them there in the shed.'

164 (Hebrew, literally) holy society; a burial society arranging funerals according to Jewish law and custom.

165 One of the oldest, most important and frequently repeated prayers, praising God, his greatness and holiness; traditionally regarded as a prayer for the dead.

Comrade Benjamin Zav[?] appears, nods in place of a greeting and mumbles, 'There's something uneasy about a comrade's funeral like this. If there were fifty, it would be more proper.'

'Fool, shut your stupid mug! I have neither patience nor nerves left for your worthless, contemptible jokes.' I burst out in great indignation which, by the way, I immediately regretted. Benjamin, poor man, sees himself right there in the first row! I look at his clothing which is more torn, tattered, dirty and shabby than usual, with a few pieces of rag instead of shoes on his feet. He has become totally shrivelled. [4] His eyes have sunken into his head.

He excuses himself, 'My feet are swollen', apparently trying to read my thoughts. 'I can't tie my shoelaces. My son sells food on the street and so I gave him the shoes which I got from the Joint. I must tell you, he is the only one who still earns a few zlotys for a kilo of potatoes or turnips. I haven't got any bread for the holiday. There is nothing left in the house to sell. I live thanks to the soup and supper I get in the [communal] kitchen. My wife and daughter go to family for food, but there isn't always any, so we often fast for whole days. Support from the Party and a little parcel of food keeps us alive, but how long will we be able to hold out? Do you know how long this can last? What are the Russians up to? People are saying that this Friday there will be a march on Russia, that America has entered the war.[166] If not', he adds a second later, 'we are all lost!'

He says this with such assurance that I don't try to argue with him and wonder at his loquaciousness, which he had never demonstrated before.

Chmielnicki's burial is dragging on. His old friend Kohn approaches and I accompany him to the shed where the bodies are laid out.

There is a big commotion around it. Vehicles are coming all the time from the town. The dead are carried on various sorts of hand carts, [5] on bicycle carts which have been modified and repainted for today's 'blooming branch of industry'. They are driven by single or double cyclists. They were followed by the old Jewish *gmina* hearses and the so-called Polish caravans from which the cross has been removed and a Star of David painted in its place. Each cart carries from four to ten corpses in crates, packed tightly together and laid out like merchandise. Most of the 'deliveries' comes from the various

166 The USSR was invaded by the Third Reich on 22 June 1941; the United States entered the war after 7 December 1941.

refugee points. Then comes the Jewish hospital with its different branches.[167] The various unidentified corpses are also collected from the streets (by the way, it often takes 3 or 4 days before someone takes pity on the dead), and lastly from the overcrowded ghetto courtyards which have been transformed into places for the 'homeless'. There is not a single courtyard which does not have its hungry legion driven out from the provinces, burnt out and made homeless, or chased out of various districts of Warsaw itself. Because of the ghetto, they lost their workshops, a roof over their heads and, as a final touch, also had to leave behind the last few possessions for which they had worked an entire lifetime.

The dead are brought without anyone to accompany them. By the way, funerals are not permitted on the streets. The drivers wear hats bearing the emblem of the firms they represent, just like those who advertise pensions and hotels in railway stations. They do the work of unloading the corpses quickly and systematically, and with such indifference as to give the impression that they are automatons and as if they are unloading slaughtered geese or calves. Every corpse has a nametag attached and is then carried into the shed. [6] We notice that the corpses are flung into it indiscriminately, onto planks or bare earth, one next to the other and one on top of the other.

The crowd thins out a little. We take advantage of this and walk towards the shed where the cemetery personnel had once kept the hearses. We don't even cross the threshold when the horror and dread caused by the terrible sight assails us to such an extent that we automatically draw back. The foul odour hits us so strongly that it causes us to catch our breath. Comrade Kohn cannot stand it and runs off.

I cannot refuse the obligation to pay my final respects to our peoples' greatest heroes and martyrs. Yes, the hundreds and thousands who have already been laid out in this shed, or are yet to lie here are our greatest national heroes. For they launched a monstrous, horrific challenge and placed a grim bet, a challenge to their most horrendous enemy and a gruesome bet with their own senses, limbs, heart, blood and mind, with all of their sentient organs.

167 Probably a reference to the Jewish Hospital on Czyste; its departments were transferred to the ghetto to various locations. See: *A Guide to the Perished City*, pp. 258–262.

In a harsh struggle against the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,[168] these our heroes, from the weakest and most afflicted of nations, in the fierce struggle among all peoples and every land – have defeated three Horsemen and have fallen in a harsh, tragic battle with the fourth. That battle was tragic insofar as they didn't even know who first and foremost had set that enemy upon them.

The first to make hunger the General was the alleged [7] ally who, in the name of 'liberty, equality and fraternity', led the world into a devil's game, giving birth to and raising that very devil.

The 'General Hunger' was supposed to force into defeat the greatest, strongest and most invulnerable army in the world which lay in the devil's sway. This invincible army had confined behind walls those heroes whom it had captured, in order that the arrows intended for the army would fall not upon itself, but on its captives. Brothers across the sea wanted to come to the aid of our heroes, but a large country stood in their way, and this in spite of the fact that the flags of that country had also been soaked with some of the blood of our heroes, and its history written with that blood, and that it had sworn to be loyal allies to the death. That country sent bread to the devil, made it stronger and fatter and, for those captured, did not even permit fraternal bread to be distributed. It introduced a false idol-worshiping, anti-philanthropic ban and fostered it. It contemplated self-help and preached it at a time when the whole world needed to help the people. There were some priests of the new idol (Moloch[169] in another form) who sought to convince the unfortunate in their time of tragedy that these victims are not without reason! Moloch needs children as victims; the best children, the only ones chosen, must be slaughtered on his altar. 'The nations must go through blood.' Europe must be reduced to ruins and then Moloch will establish his great realm in a paradise, joyous and lucid. . . . What was most tragic for our heroes was the fact that the most common scum were appointed judges and watchmen [8] in this living walled-in grave. Amongst those 'Elders' and 'Councils' were the worst thieves and bandits. They lent their hands to the basest pilfering, ripping the last bit of food from mouths, in order to warm themselves from

168 From *Revelation*: War, Plague, Hunger and Death.

169 (From Hebrew *melech* – king, god) the god of Phoenicians or Canaanites to whom children were sacrificed.

the people's last drop of blood, to get fatter and richer, and for years they have satiated themselves with the last remaining booty. Because of that they have made the terrible hell an even greater torment.

And nevertheless they kept up the fight, dogged until the last breath, the last shot, dogged although they were well aware that the sword, the poisoned bullet and even the executioner's axe was preferable to hunger! Dogged, although they had one weapon, a magic tool, which every people possesses and could sell, but which it does not want to use itself nor to depend on. This weapon is called hope. That same hope which every people calls the mother of fools is for the People of the Book the weakest and at the same time the wisest – it has become the mother of heroes.

To whom? For whom and upon whom is hope placed when everything has duped, misled, falsified and swindled? It is very hard to get an answer from a bee that rushes towards its match and then certain death, or the salmon which fights its way up river in order to spawn and at the same time depart from its life. It is also equally hard to ask Jewish heroes why they persist in sacrificing themselves for so long *al kiddush Hashem*, for whom and for what reason and with what terrible death-throes and over how many generations must one sanctify oneself?

[9] A nation known for its weak nerves is challenged by the most extreme physical endurance of suffering, has fought until the last drop of blood so that its very suffering again will be received as sanctity and touch its very essence. And thus they lie, a small number of those very heroes whom we can gaze upon with wonder.

My reasoning and deliberations are being impeded. Two demons from hell approach – nattily dressed, intoxicated and overfed officers who were the chief executioners of all the unlucky ones. They have come to take photos. They want a perpetual souvenir of their elegant, exemplary work and, in passing, to defile the heroes after their death as if they hadn't been shamed enough while living – an appropriate task for the 'true knights' of the twentieth century.

They don't want to know – these insolent, bad tempered provisional victors, that victors are not always right, that truth is not always on the side of the strong and even more so, that shame is not always on the side of the fallen heroes!

It isn't they who need to shame the fallen heroes. The first moves were made by the 'Councils' and 'Elders' who do this work to perfection.

It is dim inside the shed. Plank beds have been placed along the entire length and breadth, and upon these, as in the refugee points, lie men, women and children, packed tightly together and utterly peaceful. They are of all ages and classes; pious and cleanshaven; a common merciless death has made them all equal. [10] Those for whom there was no room, lie on the ground. They lie quietly with no sound from their mouths, but on the other hand, other sounds are heard, sounds which block the nose, confuse the mind and almost make one faint.

They all lie there completely naked and barefoot, apart from the women who are covered by a few scraps of material which one can't even call rags. Some faces still have the same expressions that you see at the refugee 'points' or in the streets. They all lie there with open eyes and mouths. It seems that there was no brotherly or friendly hand to close their eyes in their final moment.

From mouths torn right open, young, healthy teeth cry out, the only parts of the body that hunger has not managed to ravage. Enormous pain and protest are evidenced there, along with the imprint of their final death throes. The teeth serve their masters' bodies well. First of all, they gave up their gold, silver and platinum crowns, and they would themselves have been happy to tear themselves from their roots should someone want to buy them. However, since the hands, feet, muscles and blood of Jews are obtained for nothing at life's start, in the same way the teeth, like the bones of Jews, had no worth.

Are Jews, however, like dogs, horses or oxen, [11] for whom one feels compassion when they are alive, but which are eaten when they are dead? Perhaps the time will come when our modern cannibals, in the unique law of the jungle, will remember what they have forgotten until now, and then [we] will not have to suffer so much.

A single glance suffices to show how they suffered: their heads were thrown backwards, their throats exposed as if for slaughter. In addition, the neck was so thin that you had the impression that it would detach from the body if you touched it. It is impossible to imagine that a few days previously these people were alive and active. Were it not for their hair and their open, bulging eyes one could presumptuously take them for skeletons which had been exhumed after 20 years.

Here is a skeleton whose grey hair is the only indication that he was an old man. However, his stomach and chest are not to be seen. The beard

of an elderly corpse falls upon the corpse of a young man whom hunger had apparently shrivelled to such an extent that his limbs were pressed together, hands and feet entwined, and even death could not separate them and lay them straight. A row of shaven heads lie one against the other as if they were quietly telling secrets. There is no muscle or flesh upon them at all. I read the tags attached to their hands: 32 years old, 45, 28 and 29. Has hunger tormented them to such an extent [12] that they have become as small as little boys? Next to them lies someone who looks like a very fine athlete. He is naked as the day he was born except for a pair of socks on his feet. With one hand by his side and the other laid upon his chest, he gives the impression of being in the arena or a boxing ring, and is 'shaking hands' with his opponent. A closer look releases me from my hallucination. He is terribly swollen, and death has snatched him before its first messenger was able to step aside. He holds the palm of his hand on his heart as if he were trying with all his strength to prevent it from stopping. Those who took everything from him after his death were unable to take away from him the strong signs of oedema.

A bit further on lie women. Only their scraps of clothing and the tags attached to their hands help identify them as elderly. At first glance they can be taken for very young boys. Their heads are closely shaven, evidence of the frequent forced baths and quarantine which probably shortened their lives. Their jaws, eye sockets and noses were so angular and drawn that only the skin cut and torn in many places holds their faces together and distinguishes them from simple skulls, but it would be impossible for even an only son to recognise his mother in this face.

[13] There are far fewer women than men. They withstand hunger longer, which confirms once again that women have a greater capacity to withstand physical pain. Some of them have their hands and fists clenched. Possibly they felt the same pains at their moment of death as they did during a difficult labour, when children have to be torn from their womb and forcefully separated from their body.

Here lies a child. Its head lies tossed upon a woman's lap, as though mother and child both fell asleep while she rocked him. The children have their eyes closed, as though they were content not to see the world which, before they were able to recognise and understand it, they would have had to drink to the dregs its all-encompassing evil and bitterness.

Of the children too there remain only skeletons and skulls. Despite their frequent baths, they are all filthy, not from mud but from wounds and cuts which still ooze and bleed. There are also dried-up signs of blows, red, black and brown which not even the yellow colour of death has managed to wash away. Perhaps they were beaten by gendarmes at the walls as they were trying to find a bit of bread on the other side.

Next to them lie mutilated corpses without hands or feet. Perhaps they lost these parts of their bodies in the fields behind Kutno, Modlin and Garwolin,[170] when defending Warsaw or under its ruins.

[14] There is also a skeleton with empty eye sockets. It seems to me that this is the blind man who sang folk songs in our courtyard from the time I went to school. His last song still rings in my ears: 'In Warsaw I ate oranges, in Białystok I had to pick off bedbugs. Home – brother – home!'

Those killed in the camps lie in a separate group. All of their limbs drip with blood, as if they had been taken down from the Cross. They don't have a single whole limb. After they had been brought beaten up to the hospital, after their souls had departed their bodies, the post-mortem was done in order to establish that they had died a 'natural' death. They were left lying there for five days for formalities to be completed, and now they are waiting for a Jewish burial.

Almost two thousand years ago a Jewish son was led to the Cross, and because of his 'Road to Golgotha', his crucifixion, his painful death and resurrection, an entire Gospel was written. His life and pain became a religion. Hundreds of millions of people pledge courage and strength in the name of his wounds. They serve him symbolically and create a relic from his every step.

Excuse my comparison, oh ye millions of Christians! For you every dead person is holy. Of course! Try to compare the pain of today's saints, so many of whom, instead of being judged by Pilate, have been sentenced to death by entire gangs of Jewish, Polish, Ukrainian and German executioners, so many times have been crucified, tormented and defiled!

[15] Thus they lie as if taken down from the Cross. They are no longer human bodies; they are like skinned pieces of meat in a butcher's shop (I ask

170 Places of fighting during the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1920 (Garwolin) and during the Polish-German war of September 1939 (Kutno, Modlin, Warsaw). Approximately 8 per cent of Polish soldiers were Jewish.

your forgiveness, dear saints!). It is impossible to recognise Chmielnicki's son who was a club mate of mine. Blood drips from all of them: heads, feet and hands are wounded. Some have no eyes. Most of them exude a sickening odour. The people who deal with corpses are here: they fling the corpses from one place to another; they look for a certain corpse, one of the few whose relatives have come to find them and who can perhaps pay a few zlotys for the ritual cleansing and a separate grave.

I go out, scarcely able to breathe. The strong sunlight is piercing and I have to close my eyes. Comrade Cohen is patiently waiting for me. Apparently I look terrible, because he reproves me gently: 'What was the point of going inside?!'[171] A tombstone mason approaches. Until now he has taken care of my family tombs, and he tells me that now he is working with burials. 'Everybody who had a connection to the "good place"[172] has been mobilised and employed to bury the dead. They are working night and day. By order of the German authorities, all the dead who are brought to the cemetery must be buried the same day. Most burials are carried out without ritual cleansing, and shrouds are out of the question. At night, that is after 9 p.m., [16] we take the bodies as they are laid out in the shed – men, women and children (everyone is equal. . . !),[173] and we bury them in a large pit which we have prepared in advance. There's a mass grave not far from here, near the Mausoleum',[174] he says. 'Last night we buried more than a hundred. Come, I'll show you.'

On the way he tells me that he earns 30 zlotys a day wage, does piece work on the side, and also earns money from tips and makes a total of 40 zlotys. 'So you have a secretary of state's salary!', I say. 'You think so?' he says. He reproaches

171 See also Emanuel Ringelblum's notes, ARG I 446/14 (Ring. I/504), entry of June 1941; Rachel Auerbach's diary, ARG I 405 (Ring. I/641), entry of 20 September 1941; Franz Blättler, *Warszawa 1942 – zapiski szofera szwajcarskiej misji lekarskiej*, ed. Tomasz Szarota, Warsaw 1982, pp. 61–77; Stephan Lehnstaedt, "Niemieccy okupanci w Warszawie a jawność Holokaustu", *Zagłada Żydów*, Vol. 12, 2016, pp. 70–90.

172 One of several names the cemetery is called in Yiddish.

173 In Yiddish, *ale glaykh*, phrase used often by a certain Rubinsztejn, a beggar and folk philosopher in the Warsaw ghetto; it became a bitter ironic slogan of the ghetto; see ARG I 1210 D (Ring. I/600).

174 The idea of commemorating Jewish participants of the struggle for independence of Poland was born in 1938 in the Warsaw Jewish Community. The construction of the Mausoleum, designed by Marcin Weinfeld, started in 1939, and was only completed in 2019; see http://www.warszawa1939.pl/obiekt/okopowa-cm-mauzoleum.

me in surprise. 'If I have a loaf of bread and some potatoes, is that good? Can that feed 4 mouths? And look at what hard work I do!', he states. A whole day dragging, burying, dripped on by this stinking mess, don't I deserve a loaf of bread for myself? I will probably carry on doing this, but in the end I will not hold out.'

I am now by the mass common grave – it really is a brothers, sisters and children grave.[175]

ARG I 497 (Ring. I/1030 (1349))
Description: original or duplicate, handwritten (Ł*), notebook, ink, Yiddish, 158×203 mm, 8 sheets, 16 pages.

10 *After 30 July 1941, Warsaw ghetto. Author unknown [Nehemia Tytelman?], recollections of Belarus from 1940; the ghetto everyday life, rising food prices, hunger, high mortality, indifference of many in the face of death, corrupted Jewish police*

[1]

1 May [19]41 There is no sign that this is a day dedicated to our revolutionary struggle. Nature itself empathises with our mood. The sun has hidden behind thick, black clouds as though it were ashamed to show a bright face to mankind and to shine on such a day. It has been spring for 5 weeks by the calendar, and rain mixed with snow has continued to fall. The hostile, sharp wind does not let up for a single minute in this damp, oppressive atmosphere. This time the First of May is not a day for us, either: it does not presage joy, happiness and freedom. According to a P.[176] decision, we can only take an hour's break from work and have to remain where we are. We assemble in various corners of the large building. We want to rid ourselves of today with all our strength and leap from the past into the future, a future which must and will surely come. As if to spite ourselves, we sink into memories of last

175 In Yiddish and Polish, it is literally called a 'brothers' grave.
176 Perhaps the Party, or the initial of some party leader.

year's May Day events in the R.F.:[177] the enormous demonstration full of participants with waving banners in Belorussian; Jewish and Polish workers and peasants carrying numerous pictures of the greatest, finest, best and most beloved leader, as in – a religious procession without faith, without feeling, without desire for struggle and without a single bit of joy, and, most importantly, without the slogans and the calls to struggle which should have governed everything and everyone.

I become even more depressed and downhearted, I run into the street which looks even worse to me than ever; the sky is black, the earth muddy and people's faces yellow, brown, blue. Unsmiling, they walk bent over, as tired as tormented animals, their eyes without free glance, full of resignation, apathy and despair. The sun has broken through for a minute [2] from beneath the heavy, leaden clouds. I want to lose myself in reverie, and like an opium drinker, I turn my mind to visions – heavenly and fantastic – to the rays of the ever life-giving sun. But I have to keep my eyes constantly on the ground. Hundreds and thousands of beggars lie stretched out at every step I take, at every corner and gateway. I have to take care not to step on the dead who are falling like flies, on those who faint from hunger and those who feign. There are skeletal people everywhere, not yet shrivelled by the earth or in a dissecting room, skeletal elderly men, women and children, tiny ones and bigger ones, who appeal and call to me as much with their bizarre appearance as with their mouths.

In my crazed state it occurs to me to organise a demonstration today on 1 May with all of these unfortunates. What do they have to lose, what do they have to risk? I smile with a foolish grimace. Can these moribund individuals become fighters for themselves, for everybody, for a world, for a future? My thoughts are often distracted by a clamour. A young man has snatched a loaf, a biscuit or a few sweets from a passer-by or a street vendor, a poor man exactly like him, and like a mad dog, grabs it with the wrapping still on and shoves it into his mouth, impervious to the blows raining down upon him and to the fact that people are tearing pieces off on all sides. Some of these young tramps go about in large gangs, possibly to facilitate theft, but it only takes a shove from his intended victim and the bandit lies stretched out unconscious on the pavement. No one stops, nobody thinks about what will happen

177 (Yiddish) abbreviation for *Ratn-farband*, i.e. Soviet Union.

next. People are accustomed to every sort of human situation on the street and are indifferent. Very rarely a tram with a Star of David on the side passes by, packed with people travelling from one end of the ghetto to another, most often [3] those who have to take care of various matters in the 'Isle of Tears', that institution of shame that unfortunately bears the name of our *geval-tonomye*,[178] the so-called *Judenrat*. The street is full of our modern rickshaws pushed by former taxi drivers, coachmen and cartmen. They advance with leaden feet, accompanied by envious glances from thousands of people who are not lucky enough to keep aside a few hundred zlotys for such a luxury and who with back-breaking, illness-producing work are able to eke out only enough for a roll and few kilos of potatoes for themselves, their wives and their children. Most of the clients in the rickshaws lie spread out, present-day heroes,[179] the blue and green Jewish police, well-fed louts with well-stuffed mugs. They sprawl rather than sit, insolent and without scruples. They have nevertheless sacrificed themselves in service to the Jewish people, without, God forbid, any gratification or any salary. In recompense, Czerniaków the Chairman has handed over to them a monopoly on bribery and the legalisation of the most repugnant blackmail and corruption, with which they fill their mouths and pockets.

A modest gathering in honour of the 1st of May has been set for 4 p.m., but I have a session with one of the district[180] commissions where I might be able to obtain a few more addresses of wealthy, influential people from whom to extract money for the refugees. It is better to go to the session. What good are words, even the strongest, the finest, the most noble when what I need is action, effective even if very limited. Enough with words that have deceived and misled. Enough with slogans, superstitions [4] which have led people to their deaths. We need action to encourage us, to strengthen those close to us, to save whom we can. In so doing, we become part of those who want to hold out and who are able to take revenge upon everyone who created, nurtured, reinforced and collaborated in this disaster.

178 A pun based on the Yiddish words *gevalt* / violence and *oytonomye* / autonomy.

179 Perhaps an allusion to the title of the novel by Mikhail Lermontov (1814–1841), *The Hero of Our Times*.

180 In the original, *revir*, which here means part of the ghetto; it was divided into six districts.

2 May [19]41, (Friday).

A huge price-hike. Bread now costs 15 zlotys a kilo, potatoes 5 and there is no coal to be found. All products have disappeared from the shops. You can only find powdered soap . . . and cakes in the bakeries. It is impossible to walk down the street: the children's cries, the women's laments, the groans of the elderly, the invalids and cripples, the remains of erstwhile human beings, calling out almost in wonder that they are still alive. All this drives me mad and I lose consciousness. My head is pounding. I feel as though I am having the wildest nightmare. Was there anyone ever able to describe, depict or paint a picture of our daily life? It is worse than facing death! Active, majestic in its bearing, it still walks around in clean, white clothes, and over there we have a mountain of rags and human refuse which exude a horrible odour. Is it still possible to save them and to return to them some measure of a human life?

It is even worse when I stop to buy a newspaper or to give away my last few groszes. Hands, hands, dead skulls, hands clasp you as if with pliers. I try to run, but it is impossible. Thousands are massed here, pressed and pushed together on the narrow Karmelicka Street. I look for a human face I know but don't find one. [5] Have I really lost all of my acquaintances? Are there no more of them in Warsaw's Jewish ghetto? I think I catch sight of a face. No, he has to be 20 years younger. People have a yellow cast to their skin, dark faces, expressionless eyes, not a single smile. I don't see any acquaintances, but suddenly someone grabs me by the arm: 'Don't you recognise me?', and he, a former merchant, whispers: 'Lend me two zlotys.' Another, a former sportsman has taken off his team cap and groans: 'I haven't put anything in my mouth today. Give me a zloty.' I barely make it home. This time a midday meal consists of soup without bread. Bronia is weeping because she has to pay to get her husband out of labour camp. A bit of buckwheat gruel for midday meal costs 4 zlotys a person; there's not enough for bread. I sob briefly over my soup. Some people with entreaties knock (on the door): acquaintances of mine from the union, the Party, the sports club have come to plead with me, saying that since I work for the 'Joint', I should do them a favour. One person needs a shirt. Another wants 60 zlotys to provide soup in the soup kitchens so that they don't have to take money from people. A third asks that his children be allowed to come to the CENTOS kitchen. Even Forowicz[181] pleads desperately

181 Reading of the name uncertain, but most probable.

for work, saying that it would be best if I convinced Zundelewicz to make him a policeman so that he could earn some money and be assured of not going to the labour camp. The worst is going on with Sorele's: she comes in wailing. The *shiva*[182] is over, she is still very ill and needs to eat a little cream of wheat. She weeps as though she were sitting on a grave, rocking herself back and forth and sobbing on the chair. I lose control completely: instead of calming her down, I myself begin to shout and lose my temper.

[6]

8 May [19]41 Another night vigil. It started at midnight exactly. We were all already in bed when they woke my brother-in-law because he was the chairman of the house committee. There came in 3 *gmina* policemen looking for someone who had not presented himself at the forced labour camp. Because the name and address of the accused was badly indicated on the warrant, they ordered all of the men with the surname Gincberg to come forward. My brother-in-law was able to show them the house registration records which demonstrated that there was no such person in the house, but they demanded that the whole house be searched and all the men inspected. My brother-in-law sensed a brand-new attempt at extortion on the part of our so-called protectors of public order who were hoping to make a little fresh cash from the *szafa gra*. Thus he protested strongly and referred to the explicit instructions of the *gmina* chairman which stated that a special order was required in order to carry out a search of the entire house. A real scene broke out with screams and shouts, and when we showed them the door, they threatened to teach the chairman a lesson.

Before we managed to go back to bed, there was another knock on the door. In came four of 'the greens'[183] to arrest the chairman by order of their commandant. Apparently the '13' were not yet satisfied with the provocative raid on our courtyard! And those few rogues and gremlins don't want to let go of the fat bone that they have been tossed. They have begun to gulp down the money, playing innocent by contributing 1000 zlotys to their kitchen. However, 3000 zlotys remain in the pockets of various small and large-scale informers,

182 (Hebrew) seven; the period of seven days of mourning after a death of parents, children, siblings and spouses.

183 Members of 'the Thirteen' wore caps with green bands.

[7] swindlers, provocateurs, as well as mere scoundrels, found in abundance in those noble and 'needed' institutions of the G[estapo] under the aegis of the so-called Office to Combat Usury and Profiteering. They take my brother-in-law and I have to spend long hours calming my sister and telling her that her husband would come home in the morning, that it was only a question of money, and that he wouldn't be sent to Pawiak, etc. I hadn't managed to calm her down when there was another alarm in the courtyard. The earlier 3 'blues'[184] had made good on their threat. 30 men descended on us with their genuine district commandant at their head, to teach the chairman a lesson about not letting them carry out their work – their assignment and duties . . . As a result, all the inhabitants of the courtyard were dragged out of their beds. They look in the attics, in the cellars, in the pantries; they break into the shops and of course cannot find someone who doesn't exist. To their disappointment they were also unable to teach the chairman a lesson. Others had carried out that holy work first. In particular, their people had been successful. *Szafa* was playing as a full orchestra! Those who had never had a few groszes for the house committee, now had money 'to pay the devil's due.' It is better not to have anything to do with this! It's not worth it . . . and . . . so let them end up in somebody else's hands. They took away as trophies three men as living proof of their indefatigable work, precisely those men whom the commission[185] had just freed on account of illness and who of course had no proof and had no money. [8] They, like the police, were sure that they would soon come home.

It is already 6 in the morning and sleep is out of the question. The members of the house committee are standing in the courtyard and demanding that the house committees be dissolved. They again try to prevail upon me to agree with them and to persuade my brother-in-law to resign. It is of no use to argue that it is not the fault of our poor neighbours, after all. Should the kids dealing with electrotechnology,[186] the people from *schron*[187] and those unfortunates from the refugees' points – precisely those for whom the few hundred zlotys collected are intended – die from hunger because our *gmina* is

184 Jewish policemen wore caps with blue bands.

185 Commission qualifying people to the forced labour camps; see: *Forced Labour Camps* (forthcoming), Introduction.

186 Meaning unclear; perhaps participants of some technical course that took place in that building.

187 (Polish) shelter.

so corrupt? The man on the street who has not yet lost his sense of humour, ends with a joke: 'There was once a coachman who complained, saying: I have a horse which is useful for pulling, useless for carrying and useless for riding but when there is a horse plague, my shrew becomes a horse too.' It is the same with the Jewish police. They are good for nothing – they are useless! Useless to God and useless to people, but when the time comes to torment Jews, they are also a police force.

29 July 1941

[1]

3 May [1941], Saturday

Today 2 men fell dead on the narrow Miła Street, one on the new Miła Street. On our street (at the bombed and burnt-out house at Muranowska Street 37 which had claimed 70 victims), yet another dead. An acquaintance tells me that 2 people have died on Zamenhofa Street. The dead lie there and no one even looks round, someone takes pity on them and brings out a few sheets of paper and covers what had once passed for a human being.

The street is full of mud. A rain mixed with snow falls continually. The paper soon becomes wet and sticks to the mountain of rags with which the dead were clothed and the wind blows the paper away. A passer-by reflects for a minute, looks for little pebbles and puts them on the edges of the paper, in order, as he claims, to lessen the indignity of the dead. Idiot! I feel like shouting at him, 'What sort of indignity of the dead are you thinking of? On the contrary, what should be uncovered is the dishonour of the world, with its democratic free peoples, its constitutions and leaders, its dictators and presidents who gave birth to all of this, created, prepared it and carried it out!' A Jewish woman walks by and says to another, 'Look, this man probably deserved a death by stoning, but it happened after his death.' After a few minutes, no one glances at the dead man. They walk past with indifference. They take care only not to tread on him, and they walk over him as though stepping over horse dung. Even later, the street vendors stand around the dead man and shout out their wares. Bagels, postcards and ribbons are bought continually. The dead are quickly screened by an unstoppable mass of people who file by without realising that they themselves will soon be candidates for the same fate!

Removing the dead is no easy task. Sometimes they lie there [2] for two days. The dead become part of the mud, and nobody knows what these mounds

are until the Jewish *gmina* decides to remove them. People curse the *gmina* and Kaminer[188] who only know how to take money: whoever does not have 24 zlotys cannot be buried. Dozens of corpses lie for whole days, tossed into the shed in the cemetery, until somebody buries them. Other people curse the 6 [?] funeral parlours that have opened on Zamenhofa Street just to make money and have forgotten about the sacred obligation of *khesed shel emes* or *khesed v'emes*.[189] My comrade Fayvl tells me that the driver of the hearse came 3 times to Ostrowska Street 1 and when no one had 12 zlotys to pay him, he drove away until the neighbours had collected the money.

At a house committee meeting, someone said (and I don't know whether in earnest or in jest): 'We can't even think about, much less provide bread for our needy neighbours. Perhaps we should now think about burying them? Hasn't it always been a greater commandment to bury a Jew? Our neighbour Reb Ber, a rabbi, complains that this resembles the destruction of Betar:[190] the Gemara[191] states that on one side of the city the dead lay about, and in another corner of the city, they were dancing.' I interrupt him and say that the situation is worse now, because the starving collapse at the doors of the restaurants and entertainment halls, where the music does not stop for even 5 minutes. Unfortunately for us, I add, if people actually [3] danced there, here music is played to empty halls, and our best musicians, actors and artists swell up and die from hunger, just like the refugees. I would have liked, in keeping with Jewish tradition, just to celebrate a wedding on the graves of the newly dead. May it, dancing, be a remedy to stop this plague, this terrible death by starvation to which our enemy has sentenced us!

30 July 1941

ARG I 494 (Ring. I/1010)
Description: duplicate (2 copies), handwritten (BW*), pencil, Yiddish, 147×206 mm, minor damage and losses of text, 22 sheets, 22 pages.
The manuscript consists of two parts with separate pagination: the first one contains entries of 1, 2 and 8 May 1941, on the margins the Latin letter 'P' (ink);

188 Meshulem Kaminer, see footnote 514, pt. 2.
189 (Hebrew) obligation to accompany the dead, a true kindness.
190 The last city to be destroyed in the Bar Kochba revolt of 132–135 C.E.
191 Gemara (Hebrew: to complete, to explain), rabbinical comments to Mishna; part of the Talmud.

the second contains the entry of 3 May 1941, on the margins the Latin letters 'Pa'. Both parts on their respective p. 1 on the margin have the name 'Glater' (nickname used by Nehemia Tytelman) written in Hebrew characters. The dates at the bottom of each part, 29 July 1941 and 30 July 1941, respectively, might indicate when the texts were transcribed.
Edition based on the first copy of the duplicate: first part 8 sheets, 8 pages, second part 3 sheets, 3 pages.

11 *7–15 October 1941, Warsaw ghetto. [Ignacy Lipszyc],[192] notes from life in the Warsaw ghetto*

[1]

7 October 1941. Today at the opening of the Boarding and Day School for Street Children, on Nowolipki Street 25 in the presence of Mrs Chairman Czerniaków,[193] counselor Attorney Wielikowski in his capacity as Chairman of the Welfare Department, counselors Winter[194] and Rozen,[195] counselor chairman A. Gepner[196] and others, also spoke the leader of the Order Service, Colonel J. Szeryński.[197]

He said among other things: 'I knew Jewry but a little. Recently I have been watching the lives of those who are distinguished by living in this

192 According to the old catalogue of 1955, the author was a member of the Jewish Order Service; perhaps identical to Józef Lipszyc (No. 1483), see *The* Judenrat *in Warsaw 1939–1943* (forthcoming).

193 Felicja Czerniaków née Zwayer (1883–1950), educator, philosopher; before World War II she managed, together with Eugenia Zweibaum, a high school in Warsaw; CENTOS activist; Adam Czerniaków's wife; 10 days after his suicide she left the ghetto and went into hiding; she preserved his diary and in 1947, while in financial straits, she offered it to the Jewish Historical Institute; as the offer was turned down, she sent it to Canada; from 1964 the original has been at Yad Vashem.

194 Shmuel Winter.

195 Chil (Hilel) Rozen.

196 Abraham Gepner (1872–1943), merchant and metal factory owner, chairman of the Centre of the Union of Merchants in Poland, member of the Warsaw City Council. In the Warsaw ghetto, he was head of the Supply Unit; he collaborated with the Jewish Social Self-Help; he perished during the ghetto uprising of April 1943.

197 Józef Szeryński.

district. I have gained esteem for them, and today also faith.' Later on, speaking about the tragedy of the Jewish child, he said: 'I would like to live until the second ceremony, when the last Jewish child moves from the street to a boarding school.'

[2]

12 October [19]41.

Doctors call attention to the worrisome symptoms due to the general malnutrition of the Jewish population. Men suffer from weakness of the urinary bladder, which make them urinate very often, also at night. Women do not menstruate normally; their periods' delays make terrified girls and women go to specialists. There is just one reason for this: malnutrition.

[3] They point out that thanks to the Nuremberg Laws, especially the one about *Rassenschande*,[198] Jewish girls avoided the tragic fate of their elder sisters during the assaults of Petlura or Bułak-Bałachowicz.[199] Also damosels who hurried to flirt with good-looking pilots had to give up the adventures, as *Rassenschande* is a great threat! There were and there are exceptions, but luckily just a few.[200]

[4] Chairman Czerniaków

It is *erev Yom Kippur*. The communal kitchens have been closed so that, God forbid, the poor should not overeat on *Yom Kippur*. You have to fast. However, the leader, Chairman Engineer Czerniaków, along with the convert *pułkownik*[201] Szeryński went to a boarding house in Otwock.[202] This made a big impression. Is this a demonstration of something? Or simply a stupid, tactless move on the part of the *Obmann*[203] of the *Judenrat*?

198 (German) 'racial defilement'.

199 Stanisław Bułak-Bałachowicz (1883–1940), Russian, Polish and Byelorussian general; famous for his attempt to establish independent Belarus in 1920; his soldiers committed many crimes against the Jewish population. He perished in Warsaw when the Gestapo tried to arrest him.

200 In the original, text on pages [1] to [3] is in Polish.

201 (Polish) colonel.

202 Otwock (Warsaw County); information about Czerniaków's visit there is probably incorrect.

203 (German) chairman.

15 October [19]41

[5] By the ghetto wall.

A new wall is being built on Stawki Street. They build, they build and cannot finish, because . . . people have to earn a few zlotys. The *goyim* smuggle here, and one *goy* pays 10 zlotys, which is distributed as follows:

1) The Polish police – 5 zlotys
2) The masons (so that they go on building for a long time and not inform) – 2.50 zlotys
3) The *Jüdische Ordnungsdienst* – 2.50 zlotys.

The *Ordnungsmann* has to share it further. The Jewish porters take 50 groszes. The head of the [police] district[204] takes 20 per cent, i.e. 40 groszes. The *Ordnungsmann* ends up with 1.60 zlotys.

ARG I 503 (Ring. I/449).
Description: original or duplicate, handwritten, pencil, Polish, Yiddish, 105×160, 105×110 mm, 5 sheets, 5 pages.

12 *February [?] 1942, Warsaw ghetto. [Margalit (Emilia) Landau],[205] fragment of a diary (14–22 February 1942) and notes (beginning of a study?) on working youth (undated)*

[1]

14–15 February 1942, midnight

Good thing they are called . . . diaries. It is convenient to think that one does not falter, does not dream, does not aim high nor go back, but only remembers . . . Do you write and ponder?! No, I either have to fool you or myself or I get to the bottom of what's going on with me and

204 Followed by the Polish term in parentheses: *Dowództwo Rejonu*.

205 Margalit (Emilia) Landau (1926–1943), daughter of Aleksander Landau; member of Hashomer Hatzair. Along with Eliahu Różański and Mordekhai Growas, executed the death sentence on Jakub Lejkin on 1 October 1942. In the April 1943 ghetto uprising she fought in the first ŻOB unit. She was killed in street combat, when she was led to the *Umschlagplatz* with Mordekhai Anielewicz's unit. She was the first woman in the Warsaw ghetto who threw grenades at the SS men and German gendarmes.

with you. I will write it down on squared, mathematical paper,[206] so that it will be etched in my brain once and for all, like a formula, a theorem, a certainty describing the straight line or the curve of my life. Whether these things happened, I know for sure, we can testify to that fact. I know – can you hear me?! For throughout the year it set a trap inside me, tore myself apart, and then it forced me to collect pieces of myself in a public place, and now it makes me stick them together by letters, thoughts, into some kind of [x][207] whole, into a new Margalit (Emilia –?) defying the past's remains, or the future's misfortune. Which one it is – I can't know yet. In the end time will tell.

They're lying next to me. Unhappy. No, I don't really think about it, otherwise I would have to oppress myself, oppress this damned mental illness, of her, my mother and my grandmother, and even maybe a long chain of ancestors, who brought this destruction of blood upon me, just me. I would have to sympathise with myself, me, failing in my endeavours because of my ineptitude, unfolding my father's[208] imagination and shallowness into my doomed life.

Or maybe, degeneration of my childhood world puts me off all that is beautiful and in turn makes me unbearable to all that is beautiful?

They were all half-dead already, shadows of memories and hopes wandering about. I soaked in their ferocity, their fall. I know why my sophisticated bourgeois aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters of my devious daddy (when I think of them, I have to change 'father' into 'daddy', as for once in my life I share his antipathy) do not tolerate us instinctively, why they cannot stand this degeneration, so lusting for life, so glaring in the face of the satiety of their daily dying.

All the content ones refuse to tolerate me, and all the suffering ones hate me with bitter envy.

Those who are self-assured and peaceful in this mortal life sniff out a rebel in me, or maybe just a troublemaker. But why do you, Ruth,[209], and

206 Perhaps she meant the check pattern as an aid for technical drawings; this text is written on a squared paper.

207 [x] intertwined.

208 Aleksander Lejb Landau (?–1944), see footnote 9, pt. 2.

209 Perhaps Rut (Ruth) Hejman (1923–1943?), ŻOB fighter in Mordekhai Growas's group; Anielewicz's liaison officer.

others whom I cannot look after, but whom I wish I could unite with, watch distrustfully the acrobatics of my years . . .?

Once again, I think of him,[210] and he, what he cannot stand in me, and yet what draws him to me. I love this strange seed he carries inside, the stem of which climbs towards childlike joy, until it is swayed by a wind of tormenting doubts, always precluding him from reaching joy greater than the first laugh of a playful child. Did he take a liking to my eagerness, my feverish need to act, fierce despair, my load of unhappiness? No, it's only my sick imagination; he is at the other end of life, and I collect broken pieces of myself every night . . .

Well, I haven't found anything yet.

But at least so far I am on the track of terrible [. . .]

16 February 1942, 9 in the morning. The flame blazed up in me, I want to write again. For the first time I am able to communicate my thoughts clearly. I find it appealing, this ongoing discovery and detection, this emotion of a risk-taker, coming unprepared for an examination. Will I show it to anyone? It will certainly be a hundred times more important to me than to anyone else; nobody will ruminate about this writing, they will just read it. A friend will examine the probability of facts, a stranger will judge my style and imagination. And they? They would take it in, they would even like it, but they would not believe me, they would not see 'me' there, the everyday 'me', who lives in the image and likeness of each of them. They would ask ridiculous questions, and I would explicate solemnly, like a priest speaking Latin to his flock. Maybe I'll show it to them anyway. I do not feel the need yet.

And I will not show it to him. Oh, he lives too much to ponder on it, at best he will only husk the seeds of my ambitions or the sporangia of my illness. And I do not want that, I cannot mean that.

My attitude towards him may be, first and foremost, a manifestation of my self-contempt. I think, as a matter of fact: he is bigger than that. Damn it! Either I am right already or I will have it right now and announce it to the whole world, even if you all laughed, or, out of boredom and for sheer fun, looked for 'tasty bits'. The very act of writing, the ability to present my feelings right away, absorbs me more than the analysis of these fascinating

210 Most probably of Eliahu Różański, her boyfriend or partner; see also footnote 205, pt. 2.

phenomena. I live too much in the present, following the impulse of desire, to even find focus in myself. He once called it dryness, but no, it is rather an adaptation to the passage of time, growing out of old dresses; as someone who was starting not to like me once said maliciously. Or maybe I want to clean myself a bit, dress neatly for those whom I owe my love to? I'm lying in bed. I can neglect my days again, as I used to, even recently I did allow them to grow rusty with inaction and lazy ruminations. No, he wouldn't let me. Or maybe I'm deluding myself, maybe he doesn't even notice it at all, and it's just my instinct of self-preservation which intensifies my impotence. I'm getting up. I have written for an hour.

22 February [19]42, 11 in the morning

It's a good thing I haven't written for a couple of days. I was full of sensations for a day. And sensations desecrate thoughts.

[...][211]

[1a] Maybe it is not true that I will turn out differently and that it will be different for me. At best, I will become a noisy cook.

[2] Working youth
1. Young people impoverished because of the war (Sarna, Ludwik).
2. Young people in German outlets and in workshops (Jonatan and Oliwa).
3. Young people at office work and in institutions (Irka and Izrael).

1. How fast one frees oneself from one's past! She is seventeen, but now she is not a biography of her past anymore, of her years gone by. Just this last year, that sharp curved outline of her life's line[212] is the black colour of her figure. A girl, an only child. Her father, a manager in Bank Zachod[ni][213] in Warsaw. Her mother, coming from a family that belonged to the industrial elite of Łódź. In the idleness and boredom of married life, she has love affairs with random acquaintance and dreams, while to her daughter [. . .] which would realise her romantic and palatial aspirations.[214]

211 Three lines written in pencil, partly illegible, impossible to translate in a consistent way.
212 [x] is permanently stuck inside her.
213 (Polish) Western Bank. It was Hipolit Wawelberg's Bank, on Fredry Street 6.
214 [x] As a 'small child', she was very serious, acting very seriously [!], independent [!] especially when around mama's girls from the private school.

The daughter attends a private girls' high school. She goes on winter and summer holidays. She is one of those who receive pocket money and treats with cinema tickets.[215]

The father, a part-time swindler who is bankrupt, is in debt, but his social position remains unwavering for now, his credit is open, his house luxury intact.

ARG II 253 (Ring. II/173)
Description: original, handwritten, ink, Polish, 221×354 mm, 2 sheets, 3 pages.

13

22 May 1942 – 28 January 1943, Warsaw ghetto. [Yekhiel Górny]:
(1) *[Diary], 22 May – 22 July 1942;*
(2) "חורבן וואַרשע" *[Destruction of Warsaw]; notes from 21 July to 1 September 1942;*
(3) *[Diary], 4 November – 21 December 1942;*
(4) "אַקציע 2" *[Aktion No. 2]; notes from 18 to 28 January 1943*

(1)

[1][216]

10 July [19]42 [A]
[November 1939] From my note-booklet
(via Kalisz–Drohiczyn)[217]

. . . We left the city behind. We can breathe a little easier, the threat of being caught, and, together with whole groups of Jews, sent in an unknown direction, has passed.

215 [x] sweets.

216 This section of the diary has its own original pagination. Although it is dated 10 July 1942, it is a record of the author's departure from Kalisz in November 1939. Perhaps it is re-written from earlier notes. The editors decided to start the diary with this entry, avoiding the break in the chronological order of the July entries.

217 Drohiczyn (Siemiatycze County).

It is still warm outside, although it is 16 November [1939] already. In the morning, a few minutes after nine, we arrive at the train station.

. . . There are already large crowds of Jews with packages, parcels and knapsacks.

Everyone is waiting, people are very nervous and impatient, they look at the wall clock every now and then, glance through the windows at the train to Warsaw, and at a gendarme standing by an exit, [2] trying to read his mood from his eyes, hidden under a deep helmet. The Jews are already wearing yellow patches, the ordinance was issued yesterday afternoon.[218]

My friend Winter and I stay out among Christians, we don't wear yellow patches, and although our hearts are racing out of fear that some gentile acquaintance might betray us, we are sure we will succeed.

Our luggage consists of only two knapsacks. We are not afraid of any check-in, but there are many friends and relatives at the station with large packages – they need to be helped somehow.

[Trying] to not be noticed by Christians, we take two large suitcases from my uncle, who is here with his whole family, [3] nine people in total. Both of us (me and Winter) are getting ready to go to the platform. In front of us there is a Jewish family of four, with large packages. A gendarme tells them to untie the sacks and checks each item, and seeing us (two *goyim*), he smiles, pushes the Jews away with their packages and lets us pass quickly.

Moments later, my uncle and his family leave, his long, grey moustache help him pass for an ageing peasant. The Jewish family who was in front of us, left at the last minute.

The train arrives at ten to ten. There are only a handful of passenger cars, the rest are freight cars. My relatives cram into the latter, we help them load their parcels – while me and Winter sit in comfortable passenger carriages. However, not even 5 minutes pass and they ask everyone to leave, with no exceptions, even the officials who have documents to certify that they are travelling for business purposes. The cars [4] are reserved for officers, and that's that.

218 Reference to the ordinance issued on 14 November 1939 by Friedrich Übelhör, *Regierungspräsident von Kalisch-Lodz*, ordering Jews to wear a yellow armband on the right arm. Usually 'patches' mean the yellow Stars of David on backs and chests, made obligatory by Arthur Greiser's ordinance of 12 December 1940, but the author uses the word also for white armbands; see the entry of 14 June, 9 in the evening.

We are looking for the car with my family inside. They had foresight and locked the car so thoroughly that we had to send different signals before they let us in. We got settled, and with a few more Christians from our car, we sit and wait.

In Kalisz, at the station, the train stops for no more than 4 minutes – and here more than 15 minutes has passed already, and we are standing still. Suddenly, some commotion . . . Order can be heard '*Alle Juden raus*,'[219] There are Christians in our car – smugglers, who also fear for their life. A few of them move to the door and exclaim: *Tu sami Polacy, Żydów nie ma*.[220] The trick works.

The Jews gathered on the platform are rounded up to the last freight cars, where horses were recently kept. Hundreds of parcels of the property that they had managed to save – are lost . . .

Finally, at half past ten, the locomotive whistles and we move on. [5] This is how we arrive in Łódź. A Christian who travelled with us buys tickets to Warsaw for everyone (in Kalisz we were not sold a direct ticket to Warsaw). We have to wait almost two hours again. It is freezing outside, there is a snowstorm, we are terrified, one would like to have some hot tea, but it is dangerous to move to a lower level, they are capturing people for work, and secondly, you must not wander, because maybe a train will arrive. Finally, at 4 p.m. we are sitting in warm carriages. The route, however, does not head straight to Warsaw. In Koluszki[221] there is a change – who knows what awaits us there. On the way, we hear that they are playing a bit with Jews in Koluszki.

We decide to stay with the Christians. The only person among us who looks like a truly Jewish woman is my uncle's daughter-in-law. However, we believe that in the dark she will go unnoticed.

Indeed, I forgot to report on a funny episode that happened in a freight car on our way to Łódź:

It was dark in the car, the heavy door [6] was locked, and we were sitting on the packages. My cousin Izak Borowicz, who was sitting next to his uncle, wanted to play a practical joke, which would almost end with him getting whacked with a thick stick, if not for a sudden – in winter – instance of the electric light turning on. He literally stuck his hand in his uncle's

219 (German) All Jews, get out.

220 (Polish, in Latin characters) There are only Poles here, no Jews.

221 Koluszki (Tomaszów Mazowiecki County).

pocket, and the latter, not seeing who it was in the dark, grabbed a stick and cried out, *Panie, zaraz po łbie, pan zobaczy, jak się kradnie*[222] – and then . . . the bulb went on. We all burst out laughing . . .

Koluszki – the train stops. Conductors announce that we will have to wait for an hour for a second train. We hang around among Christians, it's dark, and we are feeling nasty, piercing cold. We cannot leave the open platform, so we walk back and forth. A Christian woman appears, carrying hot tea, and she is instantly swarmed from all directions. Winter, who is an experienced soldier [7] and has already crossed many borders illegally, buys the whole kettle from the peasant woman, paying a hefty sum of three zlotys.

We warm ourselves up. We drink with our fellow Christians. Meanwhile, the peasant woman runs home to get another kettle. At this point, a *zawiadowca stacji,*[223] a freshly minted *Volksdeutscher*, appears at the station, speaking very broken German, and refusing to speak Polish. He orders all the Jews to stand separately. We remain among the Poles.

Jews are forced to sing various Jewish songs and to cry out from time to time: 'We wanted this war', 'We are to blame for this war.' A few young people who served in the Polish army are ordered to jump over the tracks. One of the young people broke his leg while doing this 'holy' gymnastics. The entourage is enjoying the jokes of its chief, they are laughing loudly. Many Poles, deeply dismayed by this fact, murmured quietly:

[8] '*Psiakrew,*[224] his time will come as well.'

After an hour or so a train arrives, so packed with people that we barely managed to squeeze into the cars. Many Jews remained on the station's platform, but despite incidents that we faced later, they managed to travel to Warsaw with us.

The train stopped at a station past Skierniewice. According to a telephone report, the route was occupied and we had to go back a number of stations. And so we rode back and forth almost half the night. At a small station, when all train personnel were drunk, we stopped for a long duration of time. Soldiers who could barely stand on their feet began to run from one car to the next, looking for Jews, and they dragged them out into the open field,

222 (Polish) Mister, you'll get [whacked] on the head and you'll see how to steal.

223 (Polish) station-master.

224 (Polish) damn it.

and beat them up so severely that the unlucky ones barely escaped alive from their murderous hands. That very moment they lost the last remnants of their luggage, which were immediately picked up by eager people, even among the Jews.

Another group starts to look for [an opportunity of?] smuggling.

[9] A stroke of fate: the soldiers found and confiscated a few bottles of vodka from a Christian woman. A Pole, a former post office clerk, who was still wearing his uniform and standing with me by the car window, suddenly said, while watching the old Christian woman cry and argue with a drunk soldier: *Jeśli ktoś da zagrychę, to przyniosę wódkę.*[225]

A woman who smuggled the sausage and bacon promised to give a sausage immediately, another Christian opened her basket and took out some bread and butter, and a third woman began to take biscuits out of her packet.

The clerk wastes no time, jumps off, and approaches the place where the German left the vodka. The old woman, unable to recognise the man in the dark, starts to cry and plead again, but our friend is now too busy thinking of how to get the bottle.

[10] Suddenly, a movement: another soldier chases a Jew who is escaping over the rails towards a field. The Jew is running. The first soldier leaves the old woman with her vodka and rushes to help catch the Jew. Both use the situation to their advantage. Our friend grabs a few bottles, the old woman grabs the rest, and they retreat.

The vodka is saved and we will drink. Within seconds, they are already in our car. The postal clerk gives all the goods back to the owner, and waits for her reaction. The old woman had been a smuggler during the previous war and knows how to behave in such circumstances. She takes out a large bottle of vodka and hands it back to him. A woman with a child has a small shot glass that soon changes hands. Both of us drink a *Bruderschaft,*[226] to friendship [. . .], who likes this bitter vodka a lot, gets [. . .] and by the end has a whole lot left, which he drinks straight out of the bottle.

The train is still not moving. Howling is heard from the last freight cars, where the Jews are kept. They are being battered there.

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225 (Polish, in Latin characters) If someone gives a snack, I'll bring vodka.

226 (German) literally, brotherhood; to drink *Bruderschaft* – to get on closer friendly terms with somebody.

[11] Meanwhile, the two Germans mentioned above return, while behind them a shadow of the chased Jew lingers. The two start to look for the vodka, but it is dark, so they swear mightily at the *verfluchte Polen*.[227] The locomotive whistles. Finally we ride on, without any obstacles, and at 8 in the morning we arrive in Warsaw.

B

I have not been to Warsaw for several years. I can still see that lively city before my eyes. I could not imagine that three weeks of warfare could destroy so many of the magnificent buildings, that entire streets could be destroyed, whole parts of a city wiped out.

Even though before the war I knew my way around Warsaw and was familiar with all the streets in the city centre, this time I stopped after leaving the train station, having no idea which direction [12] Świętojerska Street is, where my sister was living before the war. My family travelled with some parcels, so we took a small peasant cart, which was the only means of transportation in those days. After an hour-long travel, we arrived at Świętojerska Street 34, but we could not pass through because the street was not yet completely cleaned. So we grab the parcels, some by hands, some on their shoulders, and we start to walk. After approaching the house, we start asking around about flat No. 10. There is nobody there – a Jew from that house informs me – nobody lives there anymore. A shrapnel fell into her flat, but it did not damage anyone, the Jew reassures me, and she moved to Miła Street 69.

Tired after the strenuous journey, we set off again towards our destination. [. . .], groaning, and we can hardly shuffle our feet because of these heavy packages, yet we continue. We follow a roundabout route, because they are capturing people on Nalewki Street to send them for labour, so this section of the journey takes over an hour.

[13] We are resting. We can see the house already. My sister receives us well. I have met my mother, coming from Pułtusk, there. My father left two days prior, for Russia.

We have rested for three days, visited our friends, and a part of our group set off for Russia. My uncle and his wife remained in Warsaw.

The journey through Siedlce went well. We are travelling towards the Bug with a peasant from Siedlce. We have spent a few pleasant days in Siedlce,

227 (German) Damn Poles.

meeting many people from Kalisz who are also getting ready for the journey. My uncle's sister found her in-laws here, they welcomed us very warmly. The moment we arrived in the town [. . .] robbed [. . .] of my cousin's back. We stayed at the peasant's house (I don't remember the name of that village) the entire day long, and at night we set off towards the Bug on a [. . .] a cart.[228]

[1]

22 May [19]42 At 3 p.m. near Gęsia Street 12, Polish police stopped a Jewish trader who was walking with a Christian. They demanded 100 zlotys to release the Christian. The Jew and the policemen entered a pastry shop in the same building. As I later learned, the food cost 20 zlotys.

22 May, 8 in the evening. One of those who had been taken away during the night of 21 to 22 May 1942 reported that [2] 300 men had been detained, 25 of whom had been freed by a medical commission. The majority of those detained were carpenters, locksmiths and metal workers. My informant, a young man of about 21, was one of those freed by the medical commission.

22 May, 8.30 in the evening. There is a stampede on Karmelicka Street. From a distance you can see the infamous truck from 'Pawiak'. A few Jews were beaten with the long whips that people had. [3] The truck drove through the street creating more excitement, and people rushed home.

Two Gestapo men were standing on Więzienna Street by the walls, where the Pawiak sentry box is located. We were obligated to greet them. A Jew who did not remove his hat was ordered, *Zurück*,[229] and he was made to go back to the corner of Dzielna Street, remove his hat and proceed in this manner down the alley.

[4]

Saturday, 23 May [19]42. 6 in the morning On the corner of Smocza and Pawia Streets an unknown woman abandoned a child who was about 3 years old. The child sat on the step of a shop all night.

228 There is striking similarity between this account and that by Natan Koniński; see: *Accounts to the Territories Annexed to the Reich,* Doc. 86, part IV.

229 (German) go back!

23 May 6.10 in the morning There is a dead body lying on the corner of Smocza and Nowolipie Streets.

23 May Obituary notices of the *goyim*:
The following three obituary notices were posted on the shutters of the funeral parlour of B. Pinkert [5] at Miła Street 25:
'The late Elizabeth Kajzer, died 16 May 1942
Fortified by Holy Sacraments, etc.
The late Paul Harder, died 16 May 1942, etc.
The late Walter Guttsman, died 17 May 1942'[230]

23 May, 4–5.30 p.m. A very tall gendarme arrived with a truck to collect bricks (he comes every day) to the corner of Przejazd and Nowolipie Streets, and this time he grabbed people for forced labour. [6] He fired two shots into the air in the office of the warehouse where the *likwidatura*[231] was.

23 May, between 7 and 8 in the evening 2 Gestapo men who were stationed in Pawiak strolled along Smocza Street from the corner of Gęsia Street to Nowolipki Street and beat Jews with their whips. This lasted a whole hour. People who tried to flee on rickshaws were thrown out of them and [7] ordered to run on foot.

24 May [19]42 On the night of 23 to 24 May (Saturday to Sunday) 5–6 men were seized by the gendarmes, taken from their homes and shot. Among them were Mssrs Levin from Nowolipie Street 21, Mandelboym[232] and Szymanowicz. All 3 (three) of them are former leading members of the '13'.

24 May, 7.30 in the morning Soldiers seize people on the corner of Nowolipie and Żelazna Streets to carry bricks.

230 In the original, obituary fragments in Polish, in Latin characters.
231 (Polish) office dealing with the calculation and payment of receivables.
232 His name was probably Mandel; see Ringelblum's note, ARG I 445/13 (Ring. I/503/1).

24 May [19]42 [8] Mr W. a co-worker in the 'work battalion' reported today that all of the 275 men seized for the *obóz*[233] on the night of 21 to 22 May are still at Tłomackie Street 4.

[9]

25 May 2 very elegantly dressed men were taken from the house at Karmelicka Street 27. They were taken to Pawiak where they were beaten thoroughly. They were then ordered to defecate in their fedoras and were forced to eat it, after which they were thrown out onto the street. The two men are lying there ill.

[10]

[. . .] May 1942 On 15 May all of the Jews from Pabianice[234] were expelled in the following fashion:

They were all assembled in one place. The children age up to 10 were ordered to wear a tag around their necks with their name and age. Those who were healthy were sent away by tram to the Łódź ghetto.

Those who remained – the cripples, the sick and the elderly, as well as children up to age 10 years old – were to be sent away to an [11] unknown destination.

There were 10,000 Jews in Pabianice.

At the same time the same thing took place in Brzeziny,[235] but some Jews were allowed to remain.

[12] I

27 May [19]42 A search was carried out today at the flat at Nowolipie Street 21, which had belonged to Mr Levin who was shot a few days ago. The search lasted one hour and was carried out by two men, one in civilian dress and one uniformed Gestapo man.

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233 (Polish) [forced labour] camp; it also appears further in the text.

234 The Jews of Pabianice (Łask County) were deported on 16–18 May 1942, the majority to Chełmno on the Ner (Kulmhof), the remainder to various labour camps.

235 The Jews of Brzeziny were deported on 12–20 May 1942, the majority to Chełmno, the remainder to the Łódź ghetto.

II

28 May [19]42 At dawn the body of a woman who had been shot was found on Dzielna Street near Zamenhofa Street. Her identity and the motives for her murder have not been established.

III

28 May On Bagno Street today two Jews were shot by two gendarmes on a motorcycle. One of the Jews was a smuggler and the other a member of the Jewish *Ordnungsdienst*.

IV

28 May Yesterday the courtyard committees received a communication from the Jewish Police districts, saying that the *Sicherheitspolizei* are searching for 4 men, former leaders of the '13', Mssrs: 1) Gancwajch, 2) Szternfeld,[236] 3 and, 4) the Zachariasz brothers. The entire courtyard was threatened with death should they conceal them.[237]

[13] Good and bad guard posts

28 May At the Tłomackie-Leszno gate there was apparently a good guard between 8 and 10 in the morning. During that time the children made some *obroty*[238] with bread and brought in up to 10 kg of potatoes each time.

However, between 4 and 5 in the afternoon, at the Nalewki-Świętojerska gate there was a very bad guard. Seizing potatoes from the poor children was not enough for the gendarmes; they also beat the children mercilessly. At the same time a truck loaded with potatoes was blocked[239] by the same guard.

[14] V

29 May [19]42 Today Mr Uszer Szymanowski, a Jew from Tłuszcz, was released from quarantine at Leszno Street 109 along with the Bursztyn family, that is to say 12 people. He said that on Wednesday, 27 May 1942, all of the Jews

236 Dawid Szternfeld.

237 See: *Czerniakow's diary*, entry of 24 May 1942.

238 (Polish) rounds.

239 Literally, 'burnt'. The meaning is that it was denounced or that the bribe was insufficient.

from Tłuszcz, 700 souls, were driven out.[240] The expulsion began at 4.30 in the morning. Soon 8 men were shot on the spot, among them the chairman of the *Judenrat*, Mr Taub.[241] Older women and children rode on wagons. All the men, young and old alike, as well as the young women, had to go on foot. On the road, the escort on horseback fired into the crowd, shooting around 100 men. In the course of a short conversation, Mr Szymanowski gave me the following names of those who had been shot:

1) Taub, the Chairman of the *Judenrat*
2) Radziminski[242] and his son
3)
4) Lerner
5) Zalcman
6) Złotówka[243]
7) Fryd
8) Radoszyński and his brother Moyshe
9)
10) Stopek and 2 sons
11)
12)
13) Abram Herman
14) Nowina Abram
15) Ostrzega
16) Lustig
17) his sister
18) Wandel
19) his daughter
20) Płatkowski
21) Berke
22) his brother
23) Cembał Abram
24) Gutowicz Moyshe
25) Zabraniecki Dawid
26) Zabłudower
27) Goldwaser Aron
28) Goldwaser Yankel
29) Szafran
30) Ferczer Shoykhet
31) his son
32) Minsker
33) Nowina Yitzkhak
34) Lewin Yitzkhak
35) Zalcman Leyb father
36) Zalcman Shloyme his son
37) Chrynowiecki
38) Bergman B. Mordeckhai
39) Frydman Simkha
40) Grynhaus
41) Zylberberg Arye
42) Zylberberg Mendel

240 Tłuszcz (Warsaw County). The Jews were forced to move to the Warsaw ghetto; see: *Accounts from the General Government*, Doc. 180; some people listed below are mentioned there as well.

241 Szmul Meir Taub (?–1942), chairman of the *Judenrat* in Tłuszcz following the death of Gutman Popowski.

242 Wolf Radzymiński, a member of the Tłuszcz *Judenrat*.

243 Mordko Złotówka, a member of the Tłuszcz *Judenrat*.

43) Sztern
44) Osowski Shaye
45) Podstolski Khaim
46) Podstolski Hersh
47) Ajchenbojm Zalmen
[14v] 48) Grosman Shloyme and others

29 May [19]42 Today the Jewish police, starting at 1 p.m. carried out an *obława*[244] and seized Jews for the *obóz*. Those whose work and registration papers were in order were released. Needless to say, 'people were released for money as well'. This is no surprise. It has been a long time since the Jewish police have had such an income.

The word is out that there is supposed to be another *obława* tonight. Men up to 40 years old have been taken.

29 May Mrs D. crosses over almost every day to the Aryan side to bring back butter and other goods from which she can make a profit. She buys her merchandise from Christian acquaintance in the villages along the road from Warsaw to Serock.[245] According to her, the Christians say that although, to a layman, the fields look well sown, this year they have sown much less than the previous year, tossing the seeds far more sparsely.

[15] I

30 May On 29 May 1942 the authorities permit Jews to be outside until midnight. In this way it is possible to deliver packages of clothes and foodstuffs to the 900 Jews who were seized during the *obława* on 29 May.

II

30 May Today at dawn the Jews who had been seized were sent away. Amongst them are supposedly 60 to 70 young boys aged 14 to 16 who had been in the Jewish prison on Gęsia Street 24 for smuggling.

III

30 May [19]42 During the night of 29 to 30 May 1942, 11 more Jews were shot, among them 4 men from a family at Mylna Street 11a (the family is said to come from Grodzisk and is very wealthy);

244 (Polish) round-up.
245 Serock (Pułtusk County).

a hairdresser from Nowolipie Street 50 where people claim that he was already searched a few times;

a certain Bornsztajn, a former policeman from the '13' who was then in the *Ordnungsdienst*.

4 men were stopped by the fence on Przejazd-Nowolipie Streets. They were apparently smugglers, and someone said that one of them ran back. The 11th [person] is as yet unknown.

IV

30 May Today three small vehicles and one large passenger vehicle drove around the ghetto. In the latter sat senior German officers wearing dark-blue uniforms, members of the special anti-parachute units.

[16]

30 May [19]42 *Rassenschande*

At midnight on Sunday 24 May 1942 the following event occurred at Zamenhofa Street 9: The wife of Mr L. had to do some washing on Sunday night. Thus she had a chat with the owner of her flat, telling her to be at home by 8 p.m. in order that she, Mr L.'s wife, might fetch some water (the owner lives in the kitchen). However, the clock struck 9 and there was no sign of the woman. Her husband, a Jewish policeman, became very agitated, because he too was unable to get into his room. At 10 [o'clock], the inhabitants of the flat started to look for the woman amongst the neighbours, but she was nowhere to be found. The policeman, who was very tired, lay down in a second room on a wooden bench and fell asleep. Only at 12 at night was movement heard in the kitchen. Mr L., for whom it had seemed a shame that 6 kilos of wood was burnt to warm water, went into the kitchen with a bucket, not anticipating any problem. There he caught sight of a high-ranking German (an officer), thoroughly drunk, with a revolver in his hand. Spotting the Jew, the German called out, *Jude! Komm hier*![246] In the meantime, the woman woke her husband the policeman who, upon seeing a German, took to his heels. The officer remained in the flat until 3 a.m.

246 (German) Jew, come over here.

It transpires that the woman, who belongs to that category of 'better type' had been with him in a restaurant since 9 in the evening, drinking and having a good time.

Her husband gave her a good thrashing, but she probably did not come out the worse for it, because when Mr L. went back again to get water at 8 the next morning, [16v] the married couple had reconciled, although they hadn't been married long.

Apparently, even with pretty Jewish women senior German officers can commit *Rassenschande*.

30 May [19]42 On 29 May 1942 at 9 in the evening, two Germans (gendarmes) brought a half-paralyzed Jewish woman into the Jewish police station of the District III at Leszno Street 40. After making two Jewish policemen responsible for her, they said that they would be back for her. They came around 11 p.m., put the woman on a chair and carried her to Leszno Street 5 where they shot her in the presence of several Jewish policemen. Who she was and the reasons for her murder are not yet known.

[17]

I

1 June [19]42 Last week Gestapo men threw a paralyzed Jew out of a window on the [. . .] floor. The man died on the spot. This happened on Mylna Street.

II

1 VI [19]42 Today, in the early morning, a Jewish smuggler was shot on Krochmalna Street.

III

1 June [19]42 At the entrance to the 'Labour Office' at Leszno Street 84 there was an enormous queue because of the Friday *obława*. From 7 in the morning hundreds of men stood and waited until the guard at the gate would let people in. In the meantime, the gendarme had a little fun and shot into the air several times.

IV

1 June [19]42 Around 6 in the evening shots were heard coming from Pawiak. They lasted half an hour. Every 3–4 minutes 6 shots were repeatedly heard.

[18]

3 June [19]42 Today two large trucks arrived from Łódź carrying Łódź Jews.[247] The guard on Leszno Street sent them back to the Aryan side. Mssrs Kohn and Heller intervened immediately (the Jews are coming through their mediation) and the Jews were let in to the ghetto by the guard post on Nalewki Street.

II

3 June [19]42 The following incident occurred on Karmelicka Street after the arrival of the Jews from Łódź: a woman who had just arrived from Łódź was riding in a rickshaw from the direction of Nalewki Street. On the other side of the road coming from Leszno Street another rickshaw approached, carrying 2 young women. Suddenly a cry was heard, 'Oh, my goodness!' People took fright and began to run through the gates. It turns out that the women were good friends from Łódź.

III

3 June [19]42 Yesterday, 2 June 1942, a postcard arrived from Wieruszów[248] in which Mrs F.L.[249] had written to her brother that on Monday 26 May 1942 Jews were tagged with the letters A and B.[250] [19] The same is supposed to take place this week. According to the postcard, those who were assigned the letter A were younger people while those assigned letter B were older.[251] Mrs L. also writes that a letter has arrived in Wieruszów from Częstochowa with information stating that one can apply to travel to *Palisty[na]*[252] (Palestine). In this connection, she asks her brother to find out more about this and to keep her in mind as well.

247 People involved in smuggling Jews between the two ghettos collaborated with the Gestapo. See Doc. 15.

248 The ghetto in Wieruszów was established in October 1941. Between 11 and 23 August 1942 the Jews fit for work were sent to the Łódź ghetto; the remainder were deported to Chełmno.

249 The initials can be read: P.L.

250 In Latin characters.

251 The same procedure took place in Pabianice, see footnote 234, pt. 2.

252 (Polish, distorted, in Latin characters) Palestine.

IV

3 June [19]42 In the Jewish Labour Office Leszno Street 84 On 1 June [19]42 at 7.30 a.m. I go to the Labour Office to ask for an employment card. On the corner of Nowolipie and Żelazna Streets there is already a long line of people waiting for 8 o'clock when the *Wach[t]meister*[253] will deign to begin letting people in.

It is 8.30 and finally they are beginning to let in 10 people at a time.

At 9 a.m. I go away. There is no point in standing there. I decide to come back tomorrow at 6 a.m. and so I did, but there are a lot of fools like me in Warsaw and at 6 in the morning there was already a long queue of up to 500 people.

[20] I think to myself that I have to come up with a plan. I stroll down the whole length of the queue and near the sentry box I spot an acquaintance. There are about 50 people in the queue between him and the entrance. The clock strikes 7 (today there's a good guard) and people begin to go in. As I chat with my friend, I slip into the queue. At 7.30 I am on the steps. At 8.15 the official served me and wrote out a chit for the cashier. And there the tragedy begins. There are roughly 25 people in room 25. Everyone's chit is ready, and so we stand in front of the window for 1–1½ hours with money in our hands. It will soon be 10 [o'clock]. The pile of chits gets larger. The cashier calls out names and we, the first 25, stand and wait.

Not only does the 'jukebox' play with the police; it works very well here too.

V

4 June [19]42 Yesterday a letter arrived from Sosnowiec stating that all Jewish children up to 10 years of age had been shot the previous week.

[21]VI

What Jews can only imagine

4 June [19]42 I would surely not have written this if only one Jew had come to me and told me such a story, but when a second and then a third repeated it, I paid attention to what I was told.

So let [. . .] people laugh [. . .], but such a terrible time could give rise to such curious things. This week, the bottom part of the iron electricity poles in the street were whitewashed.

253 (German) Police sergeant.

Today three Jews who lived in three different corners of the ghetto gave the same brief description, 'They have mined the ghetto and whitewashed the poles for that reason.' It was worth recording this. May Jews have an occasional laugh in describing these miserable times.

VII

5 June [19]42 Today the firm Kohn and Heller paid out 3000 zlotys to 30 members of the Jewish *Ordnungsdienst* (*Policja*),[254] 100 zlotys a person, as payment for keeping order in the distribution of goods to the Łódź Jews who arrived in Warsaw on 3 June.

[22]

5 June [19]42 Today *lotnicy*[255] and soldiers from other [. . .], threw children aged between 8 and 12 into the canals on the Aryan side, children who had gone across in order to obtain a few pieces of bread and a plate of food from the Christians.

Today I am not going to eat any more, a 12-year-old boy told me. By 4 p.m. I had eaten enough for two days. If it were not for throwing [. . .], I would have spent the night there.

6 June [19]42 Noise is heard at the junction of Karmelicka and Nowolipie Streets.
9.20 p.m. People are running. Suddenly a shot rings out. The gendarmerie has come and are beginning to chase the tardy Jewish passers-by.

They forced the Jewish police to chase [. . .] and take them away to the district station. Someone says, [. . .]. 'With our Jewish police you soon have to use [. . .], and the "jukebox" starts to play.' In that way for 20 zlotys a Jew was freed near his house at Nowolipie Street 63. The Jew had a grocery shop in the building and wanted to go home at 9.10.

6 June [19]42 Today a Jewish policeman, Herc,[256] was shot at his post on Pańska Street.

254 (Polish) police.

255 (Polish) pilots, airmen; soldiers of the *Luftwaffe*, believed to be die-hard Nazis by the ghetto residents.

256 Probably lawyer Józef Jerzy Herc (Hertz) (1900–1942), head of the VI Police District on Gęsia Street 42; see: Katarzyna Person, *Warsaw Ghetto Police,* New York 2021, p. 190 note 18 and p. 203 note 12.

[23]

7 June [19]42 Once again three victims have fallen by the murderous hand of the infamous gendarme 'Frankenstein'. It is not known whether this is his name or his nickname because of his appearance, which reminds people of the famous actor in the film *Frankenstein*.[257] Whenever he keeps guard on Leszno Street at the entrance of the 'Labour Office' he shoots, if not at people, then into the air.

Yesterday on 6 June, as I have already mentioned, he shot the Jewish policeman Herc. Today two policemen and a Jewish smuggler fell by his murderous [. . .] on the corner of Ciepła and Żelazna Streets.

[24]

7 June [19]42 As reported today by an acquaintance, a number of recently seized and deported Jews are to be found in the Poznań region, namely in Ostrów near Kalisz and Winiary,[258] a village 3 kilometres from Kalisz.

As my acquaintance claims, there are supposedly letters from there.

According to other information, people have been sent to B o b r u i s k.[259]

There is a third version circulating in the city, saying that the people are still in sealed carriages in the railway station in Warsaw.

[25]

11 June [19]42 At about 2.30 p.m., several Jewish policemen entered the bakery belonging to Messrs Goldfarb and Frosz at Pawia Street 16. They demanded 5 loaves of bread, to be charged to the account of the High Command of the Jewish Police. They explained that according to an order from the German authorities, they were to deliver the bread to Pawia Street 18, where a film was being shot.

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257 'One of the biggest sadists, military policeman of Schutzpolizei – Frankenstein has 300 deaths in a month on his conscience, more than half of them children', wrote Marek Edelman (*Getto walczy*, Warsaw 1945, p. 22); see also: *Warsaw Ghetto. Everyday Life*, Doc. 10. *Frankenstein* was a 1818 novel by Mary Shelley. The first film adaptation was made in 1910, and the most famous in 1931, directed by James Whale.

258 Ostrów Kaliski, Winiary (Kalisz County).

259 Bobruisk (Mohilev region) – a town in the central part of Belarus; under German occupation from June 1941 to June 1944; in 1941–1942, the local fortress was a Nazi camp for Russian POWs.

At Pawia Street 18 around a dozen Jews had already gathered, for the most part Hasidic types with beards and sidelocks.

The tables were laid with plates of fish from Szulc's restaurant on Karmelicka Street. In the corners of the room, Germans were standing ready with their movie cameras and taking shots. According to the Jewish police, the entire film to be shot in the ghetto was being financed – under order – by the *kehillah*.

[26]

11 June [19]42 This week apparently all of the Jewish men (German refugees) living in the houses next to the quarantine at Leszno Street 109 have been removed from their homes and sent away to an unknown destination.

Those who were unable to climb onto the trucks hid themselves away. The following day at daybreak, they entered the ghetto, having duped the guard by saying that they were going to work at Schultz's firm[260] at Nowolipie Street 44.

11 June [19]42 According to letters received from Pacht,[261] a Jewish settlement near Turek, large numbers of Jews, young men and women, were sent from there to the Poznań region for work.

In addition, children up to the age of 10 are being removed from their parents, for a purpose as yet not known.

[27]

13 June [19]42 Today at dawn at Parysowski Square, another 6 innocent Jews were shot. As reported to me by a Jew from Nowolipie Street, the shooting occurred in the following way:

A gendarme intended to shoot a Jewish porter with his browning. The Jew apparently gave him a slap on the hand, knocking the revolver to the ground. He then fled, and for that the German shot 6 innocent Jews whom he detained . . .

260 See footnote 336, pt. 1.

261 Pacht (Turek County) – one of several villages where ghettos were established at the end of September 1941 around Czachulec (*Judenkolonie Heidemühle*).

According to a second version, which seems more probable, the tragic event occurred in a completely different way. At 5.30 in the morning, a Jew was driving a cart filled with potatoes on Parysowski Square. Catching sight of a German from afar, he abandoned his cart [27v] and fled. At the same time, a totally innocent Jew was opening his shop on Parysowski Square. The German called him over and ordered him to stand by the cart. He also summoned another 5 Jews who happened to be passing by and then shot all 6.

14 June 1942 4.30 p.m. 3 hours ago, around 1 p.m., the former Jewish *gestapowiec*[262] Nuss[263] was shot in his flat at Twarda Street 10.

[28]

14 June [19]42 The Pawiak [car] and further [. . .]

After a few days [. . .], the 'people' from Pawiak showed their faces once again in their infamous car. Once again, they intentionally rammed a rickshaw, destroyed it, and (this time) gave its owner only a few cuffs.

[29]

14 June 1942 8 more victims. On Krochmalna Street today, 8 Jews were shot. *Junaks* who had come there spotted some smugglers who, it seems, had noticed them as well and took cover. The Germans with their machine gun, however, noticed which house the Jews had run into. [. . .] at dawn removed from one room 6 smugglers and 2 innocent Jews and shot them all.

[42v]

Sunday, 14 June 1942, 9 o'clock in the evening[98] . . . Through an open window, I hear the sound of the church organ. Apparently, prayers are held in the church on Leszno, its garden being connected to the house where I live, at Nowolipie Street 23.

How great it is to see, in the narrow frames of the ghetto, a handful of flowering trees, ploughed soil and green grass.

262 (Polish) Gestapo man, or member of the Gestapo.

263 Wiktor Nus (Nuss) (?–1942), a photographer from Gdańsk; in the ghetto, a manager of *Rohstoffzentrale* workshop and the head of the group which delivered scrap metal to Germans, trusted by them.

264 The entire entry is in Polish.

Some 15 minutes pass, and I can hear the choir. I quickly finish up my supper and approach the window.

A group of people dressed in their Sunday best is strolling down the garden paths. Men in dark suits, ladies in elegant summer dresses. Among them, a tall figure, dressed in a black frock, with arms behind his back – a priest. The conversation is surely joyous – from time to time [42], I could vividly hear a sound of laughter.

It does not last long, however. The organ falls silent. Pedestrians sit down on benches and chairs, apparently set up in the garden specifically for that evening. As if on command, the place becomes silent, and a moment later a wonderful choir, accompanied by the sounds of the organ, arises.

Quietly, slowly, and then increasingly louder, tones of religious songs rise in the air. The priest, seated in the middle, is conducting, and the people gathered around (a special choir, probably?) are singing.

It gets darker and darker. First the faces, then the human figures disappear into the evening darkness. Oh, the irony, the only objects reflected from a distance, like patches on the right forearms, are white bands with the star of Zion.

Fate decided that those who had moved away from the Jewish world by their own decision, or whose parents and grandparents had abandoned the Jews for various reasons, would be cast back to where they had come from, [41v] by the 'creators' of the new 'barbarism' of the 20th century. Many of them, especially the youth, did not even know that they had Jewish ancestors.

An unusually large ceremony today in the church on Leszno. A wedding, it seems.

Thrown behind the walls, separated from their Aryan brothers, baptised Jews are doing all they can not to forget that they belong to the Catholic Church.

The sound of church songs is dying down, and you can barely hear, even in the evening silence (1942), a song, sung softly, in a small voice, 'Boże, coś Polskę'.[265]

The spirit of patriotism, the spirit of liberation from the chains of Hitlerism, is alive everywhere.

265 (Polish) 'God who [protected] Poland'. The song was written in 1816, originally to honour Tsar Alexander I for his having established the Kingdom of Poland (1815–1830); later, with words changed, the song became an unofficial Polish anthem.

This is how a holiday ended at a converts' church in 1942, in the 20th century.

15 June 1942 Thieves on the rooftops

I felt ill that evening and was already in bed by 9 in the evening. I sleep very little of late, and I heard the church clock strike 2 a.m. I was annoyed with myself; I tossed and turned and could not get comfortable in bed.

As I lie there, all sorts of thoughts come to mind. The clock strikes 2.45 when suddenly I hear some sort of noise in the courtyard. The principal resident, whose windows look out over the first courtyard, knocks on our door. My flat owner also gets up. We realise that there are policemen in the courtyard.

The first question that I ask is, 'What policemen? Jewish or Polish?' But nobody knows yet. It strikes me that this is surely a *łapanka*, but I am not afraid. My *Melde-Karte* is in order and I lie down in bed without worrying.

However, the noise becomes more audible. Loud steps can be heard in our second courtyard, and whispering, 'Shush, shush!' My co-tenant doesn't hesitate, puts on his trousers and goes into the courtyard. 'Look there, people are running', someone shouts.

And, in fact, 4 men with sacks in their hands are running over the rooftops from Karmelicka Street 15. The Jewish police have been chasing them because a colleague of theirs who lives at Karmelicka Street 15 has been robbed. The Polish police have also appeared.

[30] Two of the thieves escaped and two who were carrying the goods were captured in our building at Nowolipie Street 23. The thieves are dressed very respectably but without shoes and socks, well-fed young men.

The Jewish police also wanted to show what they could do and beat the two accomplices with whatever they could lay their hands on, kicking them, etc. This continued until 5 a.m. when the police took the two men away in chains to the police station (accompanied, of course, by the single Polish policeman). There was no question of sleep at this point.

15 June [19]42 Today two military men (Gestapo) removed all the furniture, even the carpets, from the flat on Nowolipie Street 21 which had belonged to Levin, who had been shot a few weeks before.

[30v]

15 June [19]42 It is already after 9 in the evening, not much, 10 or 15 minutes. Jews are still on the streets as usual. They don't even hurry, although they risk being shot by the first German who drives by. Suddenly there is a commotion. A small black *taksówka*[266] can be seen driving from Nowolipie Street to Karmelicka Street. It is flying down the street. I am sitting on the balcony at my friend's home, and we turn around and go inside. The *taksówka* has passed. We go outside again, when we suddenly hear shots. At the corner of Dzielna and Karmelicka Streets three Jews have been shot and one person (a Jewish policeman) is wounded in the foot.

The *taksówka* appears several times more. Shots are heard again in the vicinity of Leszno Street.

This time Jews start to run home . . .

[31]

16 June [19]42 The message that we received a few weeks ago, that Gypsies were going to be moving into our cramped Jewish ghetto, has been proven accurate. For several days now they have been circulating on the streets of the ghetto wearing white armbands with a red letter 'Z'[267] on them.

Jews pass the word that they are to be settled on Wołyńska and Ostrowska Streets. Meanwhile they are living like real Gypsies.[268]

The black truck from Pawiak is continuing to have fun.

17 June [19]42 Even if they are not beating up Jewish passers-by, they have taken up another form of tormenting individual Jews, which is more appalling and inflicts great material damage.

266 (Polish) taxi cab.

267 A Latin character, for *Zigeuner* in German.

268 The first group of Romanies arrived in the Warsaw ghetto from the Reich at the end of April 1942. They were initially detained in the prison at Gęsia Street.

The day doesn't end without this criminal band ramming a rickshaw, breaking it into pieces, ruining it and depriving its owner of the hardly earned piece of bread.

[31v]

17 June [19]42 Smuggling on Przejazd Street

It is 9 in the morning. I go to the offices of the Jewish Social Self-Help to take care of a certain matter. On Mylna Street there is already quite a lot of movement. Porters and well-dressed people come and go, among them even a few extremely elegant ones. The latter are the 'elite' of the smuggler world. A few years ago, these people were totally respectable merchants, employees but also speculators. These days they have become 'risk-takers': they risk their lives, their money . . . Their organisation functions brilliantly. One shout, one whistle suffices for the entire company to know what is going on.

On the corner of Mylna and Przejazd Streets, a young man of about 25 is standing with a notebook in his hand. 'Who is that for?' a question falls from his lips. 'For Lalka', the porter replies, and so he makes a mark in his notebook next to 'Lalka'. 'For fat Max' says a second porter, and the young man makes a mark next to 'fat Max' [32], and so on as it should.

A few steps further on, on Przejazd Street, a young Christian is sitting on the wall, and milk cans fly over from the Polish side with great speed. People stand near the wall to catch them, and the cans disappear with truly amazing speed, as if nothing had occurred there, but the young man has noted everything down, nothing gets past him.

I become curious, and so I stroll down that small section of Przejazd Street.

About 10 minutes pass and empty cans begin to come back. A Christian gets on top of the wall again, and the cans fly back to the other side. In the meantime, by the hole in the wall, conversations are going on, deals are being finalised, and money and empty sacks are exchanged.

I want to have a chat with the young man holding the notebook, but he doesn't want to talk, *Nie zawracaj p[an] głowy*,[269] he says. This is his answer . . .

269 (Polish, in Latin characters) Don't hassle me.

Suddenly there is a shout, 'wheels', and the street empties out as if everyone had sunk into the ground. I remain alone with my heart pounding, [32v] to tell the truth, and I turn into the gate at 9 Przejazd Street. After a while two *junaks* appear on bicycles, ride down the street, don't see anything of note, and slowly set off towards Nowolipie Street.

Dead silence reigns for about 5 more minutes. An elegantly dressed young man without an armband emerges from the direction of Mylna Street and at the same time a Christian crawls out from the other side through the fence. The young man calls him over to the gateway at Przejazd Street 9, pulls out a revolver and asks him, 'What are you doing here?' I did not hear the answer, but the *goy* was soon let free. (It transpired that the elegant man was an official from the *Urząd Skarbowy*.)[270]

The street becomes more lively. People begin to appear, but not smugglers.

A long whistle signals to the smuggler world that the danger has passed, and packages once again begin to fly through the fence. The young man takes up his post once again and makes entries in his notebook.

The whole affair probably lasted 30 minutes in total.

[33]

20 June 1942 At 11 in the evening yesterday, 19 June, a Jew without an armband was brought to the wall of the house at Nowolipie Street 60. Apparently, he had been seized on the other side and shot. His identity is not yet known but, in any case, he is a victim of the so-called *kaptur* murders.[271]

20 June 1942 <u>A Jewish policeman was shot</u>

This morning a Jewish policeman was walking from Nowolipie Street to the corner of Smocza Street. When he was almost at Smocza Street he met an acquaintance, a Polish policeman, and he stopped and had a friendly chat with him. After a while a *taksówka* with Germans arrived from Żelazna Street. They stopped, called the Jewish policeman over to them, and without reason shot him on the spot. They left the dead body and proceeded on their way down Nowolipie Street.

270 (Polish) Tax Office.

271 (Polish) hood; the meaning is that he was sentenced by a kangaroo court.

21 June [19]42 At German placówkas

It has been a long time since the Labour Office of the Jewish *kehillah* in Warsaw first sent out summonses through the house administrators and courtyard committees mandating 6 days of work per month (winter 1939/1940).

From the very beginning people made a business of these 'demands'. Poor Jewish workers reported for work, along with refugees and other Jews who could not find any employment. They went to work in place of the rich and the weak for 10 zlotys a day at first (later the price sank to 3 to 4 zlotys a day).

In the early days, we, the privileged co-workers of the Jewish Social Self-Help, were also obliged to go to work (it was not until 1940 that everyone was released from work on a monthly basis upon payment of 5 zlotys or more, at the discretion of a special committee. This meant that the Labour Office stamped our work orders).

In short, I worked at various *placówkas* for perhaps 10 days during the entire period. [34] Nevertheless, those few days left a variety of impressions on me. They are etched so deeply into my memory that I believe that everyone will remember them all his life.

I must emphasise that fate would have it that I did not personally feel the burden of this work on my body, contrary to many others. I had the opportunity to observe and to see why Jews for the most part are beaten. And I have to make it clear, as unpleasant as this might be even for me, that in most cases the Jewish workers themselves were guilty. Looking straight in the eye of a German who was exasperated and provoked like a dog, he would simply remain standing there with his spade in his hand and gaze towards the heavens . . . until the *lotnik* delivered him a solid blow with the butt of his gun.

The first day, a group of several men from our house agreed to stay together. At 5 in the morning, there was a frost outside, and the snow crunched underfoot as we set out towards the assembly point at Twarda Street 6. I immediately came across a group leader I knew who advised us to travel with him to 'Boernerowo'.[272] 'First', he said, 'you won't have to slog through the snow to who knows where, and second, everyone gets

272 A neighbourhood in the Warsaw district of Wola, today within the limits of the Bemowo district.

a midday meal there.' Of our entire group only two people let themselves be persuaded to go, myself and my neighbour, a man of over forty, and not in the best of health in addition. Since I myself had a bad cough, I thought that walking several kilometres could do me more harm, because I might sweat or drink something cold, and that would be the end of me with my already weak lungs.

Upon reflection, we had come out the better: since we were leaving Twarda Street 6 right now at 8.30, we had already served for two hours. So we drove off to the first work point, which was a good hour away, and thus we did not start work until 10. Along the way we came across 3 wagonloads of coal. The German who was travelling with us ordered us to count off 50 men to unload the wagons. The group leader told me and my neighbour to remain there, and he himself remained as well. 'We will get bread and coffee here.' A non-Jew who had remained as an overseer explained as follows, *Panowie, zróbcie to raz dwa, to do godz. 2 będziecie wolni*.[273] When the group heard this, they began to work very diligently, and at 12 we had finished. We were taken into a large, warm room where we were given about a quarter kilo of bread and a cup of hot coffee with sugar.

[35] A few minutes after 2 p.m. a truck appeared, and we were driven to 'Boernerowo'. We arrived just in time for the midday meal. A young German officer asked us whether we would be willing to unload the coal wagons right after the meal. Were we to agree, he would release us earlier. We agreed. We were each given a mess tin of good soup with a piece of bread. We all urged each other to eat quickly, and by 5 p.m. the coal wagons were clean. The officer kept his word and soon sent us back into town. By 6.30 I was already at home. To tell the truth, I was tired but content. As we found out the following day, the others only came home at 8.30 and, in addition, had to walk a few kilometres to the tram.

And that is how I passed my first day of forced labour for the Germans in Warsaw.

[35v]

24 June [19]42 At midnight on Saturday 20 June 1942, 4 gendarmes accompanied by two Jews entered the bakery of Mr Markashev and associates.

273 (Polish, in Latin characters) Gentlemen, do it quickly, so by 2 o'clock you'll be free.

When the owners of the bakery saw Germans, they escaped through the window. And when the Germans asked where the proprietors were, the workers in the bakery explained that they didn't know . . . In response, the two Jews beat the workers until they passed out. The Germans demanded 20,000 zlotys by 10 a.m. the next day, and the two Jews then added that the proprietors had been at home at 5 minutes to 9 in the evening.

Since the money was not delivered by the deadline of 22 June at 10 a.m., the 4 Germans with the same two Jews came that morning and removed 8 sacks of wheat flour and the motor of the flour mill.

[36]

24 June 1942 A delegation from Rzeszów consisting of Messrs Fisz and Jakubowicz,[274] members of the *Judenrat* in Rzeszów, remained in Warsaw for a few days, with the purpose of mitigating the decree threatening the Jewa of Rzeszów.

Mr Fisz reported that 10 days earlier, the authorities had demanded of the *Judenrat* a levy of one million zlotys. The sum was paid with the help both of the surrounding small towns and Poles, but a few days later the authorities again ordered the *Judenrat* to collect and pay all of the taxes which individual Jews and all offices and institutions owed, even from before the war. The taxes had to be paid even for those who were not in Rzeszów.

According to the calculations, the *Judenrat* was liable for a sum of approximately 5 million zlotys.

The deadline was Wednesday, 24 June 1942.

People waited apprehensively for news from Rzeszów, because the Jews of Rzeszów are certainly not in a position to pay such a sum, even with a significant amount of help.

24 June 1942 Yesterday around 4.30 p.m. on 23 June [19]42, a *taksówka* stopped in front of Nowolipki Street 4 and a German officer got out, accompanied by a civilian. They entered the above-mentioned house and after a few minutes, two shots were heard.

274 Laybush Jakubowicz, member of the *Judenrat* and of the financial commission of the Social Self-Help Committee in Rzeszów; see *Accounts from the General Government*, Doc. 12.

The officer calmly came out, called a Jewish policeman and ordered him to haul away the dead body.

15 minutes later, a similar tragedy took place at Orla Street 6 with the difference that this time it was a woman who was shot.

All signs point to the fact that this was the same officer in the same car.

A Jew told me later that the man and woman were a couple, converts who had lived on the Aryan side the whole time under the guise of being Christian.

[37]

24 June 1942 The black van from Pawiak once again

At 1 o'clock [p.m.],[275] the infamous truck drove from Dzielna Street through Karmelicka Street. Jews dodged into the gateways. The vehicle was travelling fast and we thought that this time it would speed by harmlessly. However, on the corner of Nowolipki Street, the truck stopped and one of the 'Pawiak men' got down, carrying a large iron club. Having no target at hand, he went on to Nowolipie Street and delivered three blows to a young man at number 22.

It is truly a wonder that the young man's head wasn't split open from such blows.

24 June 1942 The deadline for the Jewish inhabitants to leave the [vicinity of] Muranowska Street[276] has been extended until today.

The scene was terrifying. Old, broken window bars lay around the square. People with small packs, bed linens, [37v] all their earthy possessions, ran about aimlessly, without a home in which to lay their heads.

Meanwhile, a couple of young *junaks* had a bit of fun cutting off the beards of a number of Jews. The dreadful sight will forever remain in Jewish hearts.

25 June 1942 Today in the early hours, the German gendarmerie led out 40 women and 30 men from the Jewish prison at Gęsia Street 24 in the direction of the *Transferstelle* on Dzika Street. According to our information, these were people who had been condemned to death.

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275 In the original, a.m., apparently by mistake.

276 The area north of Muranowski Square. From October 1941 to June 1942, the borders of the Warsaw ghetto were changed several times.

Yesterday on 23 June,[277] the Commissioner of the Jewish Residential District came into the prison and supposedly stated that those who were sent away today would be sent to labour camps. Commissioner Auerswald supposedly gave assurances that no death sentence would be carried out upon them. At the same time, today at 6.30 in the morning, a large number of children [38], smugglers between the ages of 10 and 14, were led out from the prison in the same direction (to the Dzika *Transferstelle*).

It is not yet known whether the explanations given by the Commissioner of the Jewish Residential District are accurate and where the people were sent . . .

25 June 1942 Reports are coming from Mława that 100 people have been expelled from the town, men and women. 65 of that 100, including women, have been shot.

Of the 65, there were 3 citizens of Mława and the remainder were from the provinces; they had only recently been living in Mława.

25 June 1942 The alley of the dead

I hadn't been on Ostrowska Street for a few weeks.

I had already become unused to the everyday pictures from there . . . By almost every gateway, a dead body covered with a piece of paper. You have to walk by very early in the morning if you want to see the heart-rending picture of paper flying and dead naked bodies.

[38v] Recently I happened to walk there again. Every morning I run down Miła Street to visit my sick mother, and every day I see two or three dead naked bodies lying there. There are a few 'little houses' (rooms) on Ostrowska Street where poor people can spend the night for 30 to 50 groszes. It is a sort of former Warsaw 'circus'[278] in reduced dimension. Poor people lie in dirty cellars, mostly without windows, on bare stone floors. Up to 50 people sleep in a cellar measuring 2 x 3 meters. You can imagine the air in there. The proprietors are simply waiting for one of their guests to die. At that point the 'hotel business' is profitable: they pull the dead man's rags off him, for

277 The date is rather 24 June, unless the entry date is incorrect.

278 A wooden building at Dzika Street 3, location of the largest refugee point, with the highest death rate.

which they can get a few zlotys on the Wołówka,[279] and they lay the naked body on the street . . .

Two people occupy themselves with removing the bodies: the 'blind Ele', a porter, and the 'fat Jewess', an old clothes dealer.

They both earn money, he on Smocza Street and she on Lubeckiego Street. Within an hour [39] the black cart transports the corpses to Gęsia Street. I must point out that the two people do the sacred work as a *mitzva*. Both Ele the porter and the fat [woman] dealer are totally upright people, and more than once they have contributed a few fat groszes from their own pockets.

26 June 1942 Death cases at a German *placówka*[280]

A horrifying event took place today at the *Dworzec Wschodni*[281] German *placówka* where 70 Jewish workers unload railway carriages.

The work should end at 6 p.m. . . . Today it is already 8 in the evening and the workers are still not here. Two young men from my building, aged between 18 and 20, work at that *placówka*. They arrived around 8.30, one of them leading the other who had been badly beaten. . . . From their faces you could tell that they had lived through a terrible day. You couldn't get a word [39v] out of the man who had been beaten because he was so traumatised. On the other hand, the other man (Centner, who lives at Nowolipie Street 23) was in better spirits, although also very on edge. He said, 'At the beginning about 5 men escaped the beatings, myself included, and the rest were wounded.' Questions rained down from neighbours, 'So what happened?' Centner begins in broken sentences, not yet able to collect himself to tell the story.

'Two of our men, Rybak and Grinberg, butchers from Grodzisk, were busy next to the *parowozownia*.[282] The others were busy with the coal. At a certain point around 11[?] in the morning, they went into the *parowozownia* without closing the door. One of the Christians who also worked at the same *placówka* ordered them to shut the door. The Jews did not want to, and a fist fight

279 Wołówka – second-hand market located between the ghetto and the Gdański railway station.

280 See part. I, Doc. 8.

281 (Polish, in Latin characters) Eastern [railway] station.

282 (Polish) steam engine depot.

broke out. One of the two Jewish workers then grabbed a pitchfork and hit the Christian over the head with it. The Christian fell dead on the spot. A commotion broke out. Soon two officers from the station guardhouse arrived, took the two Jews aside and shot them both 4 times.[283] The news spread like lightning through [40] the entire neighbourhood. A crowd of Christians gathered and began to hurl stones and other heavy objects at the Jews. This went on for a couple of hours. The Jews were not given any midday meal. Around 4 p.m. the group leaders received money to pay the workers. The hail of stones continued, however, and rumours spread that the whole group was to be shot. 'All the Jews were stood against the wall and they aimed their guns at us', said Centner, 'but an officer soon appeared, ordered the soldiers to withdraw, and sent for Polish police who were to take us back to the ghetto.' At the tram stop however, another large crowd of Christians gathered and again pelted us with stones. The conductor refused to depart with us on the tram, and once again, badly beaten, we retreated to the railway station (as usual the Germans kept themselves in reserve the whole time.)' Centner said that he was one of the 5 Jews who were spared, although it appeared from what he said that he too had been beaten, but perhaps not as harshly.

'The Gestapo came soon after 5 o'clock, led us into a shed and began to interrogate us [40v] anew for another hour. In the meantime, a rumour spread', said our young man 'that we would be taken to Pawiak and shot there – you can imagine our hearts . . .' He said nothing for a while, took a deep breath and continued, 'Once again we were driven in a truck to the tram stop. An open cart pulled up. We were ordered to climb onto it quickly, to hide our heads, and like this we travelled as far as Krakowskie Przedmieście Street. There a platoon of gendarmes surrounded the tram, and we were then convinced that we were being taken to Pawiak. However, on Miodowa Street the guards had disappeared. A *Volksdeutscher* who was travelling with us led us to the guard post on Muranowska Street. There was no one there apart from one officer, who ordered us to run home quickly.'

Centner related this story in great agitation. The young man had lived through a great deal that day.

He ended his story saying, 'Tomorrow I am not going to work.'

283 According to another account, Jewish workers were lynched by Poles who worked in the same facility; see: *Warsaw Ghetto. Everyday Life*, Doc. 60.

[41]

Saturday
27 June 1942

After a few peaceful nights, up to 15 Jews were shot in various parts of the ghetto during the night of Friday to Saturday, 26/27 [June].

Around 4 at dawn, a *taksówka* pulled up to Zamenhofa Street 9, and an officer led a woman without an armband out of the house, put her against the wall and shot her. A Jew who lived on the first floor and whom the shots had awakened, looked out of the window. The German shot at him and wounded him in the arm. A few minutes later, a second woman was shot in the same manner at Zamenhofa Street 16, and a boy at Zamenhofa Street 5.

On Karmelicka Street, before 5, a Jew was shot as he was walking to work with permission to be on the street from 5 in the morning

In the early morning a car drove up to Orla Street 15, and an officer led a woman out of the house and shot her. He then woke the *dozorca*[284] Działoszyński and ordered him to clean up the blood. He himself went for the Jewish police who soon removed the body.

[1]

29 June [19]42

Smocza Street
(a scene)

Smocza Street, stretching all the way from Nowolipie to Stawki Streets, was famous, even before the war, for its peculiar residents: market vendors, fencers profiteers and thieves.[285] Today, you can find another type [of people] on Smocza Street – old clothes traders. You can now buy and sell the most beautiful dresses, the best lingerie.

Women and men are standing by the walls, inside the gates, with various goods in their hands. A woman, still smartly dressed, is holding a briefcase and walking from the direction of Gęsia Street, which was too noisy. She is afraid to sell there, so she moves to Smocza Street. Merchants are already targeting their customers . . . 'What are you selling?', 'Anything to sell?'

[2] The woman looks each merchant in the eye, searching for a proof of honesty. She stops for a moment, as if considering her next move, and walks on.

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284 (Polish) janitor.

285 It was recently reflected in Benny Mer, *Smocza. Byografye shel rehov yehudi be-varsha*, Jerusalem 2018.

Inside a gateway, there are a couple of wartime vendors, whose apparitions testify to the fact that in the good old times they did not dabble in trade. The woman apparently likes them, and she approaches and takes out a nice, snow-white tablecloth from her briefcase, a piece of fabric which could surely tell a story of the good old times. She has set the price and stood there, as if a person bidding farewell to her best friend, knowing she would never see him again.

The buyers are assessing the tablecloth. Soon, others appear inside the gateway. Maybe the price could be reduced by two zlotys? This is a good-quality item. A quick consultation takes place. [3] They have already learned how to handle sellers – give the woman half the amount she offered, right away. The woman is upset, grabs the tablecloth and wants to leave. Other merchants appear suddenly, and they want to pay 2 zlotys more. 'For the life of me, it's not a worth a grosz more, I may make at best 3 zlotys out of it, but more likely I'll just throw 5 zlotys away.'

The woman, however, is very confident, she's not new to selling stuff, for she already knows the traders of Smocza Street. She takes the cloth from their hands, folds it carefully, puts it back into her briefcase and leaves, muttering under her breath: 'I'm not selling for less than 80[?] zlotys.' The merchants let her walk past a handful of houses.

They still believe she'll come back . . .

There are hundreds of similar cases, [4] including the words that 'they' taught me how to sing prices and to trade[?]. 'Moyshe, get running and give her 6 tens, and do not let her go. Pawlicowa [wants] a tablecloth' – says the first woman to her husband. Moyshe catches up with the woman a couple of houses ahead. *No proszę pani,*[286] for I am a Jew, I will give you a good price, 60 zlotys, not one bit more'. The woman, who started at 150 zlotys, has already gone down to 90.

Mr Moyshe throws in two zlotys, the woman reduces the price by the same amount, and now they are at 87 zlotys. He says – 78. The woman protests and rounds it up to 80 zlotys.

The transaction is completed.

286 (Polish) Well, my lady.

[[5]]

29 June [19]42 Today at 5 in the morning, at Elektoralna Street 6, the *dozorca* of the house was shot by the famous 'Frankenstein'. Coincidentally, there was no smuggling there that night.

At Wolność Street 12, also early in the morning, an innocent Jew, whom the guards mistook for a smuggler, was shot dead.

29 June [19]42 Is it true?

[. . .] We are hiding in a gateway at Leszno Street 18. A boy is standing here, and he is begging. His leg is bandaged. A white bandage on a black dirty leg *dowodzi*[287] that not much time has passed since it was applied. The beggar tells the following, quite [[6]] unbelievable story (if not for the bandage, which acts as *corpus delicti*):[288]

He knocked on the door of the flat in the house at Nowolipki Street 14, where a Jew, a policeman [No.] 1425, lives; as was customary, nobody replied. So he knocked a few more times. Then the door opened and two dogs darted out and bit his leg.

People on the street organised a whip-round to get him a rickshaw, and he drove off to the hospital, where the *opatrunek*[289] was applied.

Is it really true?

30 June [19]42 . . . Two Jewish smugglers were killed this morning on the corner of Lubeckiego and Niska Streets.

[[7]]

30 June [19]42 Over the night, from the prison at Gęsia Street 24,[290] a man named Miler, who had been imprisoned there for several weeks, was escorted out. Miler was the owner of a *cukiernia*[291] at Miła Street 42. He was led to the house at Lubeckiego Street 17 and killed there.

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287 (Polish) proves.

288 (Latin) body of the crime; physical evidence of the crime.

289 (Polish) dressing.

290 See footnotes 17, pt. 1.

291 (Polish) sweet shop.

30 June [19]42 During the night of 29–30 June a handful of other Jewish smugglers were killed on Pokorna[?] Street and in the area.

1 July [19]42 This morning a small car drove up to the building at Smocza Street 1; an officer led a woman out of the house and shot her on the spot. She was probably a Christian.

[[8]]

1 July [19]42 Today, news circulated freely in the street that yesterday, on 30 June, in the afternoon, the authorities had ordered a hole to be dug in the Jewish cemetery, for 200 people. It was rumoured that Jews and Christians would be buried there.

1 July [19]42 At Dzielna Street 45 (entrance [from] Nowolipki Street 36), the Gestapo men came with a list and led out a smuggler porter, along with a Christian woman who lived with him in the house, and a house-watchman, and proceeded to shoot them all.

A telling detail: the porter and the Christian woman resisted and did not want to go.

1 July [19]42 [[9]] Last night on Krochmalna Street, by a *meta*, three Christian smugglers were shot dead.

Two men were executed by shooting at night near the house at Karmelicka Street 1. (A rumour has it that they were both Poles; a physician and a professor). On the same night, a woman (a Christian) was brought to the building at Karmelicka Street 6, and shot there.

1 July [19]42 Today the Jewish police had a good day. There was a *łapanka*. The Jews bought themselves out for as much as they could, from 20 to over a hundred zlotys were paid.

[[10]] Around 3 p.m. at Nowolipie Street 10 (next to the gateway), I saw two policemen sharing the *łup*[292] – 10 zlotys for me, 10 zlotys for you, etc. Meanwhile, one does not trust the other.

292 (Polish) loot.

2 July [19]42 Last night, 110 people from the prison at Gęsia Street.[293] were shot. Among those executed, there were 10 Jewish policemen (including a man named Zand from Kalisz).

According to the official report signed by Auerswald, which was published tonight, 100 Jews and 10 Jewish policemen were shot for: a failure to carry out German orders, obstructing fulfilment of said orders, and even resisting the German police. According to the report, [[11]] that was literally an *odwet*[294] for the above-mentioned acts.

Truly beautiful words – and meanwhile there are announcements by the *Judenrat* about the addition of 250 grams of bread for 4.50 zlotys per kilo as compensation for the products that Jews make in the ghetto for the German authorities.

Each one of these 10 policemen was the so-called *grajek,* meaning: intermediary between smugglers and guards. They [. . .] with the guards, and the goods entered the ghetto, for a fee, of course.

One would like to know if those who took and are still taking money (t h e g u a r d s) for passing smuggling, are also ever punished.

2 July [19]42 Yesterday, the morning of 1 July, a *łapanka* took place [[12]]. 500 people were arrested and taken to the districts. A very large part was bought out, a total of 150 people were brought to Tłomackie Street, and the medical committee (for money, again) released another 70; all in all, no more than 80 people were sent to Rembertów.[295]

2 July [19]42 Posters

Pink posters . . . in Polish and German, start to appear on the ghetto walls.

The person applying the glue has not yet stuck the entire poster, and a larger group of curious Jews has gathered already, their eyes bulging; they want to immediately [[13]] find out what is written there. The Jews are already well aware that if a message with Auerswald's signature is published

293 See footnote 17, pt. 1.

294 (Polish, in Latin characters) retaliation.

295 Rembertów (Warsaw County).

in the ghetto, it cannot be good news . . . Other people flock in from other streets. They already know the content of the pink poster.

110 Jews were shot . . .

It was already known in the morning – says a Litvak – 100 innocent people, allegedly smugglers, were taken from the prison and shot like dogs, and that's it. 'Help! Is there really no humanity any more, no justice in the world?' – says the old Jew to the gathered group . . .

Suddenly – a cry. A 35-year-old woman is standing and weeping desperately. People around her think she is having a hysterical fit. It soon turns out, however, that her brother was [[14]] among the hundred killed.

People are calming her down, as if it was not certain, the names weren't known . . .

The woman controls her emotions, nods her head sombrely and walk on . . .

A simple Jew who does not understand 'fine print'[296] manages to make out only that 10 Jewish policemen have been killed; for an unknown reason he does not ask any questions, instead exclaiming, 'Damn them! Good for them! Yesterday they wanted 150 zlotys from my son – hell he gave them'. . .

A pink poster is plastered on the wall and shouts at us with its bold fonts: 110 people killed.

The murderous authorities have one hundred and ten additional Jewish victims to their credit.

[[15]]

3 July [19]42 After a quiet night, a rarity in recent times, there was a *łapanka* again today, which lasted until afternoon.

3 July [19]42 <u>An ordinary victim</u>

At around 4 p.m. in Nalewki Street, nearby Długa Street, a taxi with a few officers drove past the guards. They stopped next to the house at Nalewki Street 10, called a smartly dressed Jewish passer-by over and, without a single word, led him to the wall and shot him.

296 I.e. one who cannot read the commentaries on the Talmud; a popular term describing uneducated people.

5 July [19]42 I did not write for two days, as no important incidents took place (or maybe I did not [[16]] hear about any), but today, a sensation: a gasoline cistern caught fire at a train station in the Praga district (*Dworzec Wschodni*).[297] The fire spread over the nearby wagons.

150 of the Russian prisoners of war, who used to work there, have fled; the remaining 600 were immediately placed under heavy guard. So far, their fate is unknown.

Due to this event, a large number of Poles left Warsaw.

6 July [19]42 In the ghetto streets, another day [[17]] of profit for the Jewish police – *łapanka*.

7 July [19]42 *Łapanki* began to be more serious. On the night Monday–Tuesday (6–7 [July]), the Jewish police went around the houses and pulled people out of their beds.

The police went around with a list. Despite this, many Jews, for a fee, have stayed at home for now.

(At Miła Street 69, in flat 22, two brothers from Kalisz, surname Grosman, were released in this way for a sum of 150 d[o]ll[ars].)

The *łapanka* ended at 4 p.m. today.

7 July [19]42 On the night of 6/7 July, a droshky drove up to the corner of [[18]] Solna-Leszno Streets; German officers escorted a woman from the droshky and shot her.

On their order, the Jewish police removed the dead body.

7 July [1942] 3 people were brought in by Nowolipki Street 67, and shot on the spot. Their identity has not been established, and they wore no *opaski*.[298]

8 July [1942] That night, the Jewish police again dragged people out of their beds, to send them to *obóz*.

It is telling that the police, without looking closely or reckoning, also took the cripples lame [like] [[19]] (Zilberberg H.) from Łódź.

297 (Polish, in Latin characters) Eastern [Railway] Station.

298 (Polish) armbands.

8 July [19]42 Another group of smugglers had been shot. While crossing the fence on Krochmalna Street, 12 people were shot, including two Poles. They remained like that, hanging over the wall.

8 July [19]42, 8:50 in the evening. A flurry of activity on the corner of Nowolipie and Karmelicka Streets. A black car from Pawiak is approaching.

A shot rings out in the air. The woman, who was just running by, collapses to the ground in a pool of blood. It's late. The police took her away.

10 July [19]42 A group of 800 Jews driven out of Biała Rawska, was brought in today.[299] Those expelled were not local citizens. The Jewish *kehillah* significantly contributed to their expulsion.

[43]

[. . .] July [19]42 A Jew shot near the guard on Grzybowska Street

Moyshe Domb,[300] a resident of the house at Miła Street 47/I, a Pułtusk native, in his sixties, recently used to go with a group of workers to the Aryan side. There, the group leader released him, for a fee of few zlotys. He went to the street in order to sell or buy something. In the evenings, he returned with the same group. Several weeks passed in this manner. On Friday, when the group was about to pass through the guard post at Grzybowska Street, the *Wachtmeister* once again checked the number of workers. When he noticed that there was a surplus of one, the others pointed to the Jew, indicating that he did not belong to their group. The gendarme shot him on the spot.

One should learn the extraordinary wartime history of this man. Before the war, Moyshe Domb was a merchant, he shipped lumber by water. He was doing quite well for himself. It was said he enjoyed good fortune in the wood industry. The Jew, who was constantly mingling with Christian peasants, had an appearance of an actual German colonist or a hearty barge-master (a raftsman, commanding timber transports by water); he spoke good, proficient German, and was bold enough to do business on the other side. His long moustache and clean-shaven face removed him from any suspicion.

299 See footnote 312, pt. 1.

300 The spelling may also be: Dąb.

During the first [. . .] of the war he could almost [. . .] stroll freely, he was never held up. [. . .] was very angry [. . .] to his friends: '[. . .] so I am of no use [. . .], no longer of any use' – he spoke after his arrival, when Russians detained him twice.

Despite that, after a few days he would set out again, walk back and forth [44], and do some great business, but as the Polish proverb says: *[tak] długo dzban wodę nosi póki ucho się [nie] urwie*.[301]

The local Russian sentries knew him well. He was arrested and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

The family was sure that their husband and father was no longer alive.

However, a few days after the beginning of the German-Russian war, he returned to Warsaw, with frostbitten ears and feet. He told me that he had been staying in Łomża. When the war broke out, he escaped from prison. Even knowing the side roads and all forest people it took him 8 days to make his way back through villages and forests.

They did not suffer a lot in the Russian prison, and there was enough food. The only thing missing was air. Once every 3–4 weeks they were released for a few minutes' walk. They walked around the cell all day so that their legs would not go numb, and he calculated that during [. . .] months which he'd spent there [. . .], he did almost 1,000 [. . .].

He took [. . .] stuff with him: underwear and clothes [. . .] at random. I was present while [. . .] a parcel, from which he took out over 50[?] pairs of male underwear.

The road to Russia was blocked. But the man who had fallen into the smuggling trance was no longer able to switch to a more reliable activity. Having barely healed his wounds, he began to travel to the countryside. That, however, apparently was not profitable enough, because after a few weeks he stopped.

Yet, his children did not let him rest (and his being now killed by a German bullet was solely their fault) 'We have starved enough. The husband and the father has to take care of the household', they told him. He started taking the tram to the other side. He would bring [. . .], he took some clothes back, and the food was back on the table. They even used to regularly feed a poor friend of theirs, an old friend from their hometown, with a bowl of soup.

301 (Polish, in Latin characters) literally, a jug carries water until its handle breaks off; meaning: one can only take so much.

When the tram stopped running through the ghetto, he started frequenting the *placówki* and there, as he had predicted: 'It's better for me to die from a German bullet than for my children to starve.'

On Friday, 10 July, at [. . .] in the evening, he was killed by a German bullet.

12 July [19]42 An accident

On Stawki Street, on the Aryan side, Jewish workers are cleaning the wall. Yesterday, on Saturday, 11 July, while the workers were busy with their labour, a gendarme accidentally approached and ordered two of them [to take] a few bricks from the wall that separated the ghetto from the Polish side. The Jewish workers, one aged 18 and the other [. . .], quickly obeyed the order. [One] jumped on the shoulders of the other and they began to work. Suddenly, several shots were fired. The guard who was standing nearby, having noticed two Jews who were climbing the wall, mistook them for smugglers and fired. Both were killed on the spot, and the other two, standing nearby, were wounded.

The gendarme who ordered the bricks to be taken, calmly walked away, leaving the victims behind.

12 July [19]42 Yesterday at nine in the evening a woman was shot in Parysowski Square. Reportedly she was a smuggler.

14 July [19] 42 Additional information regarding 7 July – a woman was shot on the corner of Solna and Leszno Streets.

The man who came with this news added that the killed woman, Maria Jaźwińska, was the wife of a well-known attorney, a National Democracy supporter from Kalisz,[302] and the daughter of Neuman,[303] a very pious Jew, owner of a large mill in Koło.

302 Zygmunt Jaźwiński (1890–1941), a politician, lawyer, activist of the People's National Union and the National Party, member of the Polish Sejm of the third term; perished in Auschwitz.

303 Perhaps a relative of Neuman (given name unknown), deputy commander of the Jewish police in Koło, see: *Accounts from the Territories Annexed to the Third Reich*, Doc. 62.

[45]

15 July [19]42 At 7.30 a.m. I was already on Ostrowska Street, that alley of the dead, where as usual a few dead bodies were lying stretched out and covered with white paper in front of the gateways. The 'fat old clothes dealer' was already collecting donations to remove the dead bodies.

15 July [19]42 [. . .] already at the Gęsiówka. Business was already being carried out there. There was suddenly an outcry: a dealer ran, tearing her hair out, [. . .] stole her suitcase of goods [. . .] running everywhere. The thief must already be far away . . .

15 July [19]42 The inhabitants of the house at Pańska Street 62 whose windows overlook Twarda Street had a terrible experience last night. In the middle of the night they heard shots. 7 men were led out of the neighbouring courtyard on Twarda Street and shot by the wall.

15 July [19]42, 9 in the morning I am walking from Twarda Street. A [. . .] gendarme is standing on Krochmalna Street by barbed-wire fence. His [. . .] fills everyone with fear.

A Jew is standing on the corner of the street, with his hands [. . .] above his head and holding in them a heavy [. . .]. He stands like that for 15 minutes. This is a [. . .]

[46] [. . .] when a group of Jewish workers returned from their work at the German *placówka*, the guard at Leszno/Żelazna Streets seized all their packages [. . .] potatoes. The group leader Rybak attempted to intervene with the guards so they don't take [. . .] and therefore was shot on the spot.

16 July [19]42 Today around [. . .] two [. . .] passing by at the corner of Karmelicka and Nowolipie Streets [stopped] two Jews with a bag of potatoes. They led one to [. . .]Nalewki Street 13 and shot him there.

[. . .] house at Nowolipki Street 4 [. . .] in the evening between 9 and 10 was brought [. . .] no one has established who he was.

17 July [19]42 [. . .] house at Nowolipki Street 4 [. . .] has recently become a space for the Germans to carry out executions. Yesterday, a few minutes after 9 in the evening, two unknown men were brought there and were shot.

17 July[19]42 [. . .] various places comes the news that [. . .] people have been deported from Kalisz and Koźminek,[304] (up to 150 people from Kalisz). According to letters which have arrived on the way from those expelled (Sieradz), they are travelling towards Łódź.[305]

17 July [19]42 From the 'Jewish camp' in [. . .] (*Wartheland*) many people [. . .] sent away to [. . .] for labour in the Poznań region. Some time ago (soon to be 9 months) men were sent to the Reich. Recently Jewish workers [. . .] [lack] food and bread in particular. [. . .] in the camp 10 Jews were hanged.

17 July [19]42 Today [. . .] all foreign citizens from neutral and non-neutral countries [. . .] with small packages of up to 10 kilos. [. . .] all home. For many it is like in the Polish saying: *spadł z deszczu pod rynnę*.[306] From one whip under another. [. . .] is the same.

18 July [19]42 On 16 July at 10.30 in the evening an unknown woman was brought to the corner of Franciszkańska and Nalewki Streets and shot.

18 July [19]42 The night of Friday to Saturday, the Jewish police led out people from the *metas* [. . .] according to the special list, to the camp. The *szafa* played well this night.

[[46v] At the corner of] Leszno [and] Żelazna Streets a worker was shot as a group was returning from the *placówka*. [. . .] other workers say that he was shot because he didn't want to [. . .] his pack and tried to smuggle himself in with it.

[. . .] [19 July 1942]

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304 Koźminek (Kalisz County).

305 Jews from Kalisz and Koźminek were resettled into the Łódź ghetto on 9 July 1942.

306 (Polish) literally, from rain under the downpipe; meaning: out of the frying pan into the fire.

On 18 July at 10.30 p.m. a Polish smuggler was shot on Elektoralna Street by the wall.

19 July [19]42 During the night of 18 to 19 July, two loud air raid signals sounded. It is not yet known what they signified.

19 July [19]42 A panic broke out in the ghetto. Jews are running around distraught. On everyone's lips the same words, 'Is it true? Will people really be sent away?'

Rumours spread that people were going to be sent away from Warsaw. Reliable sources (members of the *Judenrat*) have assured us that the news is completely fabricated. In any case [. . .] not about to happen in Warsaw.

19 July [19]42 More *łapanki* both at night and today all day. [. . .] workers, the Jewish police meanwhile had made some money – *szafa gra* – young, starving boys in tatters are going into the *obóz*.

20 July [19]42 Around 12 noon *junaks* stole a cart full of flour and bread from a bakery at Zamenhofa Street 16.

20 July [19]42 A truck removed almost all of the packages that had come into the ghetto from the post office at Zamenhofa Street 19. At 12 noon this truck arrived with two German civilians and a Polish policeman.

20 July [19]42 During the afternoon of 18 July, a car brought smuggled goods to Nowolipie Street 5. After a few hours the gendarmerie arrived and ordered that the smuggled goods be handed over. Needless to say, they found nothing.

They returned during the night, beat all of the tenants severely and shot one man. The inhabitants spent a terrible night.

A woman had such a violent attack of nerves that she risked losing her mind.

[47]

20 July [19]42 Bestial sadism

Comrade Praszker[307] told me today that on Sunday 6 July 1942 the following unbelievable events occurred at the *Dworzec Wschodni*[308] at Praga:

The commandant of the railway station has a large dog. On Sundays when he is drunk, he sets his dog on people. That Sunday, 6 July, this individual set the dog on a worker. The dog threw himself on him and bit his 'balls'.

A week later on 12 July, a similar event occurred. A woman brought a midday meal for her husband, a railway worker. The dog was urged on and threw itself upon her and bit her breast. Both events involved Poles.

20 July [19]42 Jewish gossip

(Kohn and Heller, Kock and Piaseczno-Hasidim)[309]

A neighbour of mine (at Nowolipie Street 23), related the following story concerning the rumours of *wysiedlenie*[310] from Warsaw:

Kohn and Heller went to see the Kock and Piaseczno rebbes to ask them to pray for all the Jewish people. The rebbes said that Hitler would not murder the Jewish people and that the Jews would not be expelled from Warsaw.

20 July [19]42 A second neighbour (Gutman from Lipno) comes back from the street. He is a dealer in *Wołówka*.[311] 'The market has fallen through the floor,

307 Jakub Praszk[i]er (1915–1943), member of the Refugee Committee of the Jewish Social Self-Help, Zionist activist, commander of the Hanoar Hatziyoni, a combat unit, part of the ŻOB structure in the Warsaw ghetto April uprising.

308 (Polish, in Latin characters) Eastern [Railway] Station.

309 I.e. followers of Hasidic rebbes from Kock (Radzyń Podlaski County) and Piaseczno (Grójec County). Perhaps it was Yosef Asher Fisz, *admor* of Kock; see ARG II 312 (Ring. II/210); Yosef Morgenstern, the last of the Kock Hasidic dynasty, who perished there together with his 16-person family during the bombardment in September 1939. The rabbi and tzaddik of Piaseczno was Kalonimus Kalman Szapiro (1889–1943), see ARG II 14 (Ring. II/431), ARG II 15 (Ring. II/370), ARG II 16 (Ring. II/432) and ARG II 295 (Ring. II/193). Both Fisz and Szapiro lived at that time in the Warsaw ghetto.

310 (Polish) resettlement.

311 An eighteenth-century market by Stawki and Pokorna Streets. It was outside the ghetto; existed until August 1944.

there is no merchandise. There is no one there to buy anything. I bought some merchandise at a 20 to 30 per cent discount but I cannot sell it, I am poor and cannot survive.' He then adds: 'You heard what the radio said.' We looked at him and asked what anyone could really have said about the *wysiedlenie*. He did not elucidate. 'People on *Wołówka* said that the loudspeakers had announced in the evening that there would be no *wysiedlenie*.'

Such things can only transpire in Jewish minds.

21 July [19]42 Today at 11.30 in the morning a car with Gestapo officers drove up to the house at Leszno Street 12 where the Supply Unit was situated and took Gepner, Winter and Sztolcman[312] from the offices. Soon everyone learned that almost all the members of the *Judenrat* and some directors had been arrested and taken to Pawiak.[313]

It is rumoured that they were being held as *zakładnicy*.[314] The authorities demanded [. . .] zlotys levy in the form of merchandise. The reason for the arrest is unknown.

Today at 9.30 in the morning, a Jewish policeman was taken by gendarmes from his post on Parysowski Square by the wall. He was taken down Zamenhofa and Nowolipki Streets as far as the guard post on Nalewki Street, with his hands tied behind his neck. There he was shot. The supposed reason is that he let smugglers through.

[[47v]]

21 July [19]42 At 12.15 p.m. Dr Steinkalk,[315] who lives at Nowolipki Street 15, was stopped by *junaks* on Karmelicka Street. They beat him and kicked him savagely and when he asked why they were doing this, they took him into the house at Karmelicka Street 26 and shot him there.

21 July 19[42] Yesterday [. . .] the janitor (*dozorca*) of Nowolipki Street 13 was shot.

312 Abraham (Adolf) Sztolcman; see the entry of 26 July and footnote 353, pt. 1.

313 See: *Czerniakow's diary*, entry of 21 July 1942.

314 (Polish) hostages.

315 Zelman Zygmunt Sztajnkalk (Steinkalk, Szteinkalk).

21 July [19]42 This morning the meat merchant Wołowicz was shot by the wall on Twarda Street.

21 July [19]42 Two weeks ago 200 (two hundred) Jews were shot in the labour camp near Warsaw (I am not familiar with the name of the place).

The reason is that lice were found on some of them, and so the entire barracks was shot.

[. . .].

21 July [19]42 It is 2 in the afternoon. I am walking along Nalewki Street to have a midday meal. Suddenly on Karmelicka Street [. . .] at the corner of Mylna Street [. . .] a black car. [. . .] Gestapo men are sitting. The car stops. People run through the gateways. I stop by the gateway at Nowolipie Street 10[?]. The house watchman is an acquaintance. From afar you can see [them] call over a well-dressed, older man, check his papers, order him into the car, and drive away. We hide in a small room which serves the house watchman [. . .] from Kalisz as a workshop. The car stops [. . .] by the gateway and we are trembling. After a few minutes, we hear the Germans call out, *Halt!, halt!*[316] I hold my breath. Mr Szubin,[317] the former director of the Jewish bank in Kalisz, is also in the little room with me. He is a brother-in-law of the aforementioned Liebeskind who was an important merchant there. It becomes quiet. Mr Liebeskind's daughter and wife look out. The car is still there. We remained in the room for half an hour until we heard the noise of the engine as the car drove away. We breathe more easily. I go outside and set off in the direction of Nalewki Street [. . .]. On the way people say that they took Dr Mindes[318] with them, [. . .] a man on Mylna Street, and an elegantly dressed woman. All three were taken away to Pawiak.

316 (German) Stop! Stop!

317 Perhaps L. Szubin, mentioned by Aleksander Pakentreger, *Żydzi w Kaliszu w latach 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1988, p. 81, as a director of a Jewish cooperative which in fact was a bank.

318 Juliusz Mindes (1899–1942?), doctor, otolaryngologist. See: M. Ciesielska, *Lekarze getta warszawskiego*, p. 348.

[48]

22 July [19]42 Around 3 p.m. yesterday, Gestapo men came to the office of the Department of Social Help at the *gmina* at Świętojerska Street 32. They enquired after an office worker named Zeitlin[319] (a woman) and when they did not find her, they took somebody else away.

22 July [19]42 Three Jewish policemen were shot this morning on Nalewki Street, by the guard post.

A terrible tragedy on Chłodna Street

Yesterday, on 21 July, Dr Professor Szaja[320] (a Christian) was called for a medical consultation at the bedside of a sick person at Chłodna Street 26. It was legal for him to ride with a *przepustka*. He took advantage of the opportunity [. . .] to spend time with his friend Dr Pollak,[321] a convert, at Grzybowska Street 37.

When the doctors came to visit the sick man, the Gestapo entered the flat and shot all 7 people present,[322] including the Christian professor.

22 July [19]42 A car carrying Gestapo men drove up to Prosta Street 17. They entered the flat of a certain woman whose husband is in Holland. They asked her whether she had a husband in Holland and whether receives letters from him, and then they arrested her.

319 Most probably Tauba (Tola) Zeitlin, the wife of poet and playwright Aron (Ari) Zeitlin (1889–1976).

320 Franciszek Paweł Raszeja (1896–1942), Polish physician, eminent orthopaedist and surgeon, professor at the University of Poznań; from September 1939 was working in Warsaw, taught clandestine courses at Warsaw University. He stayed in contact with Dr Ludwik Hirszfeld, then in the ghetto, and helped to organise blood donations for the Jews in the ghetto. On 21 July 1942, Raszeja's patient was Abe Gutnajer (1888–1942), a well-known Warsaw antiquarian and art collector. The murder was reported by the Polish underground press.

321 Kazimierz Pollak (1909–1942), surgeon; in the ghetto a manager of blood donor centres, assistant to Raszeja.

322 The only survivor was Abe Gutnajer's 10-year-old granddaughter, who hid under a bed.

22 July [19]42 The Gestapo came to the flat of Dr Wertheim[323] at Chłodna Street 24 in order to arrest him. They only found Dr Wertheim's wife, her sick, three-year-old child, and the child's nanny. They arrested the wife and the sick child. When the nanny went out into the hallway to ask them to leave the child behind, she was shot on the spot.

This afternoon [48v] the gate on Tłomackie/Leszno Streets was walled up under the personal supervision of Auerswald. This operation took half an hour.

Several men (8 people) were shot early this morning on Stawki and Niska Streets for walking around before 5 a.m. According to witnesses, the people shot had come to Niska Street 3 just after 5.30. A [. . .] soldier immediately put back his watch and shot two Jews, indicating to them that it was not yet 5 a.m., when in fact it was soon going to be 6 [o'clock].

22 July [19]42 Early this morning at Wołówka a patrol of gendarmes shot a young Jewish woman for selling white rolls. They told the poor girl that the penalty for dealing in goods baked with white flour was death.

22 July [19]42 At a German *placówka* on the other side of Stawki Street, the head of the *placówka*, a German engineer, did not come to work. [. . .], a *Volksdeutscher* (or perhaps a Pole), told his workers the following: 'The old man (the boss) is absent today – it's a bad day for them (the Germans).'

22 July [19]42 Yesterday the Jewish police arrested Doctors Szwalbe[324] and Chain[325] on the orders of the authorities.

323 Aleksander Jerzy Wertheim (1872–1942), former head of the surgical ward of the Jewish Hospital in Czyste; head of the hospital in Leszno in the ghetto.

324 Probably Mendel Menakhem Szwalbe (1895–1942?), dermatologist and venereologist, head of the TOZ in Łódź, lecturer at the course for home-care providers. See: M. Ciesielska, *Lekarze getta warszawskiego,* p. 364.

325 Abram Yitzkhok Chain (Józef Gołębiowski) (1894–[after 1949]), internist and cardiologist, head of the TOZ Sanitary and Hygiene Department; survived outside the ghetto. See: *ibidem,* p. 320.

22 July [19]42 Today at 12 noon, members of the *Judenrat* who were detained yesterday have been released from Pawiak.

22 July [19]42 By order of the authorities, a part of the hospital on Stawki Street must be emptied by 4 p.m. tomorrow, along with the buildings at Stawki Street 6 to 8.

(2)[326]

[5] The destruction of Warsaw
22 July
1) [x].[327]
2) The role of the Jewish police.
4)[328] The death of Czerniaków.
5) Ko[h]n and Heller:
(a) their role before 22 July
(b) after 22 July.
(c) their death.
6) The arrest of the members of the *Judenrat*.[329]
7) *Umschlagplatz*.
'Wasser 7 July Friday'[330]
8) Interventions.
9) People seized on the streets.
10) Schultz and Többens.
11) Robberies on the streets.
[[5v]] 12) Participation of Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Romanians in the *Aktion*.
13) 9 August – the terrible day: up to 1000 victims shot dead.

326 This document consists of four pages of drafts (including an outline for a study?) and seven pages of daily notes; the drafts seem to have been written earlier, hence the order of editing.
327 [x] The beginning.
328 Number 3 is missing.
329 Most probably a reference to the arrest of councillors, which took place on 21 July 1942.
330 Added in pencil.

14) 11 August. The assault on Többens workshop during the night of 10 August, women taken away.
15) A quiet day. Without Germans 3800 people are seized. About 4,000 came themselves.
16) Volunteers [are] for:
3 kg of bread
1 [kg] marmalade[331]
Later: 1 [kg] bread
½ [kg] marmalade
[[6]]17) At the Landau firm *Ostdeutsche Bautischlerei Werkstätte*.[332]
18) The W . . . family
19) The Grasberg family.[333]
20) The house at Nowolipki Street 29.
21) A few lines back[?]. Miła Street 69, Nowolipie Street 23, Nowolipki Street 29, Gęsia Street 30.
22) [People] without papers.
23) The surrounding environs.
24) Sob. . . sob. . . sob. . .
[[6v]] 25) Zagan, Chilinowicz.[334]
26) The *Aktion* on Gęsia Street 9/10, 30 victims.
27) 11 August. It is going to be another intense day. The *Aktion* starts as early as 4 a.m. Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Germans and the Jewish police.
28) The commotion in the workshops.
29) Scandals.
30) As of today, 11 August, up to 160,000 people have been deported.

[4] 24 July *6 kg za Pustelnika*[?], *2 chłopów;*[335] J e w s; a Christian related
22 July [19]42 The destruction of Warsaw

331 See the ordinance of the Head of the Jewish Police of 29 July 1942, ARG II 68 (Ring. II/188).
332 Name of the firm in Latin characters.
333 The name can be also read as Grosberg; see Doc. 18.
334 Shakhne Zagan, Bentsiyon Chilinowicz.
335 (Polish, in Latin characters) 6 kg for Pustelnik, 2 peasants; meaning unclear; Pustelnik was a small settlement, known for its brickyard; now it is part of Warsaw on the eastern outskirts.

C z e r[336] *[n i a k ó w]* 3 suicides [. . .]
25 July Muranowska Street 29; a Jew
25 July *Shabbat Nachamu*[337] – consolation; Nowolipki
A Jew walks along and comforts: 'May we be consoled and sustained today on the Shabbat of Consolation.'
24 July Shooting at Dzielna Street 9 [. . .]

[[4v]] 22 4,00[0]
[2]3 3,00[0]
[2]4 10,000
[2]5 7,50[0]
[2]6 7,000
[2]7 7,000
[2]8 8,000.
46,00[0][338]
29 8,00[0].
54,000 67,000 until 29 July[339]

29 July Gęsia until 10 tomorrow morning leave [. . .]
(Okopowa – Smocza)

[7][340] 11 August Graf[f][341] – Stawki Street 4
Gepner[342] – Stawki Street
12 August Second blockade Gęsia Street 30, 100 people
Goldberg [. . .] woman[?] 43 years old
[[7v]] Blockade
Gęsia Street 24, 2 victims

336 Part of the name in Latin characters.
337 (Hebrew) Shabbat of consolation, the first Shabbat after the fast of Tisha b'Av.
338 Total should be 46,500, and below, after adding 8,000, it should be 54,500.
339 The line added on the margin; the word 'until' in Polish, in Latin characters.
340 At this side of the scrap of paper, notes are in Polish, in Latin characters.
341 Most probably Attorney Jerzy Graff (1905–1943), specialist in trade issues; in the ghetto, a member of the advisory council of the Supply Unit.
342 Abraham Gepner.

11 August [19]42 100 *osób*[343]
[. . .] greeted [. . .] sergeant[?] 4 Ukrainians

[8][344] 1 September A bomb also fell on Dzielna Street 7
Żoliborz, Dworzec Gdański
W o l a
Gęsia Street 35a, no victims
[[8v]] 2 [loaves of] bread 150
1 [. . .] 250
4 [. . .] [at] 250 = 10.00
4 [. . .] [at] 2.50 = 10.00

[1]

30 August [19]42 The destruction of Warsaw

Introduction

Today, more than a month since the onset of the so-called resettlement operation of Warsaw's Jews, when we are almost entirely certain that of the 220,000 Jews sent away, over 90 per cent have perished, I will begin to recount in a few lines the ordeal suffered in those terrible 5 weeks from 2 2 J u l y t o 3 0 A u g u s t 1 9 4 2. A shudder envelops me when I recall the details of this [infamous] period in history.

Even the times of the Inquisition, pogroms and other persecutions of Jews cannot compare to the last few weeks and to the torments of the annihilation of the largest Jewish community in the 20th century by a nation that was supposed to be Europe's *Kulturträger*.[345]

[1v] Already on 21 July, there were widespread rumours in the ghetto that the *kehillah* had received orders from the authorities to send away from Warsaw that section of the Jewish population which constitutes a burden upon the *Judenrat* and other social welfare institutions. The Jewish society was convinced that when the residents of the refugee points were sent away the resettlement operation would end. Therefore, the better-off residents

343 (Polish) persons.

344 At both sides of this scrap of paper, notes in Polish in Latin characters, except for the sentence about the bomb.

345 (German) bearers of culture.

of the refugee points began to look for housing with their relatives, and those who had a bit of money even rented flats, thinking that this could provide a solution, that they and their families would be rescued from the horrendous tragedy of being deported to an unknown destination (meaning certain death). During the afternoon, in fact, notices from the *Judenrat* appeared, providing complete details about the resettlement procedure. The main point of the notice was to show that any Jew who was unemployed would be sent away. We the employees of the Y.S.A. Help[346] were, according to the notice, to be considered part of the labour force, but only if we were registered in the 'Sick Fund'.[347] [2] On the other hand, officials who for three years had devoted all of their efforts towards working for the common good were amongst those sentenced to be sent away. However, the directors of the Y.S.A.H. intervened and everybody, even the delegates from the Central Refugee Committee, obtained papers within two days signed by Wielikowski. These papers temporarily protected them from the Jewish police who were assigned to carry out the *Aktion*.

21 July passed in tension between anticipation and gloom.

22 July[182] *[19]42* At 6 in the morning columns of the Jewish police march through the streets as if on their way to carry out some sacred task. Two hours later, the first transports carrying Jews from the refugee points appear on the streets. Their faces show despair. Pain and terror are reflected there. Their eyes ask, 'Where are we going? Into whose hands are you sending us?' Women weep, children cry out for food and a shudder grips the onlooker.

[[2v]] The *Aktion* lasts the whole day. The residents of almost all the refugee points are driven away on carts guarded by the Jewish police to the *Umschlagplatz,* are soon packed like sardines into goods wagons, and are sent off on an unknown road to the Eastern borderlands (according to the notice from the *Judenrat*). 4,000 Jews were sent away that first day.

346 (Yiddish) *Yidishe Sotzyale Aleynhilf,* Jewish Social Self-Help, ŻSS.

347 Insurance-financial institution, in Polish called *Kasa Chorych,* its official name in the interwar years.

348 In the original, August, apparently by mistake.

23 July [1942] The *Aktion* continued the next day but with a faster tempo. Although the police did not yet seize passers-by on the street and honoured all documents (such as identity cards, or temporary attestations from workshops), nevertheless all the beggars were removed from the streets as well as the remaining inhabitants of the refugee points. As a result, a rumour spread, saying that the deportation would affect only those Jews who were receiving social welfare from the *kehillah* and from communal institutions. So, it was estimated that up to 25,000 Jews would be sent away. Today, five weeks after that barbaric operation, we see how laughable our optimistic calculations were. Today, 3,000 were dispatched.

[3]

24 July [19]42 The German authorities considered that the pace of the *Aktion* was too slow and ordered 10,000 people to be delivered to them. And now the role of the 'Jewish police' begins. Our brothers become better Papists than the Pope: they seize people from all sides, block off individual houses, remove everyone without regard for ID cards.

[9]

1–[2] September [19]42 2.50 [a.m.?] N[owoli]pki[349] Street 31–33, [Wołyńska Street] 16/18; Leszno, church.[350]

Today passed almost peacefully. No blockades took place, but the night was very intense.[351]

11 at night sirens sounded alarming the population. 15 minutes later, the first explosions were heard. Three bombs fell, but they were a long way away. Soon after, the terrible ordeal began. Many bombs were dropped on the Jewish quarter. Several incendiary bombs fell on Wołyńska Street 16–18, and an enormous fire erupted.

Large conflagrations were seen near Okopowa, Wolska and Stawki Streets. A bomb fell on Nowolipki Street 31–33[352] [[9v]] There were 50 victims.

349 Abridged name of the street in Latin characters.

350 Catholic church at Leszno Street 32.

351 On the Soviet air raids see footnotes 472 and 534, pt. 1.

352 The date 30 August [19]42 in the bottom left corner, the same on p. [1] of this document.

The fire on Leszno Street by the church is still burning today (7 in the morning on 2 September).

A bomb also hit Niska Street 59. All in all, there are many casualties. When the first bombs fell near Stawki Street, a few windowpanes were knocked out on the courtyard side of the house at Miła Street 54. It is remarkable that the famous German air defence was not in operation at all.

While the first assault of 10–11 days ago was impressive, lit up with rocket flares, today's assault was very heavy and lasted almost 2 hours. About 2.30 in the morning, the warning sirens sounded again, but there was no bombardment nearby.[353]

(3)

[1/16][354]

4 November [19]42 At the OBW outpost in Praga (Hospital). One of the Jewish workers, while talking to a German soldier, uttered: *Russland kaput*.[355] The soldier replied: *Aber wir auch*.[356]

It happened on 3 November 1942.

4 November [19]42 The satisfaction of a German soldier

OBW workers, trying to shorten their marching route from Gęsia Street 30 to Miła Street, use a breach in the wall at Smocza Street, via Ostrowska Street. For two days now, a soldier has been standing next to the gate at Smocza Street 37. Each time, he asked the ones leading the group where we were going, and a moment later happily allowed us to pass through the breach.

353 Note on the margin in Polish and German, in Latin characters: 'Anna Grasberg-Górna, [born] 8 August 1906, Warsaw, doctor of sociology, teacher. Before the war, employee of the Institute of Social Economy. The institute was established in 1920 for academic research on the important social issues. OBW, *Ausweis* No. 1174, *Meldekarte* 35161.'

354 This part of the diary starts with the entries of 4 November in Polish, then continues in Yiddish from the other end of the notebook, hence double paged numbers at the beginning.

355 (German) Russia is finished.

356 (German) But so are we.

4 November [19]42 Today, the Jewish police, instructed by Germans, rounded up Jews who did not have numbers that would permit them to work in Okęcie.[357] Many workers reportedly escaped from that outpost.

4 November [19]42 Yesterday, two men were brought from Pawiak to the Jewish cemetery. One of them was hanged in Pawiak, and his naked body was buried [2/15] in a very shallow hole in the ground (they are probably taking [into account] the fact that someone else will be able to identify the body). The other was a corpse of a Jew[ish] policeman, who was fatally shot.

4 November [19]42 Workers at the Többens company have not received their bread rations for several days, with the exception of bonuses. It has been the same at OBW; there has been no bread for three days.

4 November 1942 According to the news from Kraków, last week, between Monday and Thursday, 6,000 Jews were deported.[358]

4 November [19]42 Yesterday, a man joined a group of OBW workers working in the Courts (Leszno Street).[359]

During a conversation with Mr Offerman, he claimed that he had arrived in Warsaw by boat from Sandomierz[360] on 2 November, having escaped the ongoing deportation in that town.

The gentleman said that in Sandomierz [3/14] the Jews put up resistance. The Jewish policemen flung off their caps and belts when the *Aktion* began.

Of the 25,000 Jews living in Sandomierz, the larger half [!] fled to nearby towns and villages, and those who remained fought back in their homes. Apparently, the man claimed, about 100 Germans were killed. He is unable to say how the *Aktion* concluded, because he escaped while it was still being carried out. Blockades in Sandomierz took place mostly at night.

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357 See footnote 12, pt. 1.

358 On 28 October 1942; they were murdered in Bełżec.

359 See *Warsaw Ghetto. Everyday Life*, Doc. 51.

360 Sandomierz (Opatów County).

The man also said that on the way he saw trains with Jews from Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and, supposedly, from Hungary.[361]

4 November [19]42 There was a rumour circulating among OBW employees, especially among carpentry workers, that there were still 25,000 Jews left in Treblinki,[362] who were to be sent back to Warsaw. The Jewish imagination is truly extraordinary . . .

5 November Today posters appeared on the ghetto walls, that 700 people, men and women, were being sought for an outpost at 20 Niska Street.

[1]

5 November [19]42 The Jewish police in the resettlement operation

. . . Within the walls of the ghetto, the *Judenrat* has devised a new creature: the Jewish police, officially called *Ordnungs-Dienst*. And, in fact, those young men dressed up in their high, shiny boots and uniform caps have created *Ordnung*[363] in the Warsaw ghetto . . .

They began by taking money from bakers for baking bread illegally, from merchants for trading in forbidden goods, by entering into partnerships with the gendarmes on guard to benefit from smuggling, by taking bribes for releasing those who had been seized for the labour camps. However, they really made a name for themselves during the recent 'resettlement operation'.

The day after the order to deport the Jews from Warsaw appeared on the ghetto walls, our little Jewish policemen assiduously set about their 'holy task'. The first to be taken were the inhabitants of the refugee points. A shudder went through anyone who had the opportunity to observe said 'work' in the first 2–3 days, with what heroism, bravery and brutality the Jewish police carried out their work.

361 The *Aktion* in Sandomierz took place on 29 October 1942. The inmates of the ghetto, approximately 5,000 people, were deported to Bełżec. A few succeeded in escaping; however, the other acts of resistance are not confirmed. The man could not have seen trains on his way had he come by boat.

362 I.e. Treblinka; the plural form was often used as well.

363 (German) order.

[2] By force and with blows they dragged them away as they attempted to beg and plead to be left behind. Jews felt instinctively that they were being led like sheep to certain slaughter, although the terrible name 'Treblinka' was not yet known in those early days.

Today, more than three months from that initial day, when we know for sure what happened to the more than a quarter of a million Jews, when news still reaches us about resistance, about how the Jewish police refused to take part in the operation in certain cities and small towns (the most recent being Sandomierz),[364] we can truly assess how vile the behaviour of the Jewish police in Warsaw has been, in the largest Jewish community in Europe.

It is possible that the streets of Warsaw would have been strewn with tens of thousands of corpses, it is possible that all of the Jews who have been deported would have died in Warsaw on the spot instead, but what is certain is that the 'resettlement operation' would have been delayed and weakened both in the *Gubernia* and in other lands. Instead of a million in the graveyard of Treblinka, the sacrifice in Warsaw would have amounted to a hundred to two hundred thousand Jews at the very worst. However, the enthusiasm with which the Jewish police executed their task allowed the Germans to utilise only about 150 men for the entire *Aktion*.

I had the rare privilege of living through a number of blockades manned by the [3] Jewish police. From my hiding places I could observe their work, and more than once I had the impression 'as if I were at the front, fighting the enemy, won the battle, and, as triumphant as a murderous thief, I took the *placówka*'.

They took no account of the sick, of old women and tiny children. And it seemed as if people had suddenly fallen under some sort of magic spell and had lost all sense of compassion, nobility and humanity.

I saw how the Jewish policemen dragged old, grey-haired men by their heads, how they kicked and hit women solely because they had pleaded to be left until later, because their children had their exemption papers.

Whistling and shouting, they ran into the houses like a mob of savages, ran in all directions through the flats searching, breaking down doors and dragging out the desperate Jews by force.

364 See footnote 361, pt. 2.

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The Jewish police will, perhaps, attempt to defend themselves: 'We had to do it. We were ordered to supply a certain number of Jews daily. The authorities threatened us with our lives.'

Let me take their side for a minute. Let us say that orders must be carried out if one is a 'disciplined' soldier, even if it is in the service of the enemy, when the life of 2000 Jewish policemen is 'dearer' than the lives of an entire community.

Is the conduct of the Jewish police during the operation justified?

[4] No – and I believe that there is not a single Jew who would justify or attempt to defend the participation of the Jewish police in the 'resettlement operation'.

The response to their conduct can only be a resounding, 'I accuse.'[365]

Jews are not a vengeful people, but I believe that the *Aktion* sowed in our hearts (of the survivors) a strong desire for vengeance, vengeance upon our enemies and murderers but also upon our very own brothers, the Jewish police.

Fate has already punished them as well. Large numbers of them and their families have also been sent to Treblinka, and the fate of those who remain is the same as that of the few surviving Jews.

Being sure that the Jewish policemen would be the only ones left alive in Warsaw, they took advantage of the situation and pocketed money in return for releasing people.

They were not content with small sums, so thousands flew into their pockets. Gold and diamonds were the price for freeing a Jew from 'Jewish hands'.

However, these were not the only sins of our 'holy' brothers. When it was all over, when the last person had been pulled from the houses, they began their 'work' of robbing and searching for valuables . . . and a large part of the Jewish police [5] became rich, very rich. . .

To my mind, this is the greatest sin they committed.

Let us suppose they could justify themselves, although I do not believe that such an advocate could be found with such an inhuman heart as to undertake

365 Reference to the open letter published by Emil Zola in *L'Aurore* in 1898, entitled *J'accuse . . .!* addressed to the president of the French Republic, Félix François Fauré. The writer defended French officer Alfred Dreyfus, wrongly accused of espionage. The letter became a symbol of open resistance against the injustice of the socio-political system.

the defence of the Jewish police in Warsaw. Suppose they say that they were forced to carry out the *Aktion*, to beat people, drag them out, chase them down the streets like dog catchers – all of this because the authorities ordered them to produce a certain number of Jews a day. However, who forced them to rob Jewish property, who forced them to carouse and get drunk off hard-earned Jewish pennies, etc.? What sort of defence can the leadership and functionaries of the Warsaw Jewish police mount against such a charge? . . .

And once more, the word of the great Frenchman bursts forth: 'I a c c u s e.'

Unfortunately, this accusation does not yet have consequences. Unfortunately, we can only gather in our hearts the hate we feel towards those who, to a great extent if not entirely, helped carry out Hitler's diabolical plan: [6] to eradicate European Jewry. I believe that the time will come and, at that moment, the judgement against our brothers will be as follows:

Warsaw Jewish society shall lead the Jewish police to the huge mass grave at Treblinka, and they shall be made to stand there with a large placard in their hands and on their backs for everyone to see and read: 'We, the Warsaw Jewish police, are the collaborators of the great disgrace of the 20th century – Treblinka.'

This shall be our act of vengeance, because Jews are not capable of acts of vengeance such as murdering, burning or destruction as in 'Treblinka', even against our mortal enemies the Germans, and thus we will not be able to impose such a sentence on our own brothers.

And – to kill a man takes little time. To kill a large part of a community takes a little longer, but such a living monument, standing there in memory of these innocent, pure souls for as short a time as one month, such a monument will remain forever in the memory of the surviving Jewish community.

Warsaw, 5 November [19]42

[7]

6 November [19]42

The establishment of Jewish ghettos in the G[eneral] G[overnment]

The *Kurier Warszawski*[366] of 5 November 1942 published an ordinance by the Governor-General about the establishment of ghettos for Jews in the *Gubernia*, specifying a number of towns in the Warsaw and Lublin districts where Jews were allowed to live. The ordinance states that Jews living

366 See footnote 145, pt. 1.

outside the places specified are allowed to move during the month of November to a town of their choice.

Jews are allowed to live in the following places:

Warsaw District: 1) Warsaw ghetto, 2) Sobolew, 3) Kałuszyn, 4) Siedlce, 5) Rembertów, 6) Kosów (Sokołów County).

Lublin District: 1) Piaski, 2) Izbica Lubelska, 3) Włodawa, 4) Parczew, 5) Łuków, 6) Międzyrzec,[367] 7) Końskowola, 8) Zaklików.

The ordinance also states that Jews who work for the military in State military undertakings and who live in barracks in the above places may remain there.

[8]

7 November [19]42

What German soldiers say

Non-commissioned officer Mauer,[368] who directs the *placówka* in the hospital in Praga (installed in a middle-school building) where the Jews from the O.B.W. firm (*Ostdeutsche Bau-Tischlerei Werkstätte*) from Gęsia Street 30 have been working, had a conversation yesterday with Messrs E. Szenberg and M. Chmielewski. He said that all non-commissioned officers who go to the front are automatically promoted to the rank of officer. When the aforementioned gentlemen asked him why he didn't put his name forward and how long anyone could stay in the *[H]interland*,[369] Mauer replied that all of the newly commissioned officers are sent immediately to the front, and that he values his head too highly, because going to the front means certain death, and he wants to stay alive. [9] At the same time, he pointed to the side with his fingers, 'I am not going to give my head for him.'

8 November

In one of the recent issues of last month's *[Der] Stürmer*,[370] there appeared a report from Palestine, saying that Jews are selling houses,

367 The Polish name in parentheses in Latin characters. In Yiddish, the name is Mezrich.

368 Ernst Maurer, employee of the District Governor's Office in Grójec. His name is featured on all German ordinances regarding the Jewish population of Grójec; see: Karolina Panz, "Zagłada sztetl Grice", *Zagłada Żydów, Studia i Materiały*, 2007, Vol. 3, p. 20, n. 34; Dariusz Libionka, Laurence Weinbaum, *Bohaterowie, hochsztaplerzy, opisywacze. Wokół Żydowskiego Związku Wojskowego*, Warszawa 2011, p. 290.

369 (German) interior (of the country); here: far away from the front.

370 *Der Stürmer* – German propaganda weekly associated with NSDAP, published 1923–1945.

machines, factories and the like on a massive scale. The British authorities have had to take strong measures to prevent it. What more can German propaganda come up with?

8 November On 24 October [19]42 an *Aktion* took place in Opole.[371] The Jews who had hidden were all shot when they came out of their holes a day or two later.

[10]

8 November Yesterday the *guard* on [the corner of] Żelazna and Chłodna Streets was very harsh. The *Wachtmeister* Dziobak,[372] as the Jewish workers call him, seized everything and in addition gave everyone a lash with his whip.

When the Jews saw what was happening, they began to eat up the few rolls, the 100 grams of sausage and the 50 grams of butter, washing it all down with half litre of milk, all of which each one of them was carrying.

The scene had a tragi-comic aspect to it. You only see such scenes in American comedies. When one of the workers asked the *Wachtmeister* to leave him a roll and some butter for his sick child, he was told: *Wir sind auch krank*.[373] He was given back a small roll and perhaps 20 grams of butter.

[11]

8 November [1942] From the ghetto.
Genuine kosher meat was being sold yesterday in the O.B.W. block on Miła Street for 100 zlotys a kilo.

9 November [1942] The offensive in Africa is proceeding rapidly.[374] Today's *Kurier Warszawski* of 9 November contains an official report that the American army

371 On 24 October 1942, as a result of a selection in the ghetto in Opole Lubelskie, some of the young and qualified workers were sent to the labour camp in Poniatowa, the rest were deported to Sobibór; see: *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, pp. 550–552.

372 (Polish) literally, platypus, duckbill.

373 (German, in Latin characters) We are also ill.

374 Most probably the reference is to 'Operation Torch', which began on 8 November 1942, and aimed to seize the French colonies in North Africa remaining under the control of the Vichy government.

is attacking Algiers.[375] Pétain[376] has issued a call to the French nation: 'We shall fight.'

Genoa[377] has been bombed again. Jews in the ghetto are saying that the Anglo-American army has already taken Dakar[378] (Africa).

The mood of the Jews is improving. Hope waxes that the few surviving European Jews might yet survive Hitler's plague.

[12]

9 November [19]42

Reflections (1)

Yesterday's news in the papers has evoked much joy amongst the Jews.

In their conversations, Jews have already defeated the entire German army in Africa. People greet each other with the wish that it might all end quickly, so that the few surviving Jews might live long enough to see the end of the plague of Hitlerism and to take revenge. Meanwhile, however, the Jews in the ghetto are not safe, and every day lived through is a great victory. Treblinka is still working, and *Aktionen* are still occurring, even in the territories of the *Reich* in such places as Płońsk,[379] Białystok[380] and Tarnopol.[381]

Nevertheless, this good news on the political front provides Jewish souls with some hope.

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375 Algiers – city in northern Africa, the capital of Algeria; in 1942, a location of the battle between British-American landing forces against the French troops of the Vichy government.

376 Henri Philippe Pétain (1856–1951), Marshal of France, the head of the Vichy government. On 22 June 1940, after the defeat of the French army, he signed a truce with Germany. After the Third Reich forces invaded unoccupied France in November 1942, he did not resign, and his official protest carried no weight.

377 Genoa – city in the north-western Italy.

378 Dakar – city in west Africa, the capital of Senegal. In 1940, British and Free French Forces failed to take control of Dakar. In 1942 it was seized by American troops.

379 Płońsk was in the Reich's *Regierungsbezirk Zichenau*.

380 Białystok was in the Reich's *Bezirk Bialystok*. The reference is probably to the *Aktionen* which started on 2 November 1942 in almost all the smaller ghettos in this area. Of approximately 100,000 Jews who lived there, some were killed on the spot, with other deported to five larger ghettos including in Białystok.

381 Tarnopol (now Ternopil, Ukraine) was in *Distrikt Galizien*, in the General Government. One of the *Aktionen* took place at the beginning of November 1942; about 2,500 people were killed.

[13]

10 November [19]42 Reflections (2)

There have not been any newspapers yet today, but Hitler's speech[382] is being widely discussed. Hitler is supposed to have said a good deal about the Jews. The African offensive is also supposed to be their fault. The *Kurier Warszawski* of 9 November[383] reported that *Paris Soir*[384] carried an article saying that English and American Jews are responsible for the new African offensive.

The ghetto is living through yet another painful day today. People are being taken from the Többens and Hoffman[n] shops. People say that skilled workers, tailors, are being taken to Lublin. News is coming to us on Gęsia Street that on Zamenhofa Street, women and children are being led away to an unknown destination.

Our mood is very despondent.

[1][385]

10 November Yesterday, at Żelazna Street 103, the *Befehlstelle*[386] demanded 15 trucks from the *gmina*. Supposedly this is related to the *Aktion* at the 'Hoffman[n]' company at Nowolipki Street 52–54.

It is reported that 2,000 tailors in total were requested.

10 November Yesterday, on 9 November, there was a good guard between 7 and 8 am. Carpenter Hochman accidentally forgot to leave money at home, and he had 150 zlotys on him. [2] However, he soon realised the fact and explained to the gendarme that the money belongs to the whole group, and is intended for purchasing potatoes. The guards let him pass. The *Wachtmeister* said, 'I know each of you has some things on himself, but go.'

382 Reference to the speech of 8 November 1942, https://archive.org/details/tcahs/page/n2631/mode/2up pp. 2696–2708 (accessed 24.02.2022).

383 In the original, October, by mistake.

384 *Paris-Soir* – French daily newspaper published in Paris in the years 1923–1943.

385 Beginning of the second notebook.

386 (German) headquarters, command post. During the *Grossaktion* of 1942, the German command was there.

10 November In the court on Leszno, where a group of OBW labourers is working, the following incident occurred yesterday: inspector Holzheimer demanded that the workers perform some task in a day's time, and, if they failed to do it, he threatened to shoot them. Hochman, a carpenter, [3], quickly replied:

'It is possible to be executed only once, yet it is impossible to finish this work today.'

Holzheimer said nothing to that.

10 November During a yesterday's *Aktion*, 112 tailors were taken from the 'Oschman[n]' company at Nowolipki Street 9.[387]

10 November Early morning, when the gendarmes came to the Hoffman[n] workshop on Nowolipki Street to carry out an *Aktion*, out of the total of 1,000 workers in both crews they found all in all 40 people whom they took away.

100 items of machinery were taken as well.

[4]

10 November 10.50 a.m. – there is an *Aktion* in progress at the Többens company on Prosta Street. 1,000 tailors were requested.

10 November During an *Aktion* carried out by the gendarmes without SS men, 30 Jewish policemen were used to escort people to the *Umschlagplatz*.

10 November The price of a gold dollar soared to 270 zlotys, probably in relation to the American victories in Africa.

[5]

10 November, 2.30 p.m. There is currently a blockade in the Többens buildings on Leszno Street. Before noon, there was another blockade at the 'Brauer' company, on Nalewki Street.

387 Cap-makers workshops.

10 November, 3 p.m. As the 'OBW' workers, we are impressed by the *Aktion* in the streets. Half an hour ago we received a newspaper, *Kurier Warszawski*. As we were reading it, all of a sudden we heard the SS officers approaching. [6] Our entire group scattered like mice, each person running to his work. 4 SS officers showed up in the yard (the same ones that carried out all the previous *Aktionen*), accompanied by a single civilian.

We were certain that there would be an *Aktion* here, too. But they just inspected the ongoing work and walked away.

10 November, 3.10 p.m. A phone rings. It is Mr Sztiler (a Christian, working as clerk at the OBW company), saying that the provisions department has run out of bread after 10 days, that the monthly amount allocated for the company was[388]

[7]

10 November, 3.25 A group of people is being led out from the small ghetto. The group consists mostly of women and children, and a very small number of men. To this day, according to reports, about 500 people have been escorted to the *Umschlagplatz*.

10 November, 3.40 According to the latest news, the same SS-men who were in OBW, also came to the Schilling company,[389] where they were looking for machines.

10 November The number of people taken today is:
1) Többens – 386,
2) Aschman[n] – 112 tailors,
3) Hofman[n] – 42,
Total – 540.

10 November Hitler's speech was published in today's issue of *Kurier Warszawski*. Apart from [8] its political content, it is full of references to Jews. Hitler says: 'If the Jews wanted to destroy Europe, we will eradicate all of them from Europe.'

388 The remainder of the sentence is missing.
389 See footnote 624, pt. 2.

10 November, 3.10 p.m. Half an hour earlier, during a search by SS men, Rosenberg, a member of the *Werkschutz*, suffered several blows.

The reason was telling. When the SS men arrived, Dr Jabłoński[390] was having a telephone conversation. He was not wearing an armband. [9] When the doctor left and the officers noticed him, they asked if he was Polish. He did not reply, so they ordered him to follow them. The doctor, however, seized the opportunity and slipped away. When the officers started looking for him, they asked *Werkschutz* Rosenberg, who was standing nearby, where the man had gone. Rosenberg, who had no knowledge of the latter's whereabouts, said nothing and therefore got beaten up.

[10]

11 November Yesterday's *Aktion* cost almost 1,000 people – 600 from the buildings in Leszno Street and almost four hundred (386) from Többens.

According to reports, 2,400 tailors were to be delivered by Friday, 5 November. People were to be brought in by the Hoffman[n], Többens, Schultz and Aschman[n] companies.

There were negotiations between the SS and the aforementioned companies, but they yielded no results. The *Aktion* began at the Hoffman[n] company, where out of the two crews of 1,000 [11] workers in total, they found barely 42 people. As an act of revenge, the SS took 100 machines.

11 November All non-professionals who had been detained and taken to the *Umschlagplatz*, were to be released.

11 November People are saying that the Americans interned Darlan,[391] a French general, in Africa.

11 November The news about the dismissal of non-professionals from the *Umschlag* has not been confirmed. Right now, at 9 a.m. [12], the *Aktion* is taking place in the Többens and Schultz buildings.

390 Perhaps Józef Jabłoński, laryngologist; see: M. Ciesielska, *Lekarze getta warszawskiego*, p. 336.

391 Jean François Darlan (1881–1942), French politician, admiral since 1939, commander of the French armed forces in the Vichy France from 1942, appointed as successor to Marshal Philippe Pétain. In 1942, after the Allied forces landed in Algiers, he signed a ceasefire.

11 November, noon The *Aktion* is taking place in 'Oksako'[392] on Niska Street. There was no blockade here. The SS demanded that the company provide them 60 tailors. Meanwhile, it is not yet known whether they were taken.

11 November, 1.30 p.m. There was an *Aktion* at Kurt Roehrich. 89 people were taken away.

[13]

11 November The Germans, both military personnel and civilians, were forbidden to be in the streets past 8 p.m. today and tomorrow, 12 November.

11 November, 5 p.m. Jews gathered at the *Umschlag* were put into train cars, up to 60 people per one wagon. Only professionals (women and men) were sent in the transport.

12 November, 10 a.m. On Miła Street, two SS men entered the OBW buildings. They immediately went [14] to house no. 61 and took the meat from the store. They also took three people.

12 November A search was carried out at the Schultz company. They searched for people, but also for some items (which precisely – is not known).

A handful of people without numbers were taken away.

12 November, 2.45 p.m. A lone Jew was walking by a house at Franciszkańska Street 20. At the same moment, famous 'Brandt' was passing along with several SS officers [15]. They arrested the Jew and put him at the disposal of a *junak*. The Jew, seeing that the SS men were leaving, started to escape. The *junak* shot him.

12 November The detained children were released from the *Umschlagplatz* and escorted to the 3rd boarding house[393] on Dzika Street.

392 See footnote 629, pt. 1.

393 On Dzika Street 13 and 15 there were dormitories for children from families resettled into the Warsaw ghetto. See ARG I 321 (Ring. I/231).

13 November, 7 a.m. A *Wachtmeister* for Zamenhofa-Leszno Streets, hearing a response by a member of the *Werkschutz* from the OBW company, rightly claiming that he was a *Werkschutz* member [16], replied with a smile: *Ja, ja, Werkschutz, Luftschutz, Wasserschutz*[394]. . .

14 November Today, a conference was held in the Brühl Palace,[395] with the Jewish *gmina* and representatives of the ghetto authorities. The Germans assured that the Jews would stay and that two ghettos would be established: 1) in the Többens and Schultz buildings and 2) the present-day ghetto.

[17]

17 November Posters were placed on the walls, on the Aryan side. Within next 10 days, Jews can enter the ghetto without penalty. Hiding a Jew is punishable by death. For the first time, the posters also included a warning directed at the Germans.

17 November, 7 a.m. The guard post on Okopowa [18] was the worst one. They took everything. Additionally, two Christian smugglers were shot.

18 November About 300 people were released from the *Umschlagplatz* today.

18 November Today's *Kurier Warszawski* informs that in Morocco, several local citizens were arrested. According to German news, these people were detained on the basis of 'Jewish' denunciations.

[19]

18 November Yesterday, on 17 November, at 4.15 p.m., when the OBW group was walking home along Gęsia Street, we noticed a wounded Jew lying next to the house at Gęsia Street 45. He was still alive. Our (OBW's) *Werkschutz* called the ambulance service, which immediately took the Jew

394 (German) yes, yes, factory guard, air raid guard, water supply guard . . .

395 It was a seventeenth–eighteenth-century palace in Warsaw on Wierzbowa Street, in 1935 remodelled for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; from October 1939 the seat of the Governor of the Warsaw District; destroyed in 1944.

to hospital. Today, at 3 p.m., the Jew was still alive. People say that he was a rickshaw driver from the *Befehlstelle*.

19 November A passenger train was blown up near Dęblin.

[20]

19 November, 4.30 p.m. A group from the OBW marches back home along Gęsia Street. On the way we were stopped by a gendarmerie patrol who cursorily searched our packages. They pulled Mr Grinberg out of the line and took 780 zlotys from him. Later it turned out that Mr Grinberg did not notice in the dark that they had given him his money back, along with his wallet, taking only small scissors and other trinkets.

[21]

19 November <u>News items</u>

In the 18 November issue of *Kurier Warszawski*, in a column titled 'Laterna Magica',[396] the contents of an alleged dispatch sent by 'the' Jewish *kehillah* of Moscow to Stalin, in connection with the 25th anniversary of the October Revolution, was printed.[397]

The contents read:

'The Jewish *kehillah* in Moscow greets the leader of the Russian people, and sends "Divine blessings" to the Red Army, and wishes it a great victory.'

[22]

20 November Today, Kirszenbaum, an OBW worker, was shot dead in the building at Miła Street 52.

21 November Yesterday, on 20 November at 4.15 p.m., OBW workers were again detained in Gęsia Street by a patrol of gendarmerie, which conducted searches of some of them, including Mr Herszkowicz, Dr Gilder, Dr Falman, Salbe[398] and Grinberg (the latter underwent the search on 19 November).

396 See footnote 145, pt. 1.

397 An armed Bolshevik-inspired coup from 6–7 November (24–25 October) 1917.

398 The name appears in the entry for 12 August in Doc. 9; however, it might be a different person.

[23]

21 November The following posters appeared on the ghetto walls: 'All unemployed Jews must report to work in *Werterfassung* until Monday, 23 November.'

21 November This morning at Zamenhofa Street 44 soldiers captured one Jew for work.

22 November 80 Jews were released from the Mokotów prison[399] and handed over to *Werterfassung*.

[24]

22 November Yesterday, on 21 November, when a group of OBW workers, employed in Praga, stopped along the way (with the permission of the commanding soldier) for a few minutes, to buy or sell some stuff, the following event occurred:

Mr Zilberberg wanted to sell a 'small crystal' for 50 zlotys. A Christian woman offered him only 35 zlotys. Z. did not accept [25] the price and withdrew the item. In the meantime, another Christian woman offered him 40 zlotys. When the first woman noticed this, she attempted to snatch the crystal. The head of the group 'Srebrnik', thinking that the Christian woman was taking something from Mr Z., walked over and violently pushed her off. Meanwhile, a man standing nearby (a *Volksdeutscher*, as it turned out), started to cry out and wanted to beat up the Jew. [26] 'Paul[?]', a non-commissioned officer, noticed this and intervened to defend his Jews. When the *Volksdeutscher* reproached him for doing this, the latter slapped him and marched off with the group to Praga.

25 November This morning, a shot Jew was lying nearby the prison at Gęsia Street. Before noon, 8 Jews were shot in the streets of the ghetto.

[27]

26 November Yesterday, on 25 November, before noon, on the corner of Lubeckiego Street, a gendarme stood near the OBW building, warning Jews who tried to leave the building, with the words:

399 See footnote 649, pt. 1.

'Do not come out. A SS man is standing over there. He'll shoot you.'

26 November The shooting of people in the street stopped yesterday, on 25 November, with 30 dead. Before 5 p.m., a Jew was shot next to a house at Miła Street 55.

[28]

26 November Today, at Franciszkańska Street 22, three Suchecki brothers, butchers by trade, were shot. They were caught smuggling meat.

30 November Yesterday, on 29 November, around 7 p.m., First,[400] the director of the Economic Department was shot on Muranowska Street by an unknown perpetrator. Who was the man who was killed? Director First, although still a young, 36-year-old man, [29] enjoyed a great career. Those who knew him from a young age could testify that he had the ambition to become a great man and achieve the goals he set for himself. A son of a small embroidery manufacturer, he managed to get out, graduated from a gymnasium, then from the W.S.H. (Wyższa Szkoła Handlowa),[401] he fell in love with one of the richest girls in Kalisz (Reich, daughter of the owner of one of the largest mills in Poland).[402] Thanks to his ambition, he fought the stubbornness of the Reich family and achieved his goal, becoming director of the Jewish Academic House[403] in Warsaw. After the Germans entered Warsaw, he became the director of the Economic Department at the *Judenrat* (as they say – a Gestapo stooge). Officially [30] he was a messenger between the *Judenrat* and the Gestapo. A vile man in his personal life, striving to get

400 Israel First.

401 (Polish) University of Commerce; it was established in 1906 as August Zieliński's Private Business Courses for Males, to become in 1933 Szkoła Główna Handlowa (Main University of Commerce).

402 A German, Bruno Reich, owned a large mill in Kalisz together with a Jew, Laybush Chmielnicki. After the death of her husband Izrael First, Wera Reich and the child managed to get out of the ghetto, thanks to their daughter's German nanny. After the war they lived in Berlin.

403 The Jewish Academic House on Sierakowskiego Street 7, funded by the 'Auxilium Academicum Judaicum' Jewish Students in Poland Aid Association, was established in 1926. It was one of the most important institutions of Jewish culture in the interwar period. The building survived the war.

ahead of his friends and companions (in his youth already), he used to resort to anything, even dirty tricks.

It is a pity that such a man managed to climb to such a high office in the Jewish social sphere. However, this could only happen in abnormal times, like that in which we are living today.

2 December [19]42 Unverified reports impart that yesterday, on 1 December, two Germans (officers) came to the cash register at KKO[404] and took all the money – a million zlotys. A similar incident supposedly took place at the Többens company, where the same [people] also took away uniforms. According to a Jewish 'canard', [31] they were Poles, dressed in German uniforms.

2 December [19]42 Yesterday, on 1 December, the Gestapo rulers of the ghetto, Mende and Witossek,[405] entered the *Judenrat* building and expressed their sympathy and condolences because of the death of director First. From the *gmina* at Zamenhofa Street they headed to Muranowska Street 40, to Mrs First's private apartment, where they also expressed their condolences.

4 December Related to the news about the robbery of the KKO cash register, information is provided that the robbers dressed as Germans took one million one hundred and fifty thousand zlotys and left the following receipt: 'This is money from levies.'

[32]

4 December 1942 A few days ago, 400 Jews were taken from the SS camp in Lublin at Lipowa Street 7 and deported to a concentration camp.[406] There were several Russian POWs among these 400. On the way, one of the prisoners grabbed a rifle from the gendarme who escorted them, and fatally shot him.

The remaining Jews attacked the Ukrainians who were escorting the group and beat them up. 386 out of 400 Jews managed to escape.

404 Abbreviation for Polish Komunalna Kasa Oszczędności (Municipal Savings Bank).

405 Gerhard Mende and Walter Witossek.

406 See footnote 616, pt. 2.

4 December [19]42 Yesterday, on 3 December, at 5 p.m., next to a house at Smocza Street 5, 2 Jewish pedestrians were shot by the SS.

[33]

7 December [19]42 Yesterday morning a message arrived, stating that both tomorrow, i.e. on 7 December, and on 8 December, a meeting of the SS and the SD regarding the Jewish question in Warsaw would take place in Berlin.

7 December [19]42 Already last Saturday, 5 December, a rumour was spreading around the ghetto that on 7 and 8 December there would be a resettlement operation, involving small workshops. All *placówki* not employed by the *Wehrmacht* are also to be liquidated.

7 December Yesterday, on 6 December, a report was plastered on the wall of the house at Zamenhofa Street 19 (the *Judenrat* headquarters), in which the *Judenrat* informs that [34] per the command of Mende (SS-Scharführer), no such operation will take place.

7 December, 4 p.m. OBW company workers from Gęsia Street 30 had already gathered in the courtyard, getting ready to go home.

All of a sudden, a *gestapowiec* (the one who carried out all selections in the company) entered the yard. A shiver went through everyone. He was followed by an 'airman'[407] and 5 Jews with large parcels. As it turned out, the *gestapowiec* captured these Jews and the airman as they attempted to pass the guards with some sacks. The items were left in the gatehouse, while the SS man phoned Żelazna Street 103 (*Befehlstelle*), from where a car was sent to get things.

In the meantime, the *gestapowiec* said: 'You, the Jews, are better off [35] than me. I slept a total of 3 hours last night. You come to work at 8, and at 2 you start to talk politics. And at 4 in the afternoon, you go home.' We spent the following 15 minutes in fear.

407 See footnote 255, pt. 2.

8 December Canards

A rumour started to circulate that all Jews still remaining in Europe would become American citizens.

At 12 noon, the Jews brought in a fresh canard. Italy allegedly asked the British government for a separatist peace treaty. The Jews let their imagination run so freely, that they added that the peace terms would be announced on Friday, 11 December.

[36]

10 December [19]42 900 Jews were sent from Radom to Szydłowiec,[408] where they are staying under terrible conditions. You have to pay 10 zlotys for a sip of water.

11 December [19]42 A young man with an armband was detained in the *gmina*, under suspicion that he was Polish. After the search, the Jewish police handed him over to a *junak* who had been sent from the *Befehlstelle*. On Smocza Street, the detainee pulled out a revolver (probably belonging to the *junak*), fired it and escaped. A manhunt began right away on Smocza Street.

16 December [1942] A train with Jews from Płońsk rode through Warsaw today. The Jews were supposedly taken to Oświęcim.[409]

[37]

17 December [1942] Yesterday, in the residential buildings of the 'Ursus'[410] *placówka* on Miła Street, an internal blockade was established [in order to catch] the Jews who avoid fulfilling their labour obligation. In addition, several people without numbers were detained.

17 December [1942] Murder of a Jew

Today, a few Jews lured another Jew to a house at Miła Street 53 under the pretext of selling him a certain amount of various goods for 10,000

408 Szydłowiec (Radom County), 32 km south-west of Radom.

409 See: *Letters on the Shoah* (forthcoming).

410 Company for the tractor industry Ursus, established in 1893; it had its plant in the ghetto, employed 400 workers; some blocks of houses in the ghetto were ascribed to particular companies, like barracks; see: *A Guide to the Perished City*, p. 492 and ARG II 326b (Ring. II/246).

zlotys. Inside, the Jew was murdered, the thieves took his money, stripped him and covered his body with feathers. In connection with this murder, several Jews from the 'Alvia' residential block[411] at Miła Street 32–36 were arrested.

[38]

19 December [19]42 As SS-Scharführer[412] Mende ordered, the *gmina* was to set up room for 1,000 Jews from Sobolew in the buildings by the *Umschlagplatz*. When the work was already underway, the order was withdrawn.

20 December [19]42 As for the news about Sobolew which spread on 19 December, we learn that no resettlement from that town has occurred. The rumour has spread because of the dissolution of the 1,000 people camp in Wilga,[413] in Garwolin County.

20 December Today was a day of good news:

[39] 1) The Jews talked a lot about the landing of British and American ships in Tripoli.[414]

2) It was rumoured that the ghettos in Kraków and Lwów had been opened. Jews no longer wore armbands there. People in the Warsaw *gmina* circles are saying in that a similar thing will happen in Warsaw. That Jewish imagination went even further. Namely, that the Jews are to be allowed to go to the Aryan side for 3 hours a day.

Meanwhile, yesterday a horrible guard was upon us, they took everything, and almost stripped women naked.

There was also some bad news yesterday. Poles were expelled [40] from Zamość and Dęblin.[415] Zamość will be transformed into the SS headquarters, and the town will be renamed Himmlerstadt. All the Zamojski family estate will be distributed among distinguished SS men.

411 Probably a reference to the Avia company, dealing with collection of scrap metal; see *ibidem*.

412 An equivalent of a sergeant.

413 Wilga (Garwolin County). In 1941, a labour camp was located there; it had 800 prisoners on average.

414 Tripoli – city in northern Africa, capital of Libya. Following the Italian-Turkish war of 1911–1912, it was under Italian rule; in 1943 it was seized by the British.

415 Dęblin (Puławy County).

21 December The Jewish group leader recounts a conversation from two days ago, at the *Ostbahn placówka* between the inspector of the *placówka* and two soldiers who returned from the Stalingrad front a few days prior.

The conversation went on for 4 hours and was conducted outside. The inspector's face, every now and then turning from red to white and back again, was visible proof of what the soldiers were telling him. The Jews working nearby overheard the conversation (the Germans were speaking loudly). If the situation as it is today shall continue for a few more weeks, said the soldiers, not a single German will come back from there, as they are not letting them return, it is impossible to move forward, and there is a battle in the middle.

(4)

[1]

28 January [19]43[250] *Aktion* 2

10 days have now passed since that unexpected Monday, 18 January 1943. Ten days full of nightmares, fear, terror and dread of the unknown tomorrow.

Chased out of the ghetto so cramped, and yet known to us, we were broken, having also lost the last remains of those terrible days of 6–9 November 1942. We wander among strangers like savages, afraid to raise our heads. We settled among friends and acquaintances, not looking at the grim faces of our hosts. We have been sitting at the 'brushmakers' for a week now, enjoying the hospitality of our friends, with no prospects for tomorrow.

But enough with the musings, let's rather talk about those few days for all their stark nakedness, poverty and heroism exhibited by the handful of Jews who survived.

But first, a retelling of a minor episode. Yesterday, on 27 January 1943, I overheard the following words in a conversation: 'Had in July 1942, in the early stage of the resettlement *Aktion*, the Jews taken up arms, tried to resist, [2] killed a few Germans, forced the Jewish hooligans (police) to take no active part, then thousands of Jews would be killed by German bullets, and other Jews would say: it was because of their stupid heroism.'

416 In the original, 1942, evidently by mistake.

Yet nobody thought that such a resistance would have, to a large extent, halted the *Aktion*.

Today, when for approximately 6,000 Jews sent away, there are 1,000 Jewish victims for 12 Germans, the population finally understands the heroism of that 'stupid' youth. This is what a simple Jew said during that conversation.

It is Sunday, 17 January 1943, a day off, as usual. In the ghetto: confusion, turmoil. Whether they have to or not, Jews stroll through the streets within the narrow walls of the ghetto, despite the immense cold.

One can walk longer between the rows of tenement houses. At nine o'clock in the evening you would go from house to house (cautiously), talk to your neighbour, sometimes even play cards, and that's how life in the ghetto looked like after those [3] horrible days of selections.

The next day, everyone will go to the workshops on the *placówki* to work, as usual, to perform slave labour for the eternal enemy. And, having no premonitions, we go to sleep.

The clock is showing 5.45 a.m.; it is 18 January 1943. I get dressed and get ready to go to a workshop along with the whole group from Gęsia Street 30. I hear, at 6.30 a.m., as our *placówka*, which works in the courts on Leszno Street, leaves the building. Suddenly, a gasping neighbour bursts in: 'You still lying in bed?' – she addresses my room-mates. 'The street is surrounded by the gendarmes, the *placówki* are not released from the ghetto, it's a blockade, surely an *Aktion*.'

There is a commotion in the room, turmoil. The decision – we have to hide – and we all crawl into the shelter.

7.30. The first shot rings out. This lets us know that the work has already started and at 8.15 they are already at our house. We are sitting [4] quietly, like mice in a burrow. We hear the door being battered down. As scheduled, without haste, a German breaks down our door, opens it, enters the apartment, starts looking in wardrobes, beds, finds no one. Our hearts are pounding in fear that they might discover us. He shattered the window pane and left the apartment. We relaxed, but getting out is out of the question yet. They work the entire block, so we are sitting packed like sardines and waiting. Every now and then shots can be heard. We don't yet know what they mean. The *Aktion* in the building lasts until 4 p.m. We stick our heads out only around 5 p.m. There is dead silence in the streets. No living soul in sight. The more daring of us go to Miła Street 64 to get some information. It turns out that the Jewish police also took part in the *Aktion*, but

not as actively as in the first days of July. They were content to just escort people out. [5] We learned that the entire *placówka* from the courts had been moved to *Umschlag*, and we also learned that the entire OBW management was taken. Mr I. Landau[417] assembled some workers and together they headed to the factory (workshop). On the way, the whole group was stopped and taken to the *Umschlag*. On the way, a few people escaped, including Aleksander Landau, who immediately contacted the Polish management and with great effort managed to get his brother Józef[418] out. The rest were sent to Treblinka, with the exception of refugees from the *Umschlag*. Many who jumped from the cars during the journey returned. One of our carpenters, Chaim Srebrnik, travelled as far as the Treblinka train station.

A separate chapter should be devoted to a heroic performance by the groups of *halutzim* and *shomrim* groups at Miła Street 61. There the first shot was fired, which may have resulted in further [6] defensive action. A gendarme was wounded there (later it was said that he died). 5 Jews died on the battlefield, among them Emilka Landau (Aleksander's daughter) and Liberman, a *Werkschutz* from the OBW. The Germans hurled a hand grenade into the basement of the house at Miła Street 61.

On Tuesday, 19 January, at 6 a.m. we were in our hideout. The *Aktion* continued, this time on Muranowska, Niska and other streets.

It was quiet in our house, but the fear was still great, as the *Werterfassung* immediately started to work, which meant there was a risk of our hideout being discovered and us being shot.

But Jews have a ready excuse for every misfortune, and since the group worked on Miła Street 61, it was concluded that it was only taking [7] things from the apartments of Liber and A[leksander] Landau. Later, however, it turned out that they received an order to clean out the houses at Miła Street 61, 64 and 67.

The house 64 [at Miła Street] bought itself out, paying the Jewish group leader Fogel[419] 7,500 zlotys. *Werterfassung* has not yet been there to this day, even though the rest of the houses in this row have already been checked.

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417 Reference to Aleksander Leyb Landau.

418 Józef Landau.

419 Mojżesz Fogel (Fogiel), Jewish manager of *Werterfassung*, head of the Bureau, and later of the Housing Department of the *Judenrat*; had a reputation of being inept. Rumour had

On Tuesday, 19 January I found out about the resistance on the first day, 18 January 1943, at Miła Street 34 and on the corner of Niska and Zamenhofa[420] Streets.

There was a big shootout on Niska Street. From inside a small wooden house, three young people fired at a group of marching Germans. The shots gave the impression that the bullets came from a machine gun. 4 Germans died. Only after the house was set on fire could the group of Germans move on. The Jewish heroes died [8] in the flames of the burning house.[421]

On Wednesday, 20 January, our neighbourhood was almost quiet. People are back at home. However, the *Aktion* continued on Leszno Street, where shots were fired from house [no.] 78. The Germans withdrew from the building. But they pulled out several hundred Jews from other buildings, and shot 150 of them right in the *Umschlagplatz*.

On Tuesday, 19 January, there was an *Aktion* in the brushmakers' workshop on Świętojerska Street. 350 people were taken, of them 13 were killed, including dir[ector] Chołodenko.[422]

During the *Aktion* on Miła, on 18 January, in the house [at] Miła Street 69, dir[ector] I. Giterman[423] was also shot dead.

Description:

(1) a) ARG I 414 (Ring. I/29; Ring. I/96; Ring. I/264; Ring. I/895; Ring. I/1060; Ring. I/1220/87)
Ring. I/29 (notebook), notes of 14–27 June; Ring. I/96, notes of 7–30 May and 11–14 June; Ring. I/96, I/1060, I/1220/87, notes of 1 June and 3–7 June; Ring. I/264, notes of [11]–22 July; Ring. I/264, I/1060, notes of 22–25 May; original, handwritten (U*), pencil, ink, Polish, Yiddish, 95×155–220×288 mm, minor

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it that in 1942 he collected in a short period of time more than 100,000 zlotys through bribes.

420 On 18 January 1943, the ŻOB unit under the command of Mordekhai Anielewicz recaptured Avrom Zandman, a young employee of the Hallmann workshop, who spilled acid on a German *Werkschutz*, and was then arrested. The group of militants mixed in with the crowd of Jews led to the *Umschlagplatz* and at the corner of Zamenhofa and Niska Streets attacked the convoy which escorted the column. Almost the entire group was killed; Anielewicz was wounded. The majority of Jews destined for deportation managed to flee.

421 Only three or four people survived, including Mordekhai Anielewicz.

422 Dawid Chołodenko.

423 Yitzhak Giterman.

damage and losses of text, 49 sheets, 72 pages. Attached is Hersh Wasser's note in Yiddish: 'Daily notes by Yekhiel Górny.'
Ring. I/895, notes of 12 April 1942 belong to *Accounts from the General Government*, Doc. 128.
b) HWC 32/5, notes of 29 June – 10 July 1942; 14 July (account of November 1939); original, handwritten (U*), ink, notebook, Yiddish, 16 sheets, 32 pages (19+13).

(2) ARG II 302 (Ring. II/198), notes of 22 July – 1 September 1942.
Original, handwritten (U*), notebook, ink, pencil, Polish, Yiddish, 63×99, 88×208, 150×210 mm, 22 sheets, 17 pages.

(3) ARG II 246 (Ring. II/237; Ring. II/287)
Ring. II/237, notes of 4-10 November 1942; original, handwritten (JG* and U*), notebook, ink, Polish, Yiddish, 160×198 mm, 12 sheets, 17 pages; it was kept in a binder; on p. 1 in Yiddish (handwritten – LEG* [?], pencil): "1. Górny";
Ring. II/287, notes of 10 November – 21 December1942; original, handwritten (U*), ink, Yiddish, 143×204 mm, 15 sheets, 27 pages; it was kept in a binder; on p. 1 in Yiddish (handwritten – LEG* [?], pencil): "2. Górny" and "Bibersztajn, Kacyzne".

(4) ARG II 247 (Ring. II/288), notes of [18]–28 January 1943.
Original, handwritten (U*), pencil, Yiddish, 151×196 mm, binder, 8 sheets, 8 pages.
Published in *Selected Documents*: pp. 86–94 (ARG II 246 [Ring. II/287]); 94-101 (ARG II 246 [Ring. II/237]); 591–594 (ARG II 247 [Ring. II/288]); 701–102 (ARG II 302 [Ring. II/198], fragment).

14 *April–July 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Shmuel Shainkinder,* "פֿון מײַן טאָג־בוך" *[From my diary]; notes on current events and on people who died in the ghetto*

[1] From my diary

Tuesday, 21 April

A beautiful spring day. The sun warms us like never before [. . .]. The air in the walled-in ghetto is musty and suffocating. There is no trace of anything green, of anything sprouting. It is still muddy around the ruins. Huge mounds of refuse and filth remain in the courtyards from the entire winter, carrying an unpleasant smell through the windows into the houses.

People's moods are likewise far from spring-like. They are accustomed to shabby tramps and swollen bodies, to starvation shining out of people's eyes. People walk past with indifference; today, however, even decently dressed people look different. Pale faces, a horrified gaze, and they are completely, strangely disturbed. The sound of a car horn is enough to make people rush through the nearest courtyard gate and stand there with pounding hearts.

The nightmare of that bloody Friday night is not yet over.[424] It has not yet been established for what sins 52 people from different social classes paid with their lives. They were shot in a bestial fashion in the middle of the street, like dogs in the dark of the night. Everyone is still reacting to the unexpected events, and the mood is one of intense agitation.

It is already 1 p.m. The sun gazes down from on high with a cheerful warmth. The pale blue sky is clear and bright. It is only the planet that trembles in wild convulsions.

Suddenly a shudder runs through the ghetto. People's faces grow paler, their eyes more horrified. Weak legs move faster and faster. The frightful news is passed from mouth to mouth. More shooting . . . in broad daylight . . . at home . . . a mother with her son . . .

Why? For what? Who are the new victims?

Górka, Górka[425] a journalist, one of 'The Thirteen', a member of the *pogotowie*,[426] from the Invalids,[427] for no reason. Tens of guesses circulate as commentaries on the dreadful event. The commentaries are intended to justify and calm the masses: people are not simply shot like that for no reason.

Like that? Everybody sticks their noses in the air. And 'like that' is supposed to mean: 'So, nothing can be done, as long as it's not me. I'm not involved in anything . . . so this can't pertain to me. . . .'

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424 Reference to the night of 17/18 April; see footnote 154, pt. 1.

425 Chaim (Heniek) Górka (1913–1942), sports journalist, social activist.

426 (Polish) Jewish Emergency Service, the so-called Red Emergency, affiliated with the 'Thirteen'. The official goal of the Service was to provide medical assistance to the most destitute inhabitants of the ghetto.

427 Jewish Invalids of the 1939 War Association; organisation affiliated with the 'Thirteen'.

Chaim vel Heniek, Górka was born 29 years ago in the same flat where he was shot. The sixth child and fourth son of well-to-do parents. The father, an industrialist and later travelling salesman, a man of superficial manner and of despotic and egotistical character. The mother, an ordinary Jewish woman for whom the responsibility for children and housekeeping was her sole reason for living. Heniek, like his older brothers and sisters, had a very assimilated upbringing. The Jewish word and sensibility were alien to him. He also derived nothing from a home in which there had been no domestic harmony since his childhood. And so Heniek grew up into a tall, big-boned young man, physically well endowed thanks to his mother's care, spiritually very limited on account of his father's absence. The only thing that brought him into contact with others was his loquaciousness. He inherited his mother's chatter and his father's big mouth. In this regard, he did not lag far behind his elder brothers, who were well-known sportsmen on the Jewish street.

From the ages of 17 to 18, he began to follow in his elder brothers' footsteps and joined Maccabi[428] as a football player. However, he displayed little ability and especially a phlegmatic lethargy, the latter a consequence of his plodding manner of thinking. He abandoned his career as a sportsman quite rapidly, at the age when others are just starting. He then tried out journalism, a profession which he found particularly impressive, but as a writer, however, he showed no special talent. For a short time, he worked in a technical capacity for the Polish Jewish *5 Rano*[429] until the publisher came to an agreement with the Journalists' Union[430] and employed only professionals. Unable to find employment in the liberal professions, he took a job with the firm for which his father had worked as a travelling salesman for many years.

428 Maccabi (The Maccabi World Union of Jewish Gymnastics and Sports Organisations) – the most dynamic institution organising Jewish sports life, associated with the general Zionist movement. Maccabi clubs were created in Poland from the beginning of the twentieth century.

429 (Polish) '*5 in the morning*'; Polish-language Jewish daily, published in Warsaw in 1931–1939; its contents focused on criminal and sensational matters.

430 Association of Jewish Writers and Journalists in Poland, established in 1916, self-dissolved in September 1939. Its editorial office, which was also a meeting place for actors and artists, was on Tłomackie Street 13 in Warsaw. See: Nathan Cohen, 'Association of Jewish Writers and Journalists in Warsaw', in: *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, Vol. 1, ed. Gershon David Hundert, New Haven–London 2008, pp. 87–88.

When the war broke out, Górka joined the army as an artillery man. After the end of the September campaign, all trace of him was lost and he was thought to have been killed. However, he finally turned up in bad shape, with a damaged spinal column and broken ribs. After lengthy medical treatment, he emerged as a war invalid, healthy but with a crooked shoulder.

When learned one day that Heniek Górka had become the chairman of the Invalids' Union, I found that fact difficult to grasp. Couldn't they find a more serious and capable head? How did such a limited young man, a social ignoramus, reach such a level? I began to investigate this 'Invalids' Union' and discovered the following: the association is not a legal body but regards itself as a section of the 'Jewish Emergency Service' which, in turn, is a branch of '13'. [2] Every day dozens of Jewish invalids came to the building at Leszno Street 6 [. . .], and they were convinced that this association would be helpful to them. And the management of the 'association' [. . .] con-men and careerists looking for an opening for themselves. The young, naive, vain-glorious Górka was needed for their machinations, and he went around puffed up and content with his new role and career.

With the collapse of '13', the lustre of its related institutions also paled. The 400 invalids who had registered and paid their membership, their enrolment, their identity card fee and their armband fee, etc., received nothing, as I found out. Nevertheless, Górka often appeared at the head of a delegation of invalids in the offices of the *gmina*, the J.H.K., and other institutions where a contribution to the Jewish invalids was to be had. In addition, frequent fundraising took place among the wealthier members of Jewish society. I do not know to what use the money and subsidies were put. However, what I do know is that Heniek, who had married in the meantime and was living a good life, had lost 300 zlotys in a card game at his house the night before he was shot.

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At half past twelve in the afternoon a dark-blue car pulled up to the gate at Leszno Street 41, and three civilians and a uniformed German got out. The three civilians went into the courtyard and quickly entered the house opposite the gateway. The inhabitants of the house were terrified. Every floor the three men passed lifted a stone from their petrified hearts. Finally,

the men stopped on the fourth floor. After a short time, the neighbours heard a shot, followed rapidly by another one, and the three people left flat No 21. When they arrived in the courtyard, two of them turned back and another shot resounded. Then they finally came out, got in the car and drove away.

When the neighbours entered the flat, they found a dreadful scene: in the last room, Górka lay dead on a settee with a bullet through his head. His mother lay face-down in a pool of blood by the door, and other than these still-warm corpses, there was no one else in the flat. Górka senior had left 10–15 minutes earlier to take a walk with his grandson, and the maid had run away and hidden with a neighbour.

Jewish militiamen are standing in front of the closed gate, letting no one in. However, soon a young woman approaches. She looks around. 'What happened? What is the fuss about?' Voices reach her: shot with his mother. Her heart begins to beat faster. She runs into the courtyard, looks everyone in the face, runs out again and then comes in again. She sees horrified neighbours standing on the staircase. 'What happened? Can't I go into the flat?' 'You'll faint, if you do', someone answers. With rapid steps she hurries into the flat, and a heart-rending scream pierces the air, a scream by someone who has had the best and the most valuable thing in the world ripped away, something which cannot be replaced by anything else.

Later the maid explained what had happened: when the three men had come in, she had been in the kitchen with Mrs Górka, who was preparing lunch. The men asked, 'Does the chairman of the Jewish Invalids live here?' 'Yes', answered his aged mother, blanching, and led them into the back room where the chairman was sitting cheerfully reading the newspaper. Upon their entrance, he stood up pale and said, 'Allow me please to say a word.' However, one of them brutally threw him onto the settee, and instantly a shot was heard. His mother, who witnessed the scene, opened her mouth to scream but immediately got a bullet between her teeth and fell dead face downwards. Górka managed to shout to the maid, 'Save your young life! Run!' and she ran away.

Half an hour later, everything had returned to 'normal'. The dead had been removed. The street was in a state of agitation. In the flat, deep sadness and pain reigned, and Górka had taken his secret with him to his grave . . .

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Thursday 23 April On Majzelsa Street 11 yesterday morning, two young women were found shot in the head. Crosses were hanging on their chests. Immediately rumours spread that this had to do with a provocation, a blood libel, as a result of which two dead Christian women had been dragged there. More troubles for the Jews . . . In the course of the day, however, the mystery was solved. The two women were two well-known Jewish beauties from *Łódź*. The maiden name of one of them was Rosen; her husband, from whom she was divorced, was Pomeranc. The other one was named Wiślicka. Both women were extremely rich and were already known in *Łódź* as shameless women who moved in non-Jewish circles. In Warsaw as well they took Christian lovers, even German officers, and [3] lived on the Aryan side as Christians. It would seem that they were disposed of after people became tired of them.

Last night a number of Germans came to Gęsia Street 17 and ordered the house committee to hand over 10 Jews. The house committee selected 10 martyrs and abandoned them to the Germans. To everyone's astonishment, the 10 'dead' Jews came back from 'the other world' in the middle of the day. They had been delivering coal.

Friday, 24 April At 7 in the evening passers-by on Dzielna Street spotted a tall, corpulent, big-boned, elegantly dressed Jew being escorted by two Germans. Everyone was convinced that he was on his way to Pawiak. Half an hour later, people found out that a Jew who had just been shot was lying at the threshold of Dzielna Street 27. It turned out to be the same man who had been led down the street earlier.

Rozin[431] was one of those rare Jewish tanners who made a point of being a common presence among the Germans, received orders for merchandise, and made hard millions in these hard times. For what, for what price, for what justification is not known. The fact is that a few weeks ago, Rozin was arrested and taken to the central prison on Daniłowiczowska Street.[432] Well-informed sources from the same branch relate that a ransom was demanded, but Rozin had a lot of influential people on his side and did not want to pay. And that sack of millions is now lying dead inside the gateway. A Polish policeman searched him immediately . . .

431 See AŻIH, *Relacje*, file No. 301/4511.

432 See footnote 17, pt. 1.

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[4] From my diary

Tuesday, 12 May Today is a day of memorials. In 1926, the May Coup took place in Poland.[433] Piłsudski and a group of faithful officers overthrew the Chjeno-Piast[434] regime with Witos[435] at its head, establishing another regime, an authoritarian one which, according to Bartel's[436] declaration in the Sejm, was supposed to guarantee justice for all citizens irrespective of nationality. In 1935, however, Piłsudski died on 12 May, and with him the alleged freedom and equal rights of Polish citizens perished as well. What it bequeathed was friendship with Germany, the 'butcher's shop' in Bereza Kartuska,[437] and a group of demoralised, adventurist, careerist officers who led the country to internal disintegration and external ruin.

On 12 May 1941, Rudolf Hess flew to London. German propaganda would have it that the theorist of the Nazi Party and Hitler's deputy was mentally ill and discounted the entire, painful affair. We, however, saw a glimmer of hope in it, a splintering among the ranks of the Third Reich leadership. We anticipated that salvation was imminent. A year has passed, a terrible, gruesome, bloody year, and humanity has not yet been freed from bloodthirsty, bestial annihilation.

Today's date is also inscribed with blood in the history of Jewish martyrology. Yesterday, between 10 and 11 p.m., the residents of Zamenhofa, Gęsia, Kupiecka and Nowolipki at the corner of Smocza Streets heard two short, distinct shots. Their hearts gave a momentary flutter, and blood ran swifter through their veins, but the stillness of the night was soon restored.

433 The coup by Marshal Józef Piłsudski and military troops loyal to him on 12–15 May 1926.

434 The conventional name of the centre-right coalition formed by the Christian Union of National Unity and the Polish People's Party 'Piast'.

435 Wincenty Witos (1874–1945), Polish politician and leader in the agrarian movement. He held the office of Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland three times (1920–1921, 1923, 1926).

436 Kazimierz Bartel (1882–1941), Polish politician, professor of mathematics at the Lwów Polytechnic, prime minister of the Polish government in 1926, 1928–1929 and 1929–1930, associated with the Piłsudski faction. He was murdered in July 1941 along with other representatives of the academic community of Lwów.

437 A camp for political prisoners, operating in 1934–1939.

However, in the early morning, 2 dead bodies were found: Moyshe Szklar[438] lay shot in a pool of blood by the gateway of Nowolipki Street 54, and Roman Fas[439] lay dead by the gateway at Zamenhofa Street 19. He had been killed in the same fashion.

I met Moyshe Szklar in 1931, when I had just taken my first steps as a journalist for *Moment*[440] in the Yidishe Prese[441] publishing house, which had a good financial reputation in the city. Unfortunately, it was already permeated by the chaos and disorganisation which was a result of its unsuccessful cooperative system. Everyone was a boss, from the editor in chief, the administrative personnel and management, to the janitor, and thus there was no administrative structure. The 'street' became aware only years later, when the publishing house went bankrupt to all intents and purposes, that, in that beautiful, modern building at Nalewki Street 38, not everything was modern. We, however, were witnesses years earlier to the daily internecine quarrels, intrigues and conflicts there between the editorial staff and the typesetters, the administration and the machinists. We all felt that this would come to no good end.

The taciturn, obdurate, sarcastic typesetter Szklar struck me at first as a disagreeable man, an enemy of the editorial staff. In Jewish publishing houses there is always daily antagonism between printers and writers. I, as a fledgling journalist, avoided the elderly, experienced typesetter. With time I realised that Szklar was not disagreeable on account of nastiness, that he fought for things with a quiet stubborn doggedness. Szklar stood out with his clean, European, almost elegant attire and his carefully combed pitch-black hair. His comrades were bearded, semi-enlightened members of the older generation, or extremely self-inflated young typesetters. Szklar possessed both the style of a good manager and the responsibility of a conscientious worker. I found out later that Szklar was not a member of the publishing-house cooperative. He had made that choice intentionally in order to emphasise his negative attitude towards the divided and disorganised cooperative. [5] In later

438 Moyshe Szklar (?–1942), Bund member and an activist of the Printers' Trade Union, organiser of underground press publishing.

439 See footnote 40, pt. 1.

440 On *Der Moment*, see further on in this document.

441 A publishing house founded by Tzvi Pryłucki and Magnus Kryński, it supported the publishing of the *Der Moment* financially.

years, when I became a member of the editorial board and technical editor, I had the opportunity once again to substantiate that Szklar, the shift overseer in the typesetting department, was a very different man from the others. A word once given was kept. If I needed another typesetter or a printer for layout, I could always count on Szklar. On the others, no.

During the last few years of the war, we came together once again, this time in another sort of work: in the Soup Kitchen Department.[442] Szklar was the head of the soup kitchen at Orla Street 2, which served as a model in every respect. He was a strict manager with regard to both employees and clients, but at the same time he took care to ensure that the soup was good. He fought for his employees every day in the Kitchen Department, for higher wages, for better working conditions and for health and safety provisions. Szklar also had a good job in the shop kitchens, so in terms of his material needs, he was relatively well positioned. His comrades were jealous of him, although he never refused anyone a meal. Nevertheless, when a comrade of his who had worked with him for years at *Moment* justified himself because of his difficult situation, Szklar replied coldly that no one knows what the future holds.

He pronounced these words on Thursday 16 April, and the next day he was arrested in the evening, along with a few dozen other Jews who were shot on the street like dogs. It was assumed that Szklar was among them, but his body was not found. His family found out later that he was in Pawiak. A ray of hope filled the hearts of those close to him. Perhaps he would get out alive, but at 11 p.m. last night, the tenants of the buildings on the corner of Nowolipki and Smocza Streets heard a shot. Moyshe Szklar was killed by a bestial hand at the gateway of Nowolipki Street 54.

Why? For what sins? Nobody knows exactly. Szklar had been a Bundist activist in the professional Printers' Union before the war. Recently, perhaps, he wanted nothing to do with 'foolishness'. Why he had been held for more than three weeks in Pawiak, we don't know either. It is supposed that he was tortured and that they wanted to get something out of him, but they were not acquainted with the strength of character and stubbornness of Moyshe Szklar. If he knew something, he certainly took it with him to the grave . . .

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442 Presumably the headquarters of the ŻSS People's Kitchens.

Roman Fas was absolutely unknown at the Jewish street, because he did not belong to it. I met him for the first time in 1928 at a . . . football match. I was a centre half for the Hagibor[443] Jewish sports club, and he was a centre forward at the military team of the Medical Unit in Powązki. Each of us had a fair amount to contend with: he was taller, heavier and 10 years older than me; I, however, was younger and more stubborn. Compared to his team mates, he played fairly and did not play any dirty tricks on me. After the match, I saw that I was dealing with a . . . sergeant.

Some years passed. I was still wandering around football pitches, and he as well, but no longer as a player, rather as an umpire with a whistle in his mouth. Sergeant Fas was regarded as a good, calm, objective arbiter. [6] Despite the fact that I was the captain of my team, it often happened that we greeted each other, and a formal, distant friendship developed between us.

A few more years passed. I had already abandoned my 'youthful follies' and was now a sports journalist acting with great pomp. Fas, meanwhile, had become one of the most respected football umpires in Poland. He was no longer a sergeant, but a tram conductor . . . Fas began to intrigue me. Given his reserved, unassuming character, he could be taken for a Jew, but given his former social position, it would be difficult to believe in his Jewishness. He had occupied a responsible position on the bench, had been a sergeant, a tram conductor – all of this were not common for Jews. With time I learned that Fas was in fact a Jew, that he came from Eastern Galicia, that he was a legionnaire and was highly respected in the upper ranks of society. Nevertheless, I could not resign myself to the fact that he was a Jew. Perhaps he was a convert.

We used to meet often: during the week in the tram and on week-ends on the football pitches. Our friendly relationship persisted, although I never touched on the subject of nationality. I felt that this pleased him.

Spring 1940. Every day, with my heart pounding, I travel by tram to Praga where I work in a Joint centre distributing dry goods. People were seized for forced labour every morning, even dragged off the trams. I was lucky, however. One fine day I spot Fas as conductor on the tram. He looks at me with a smile. We chat about sports, about everything in the world except his origins. It is clear to me that Fas is not a Jew, otherwise he would not have been a conductor under the Germans.

443 Hagibor Jewish Sports Club; its chairman was Abraham Rozengarten.

Spring 1941. Kohn and Heller from Łódź launch horse-drawn omnibuses in the sealed Jewish ghetto. At the corner of Ogrodowa and Żelazna Streets, where the tram depot is, I catch sight of Fas with a Jewish armband working as a conductor. We smile at each other as usual, but as always, I do not talk to him about Jews. So, Fas is a Jew after all. I see him quite often in his job as conductor on the omnibus. We greet each other and nothing more.

This morning a Jew who had been shot was found lying in the gateway at Zamenhofa Street 19. No one knew who he was, but in the evening a death notice was affixed to the omnibus office at Leszno Street 46, announcing the death of Avrom Roman Fas, 42 years old. He left a wife and two sons. He had been held in the Jewish prison at Gęsia Street 24. At 10 in the evening, he was led out and shot on the street. Why? It is said that he was active in the PPS, that he had conducted business outside the ghetto, utilising his contacts with the tram employees. People said a lot of things, but whether he was tight-lipped and reticent or not, whether he took the secret with him to the grave, one secret was revealed to me: he died a Jew.

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[7] [From] my notebook.

20 May

Tomorrow is *Shavuot*. The sun is shining as if it were summer, but it is still cold. People are dressed partially in winter clothes. It is 4 o'clock.

The worst hour of the day. When I finish my work in the office and head home, 2 hungry people are waiting for me. Nor have they have prepared a meal, neither I did leave them anything in the morning with which to do so.

A group of passers-by have gathered on Leszno Street not far from my house. On one side of the street is a large lorry from the power plant with strange hoses coming out of it – like a fire engine – which go to the other side of the street, near Adaś, the popular tavern where Jewish informers, Gestapo people, shady characters, and ordinary war heroes hang out.[444] What is happening? Is there a fire? No, they are making a . . . film.[445]

444 A restaurant on Leszno Street 19.

445 On 1 May 1942, a German film crew visited the Warsaw ghetto to prepare an anti-Jewish propaganda film. It was titled *Das Ghetto*. The history of its creation and the scenes used

For a few days now, the German propaganda machine has been installing sets and is filming Jewish life in the ghetto. It is difficult to work out what they have in mind. In any case, the director and the writer come up with wild ideas, and the whole business provokes a wide variety of commentary. On the one hand, people do not understand how they can be so frivolous as to make Jewish horror films at such a serious time when rivers of blood are flowing in Kercz and Charków.[446] On the other hand, people advance the notion that such a film will not do us any good. So what's surprising about that? Cakes, baked delicacies and other lovely comestibles are laid out [. . .] in the shop windows. The restaurants and little gardens display posters [. . .] and our women stun us, dressed to the nines in their elegant clothes, and provoke [. . .]. Of course the occupier cannot bear this. It gives him a pretext for further [. . .] and debasement.

Various opinions circulate around the film production. Fantasy works a bit and creates a nightmarish picture. There are rumours about a film shot in the *gmina*. Jews with beards were seized on the streets, taken to the meeting room on Grzybowska Street, placed at the table with Czerniaków as chairman, and a meeting of the *Judenrat* was concocted. The Jews had to make mad gestures. Czerniaków likewise was forced to make fun of himself, and the camera kept turning . . .

Jews with beards and elegant young women were seized on the street, taken to the bathhouse on Dzielna Street and made to strip naked, made to adopt various compromising positions and ordered to dance. One Jew who refused to dance was killed *al Kiddush Hashem,* so people say.

They came to film a synagogue on Koźla Street.[447] In the middle of prayers, one of the congregants, an older man, went up to the head 'artist' and asked his name. 'Why do you need to know that?' he was asked. 'I want to say a prayer for your health', came the humble reply. The head 'artist' lost his composure and everyone left, so people say.

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in it became the canvas of the 2010 documentary film by Yael Hersonski, entitled *Film Unfinished*.

446 Charków (Kharkov, Kharkiv), a city in north-eastern Ukraine. In 1941–1943, it was the location of several battles between the German and Soviet armies, including in May 1942, which saw a failed offensive of the Red Army attempting to recapture the city.

447 Synagogue on Koźla Street 7, established and owned by Khaya and Volf Blumberg after 1852.

Filming also took place at Szulc's popular tavern on the corner of Nowolipki and Karmelicka Streets, which had been a nest of 'nice society' before the war. They called people in off the street, sat them down at the tables, ordered all sorts of good things and filmed . . . Later, they positioned [8] a row of ragged bums at the entrance, and a fat, well-dressed Jew with a big cigar stuffed into his mouth had to run the gauntlet and spit on them.

They filmed a . . . circumcision. They staged a Friday night, and more and more versions and variants of these stories passed from mouth to mouth. Now they are filming at Adaś. Before that, they were filming at Sztuka, a better locale at Leszno Street 2 and in the sparkling brand-new Plaża, built on the ruins of Leszno Street 26. They have filmed everywhere, have snuck in everywhere, with Jewish traitors, informants and lackeys.

Why are they doing this? For whom? Nobody knows, but we get the feeling that it is not for our benefit. People only wonder why they are not filming the *wylot*"[448] on the corner of Tłomackie and Leszno Streets, where the guard gendarme, using his rifle, split the head of a 10-year-old boy yesterday who ran by with 3 or 5 kilos of potatoes. Why don't they film Pawiak, from which shots ring out constantly, or Więzienna Street, where passing Jews are seized and thrown into Pawiak where they are subjected to barbaric, truly atrocious torment? Why don't they film the car which frequently drives along Karmelicka Street killing innocent passers-by? Why don't they film the wall by the Żelazna Brama, where [. . .] shoots Jews for breakfast and who boasts that he is the best shot of all the German pilots? He has already shot down 171 Jews. Why don't they film the people who walk down the street beating and kicking the Jews passing by?

Why? That single word embodies the despairing cry of tens of thousands of [. . .], of congealed blood, of superhuman pain and suffering, of hunger and poverty. Why and for what purpose? [. . .] meanwhile not. And the film that is being shot and edited today will also not answer why.

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448 (Polish) literally, exit; the meaning here is probably a hole in the wall or other way to escape.

[9]

21 May

At dawn today, Tzvi Pryłucki went to his final resting place at an advanced age. This is the third of our family of writers to have left us within the space of a week. Menahem Kipnis, Herman Czerwiński and Tzvi Pryłucki[449] were very different figures in the world of Jewish journalism. Just as the way of life of each one of them was distinct and dissimilar to that of the others, so the death of each of them leaves a unique echo in the tortured, starving but pulsating Jewish life in the Warsaw ghetto.

When I first came into personal contact with Menahem Kipnis, he was already socially a little out of date, although his appearance had not changed: he looked the same as he had 15 years earlier. The same cheerful little smile, the same vivaciousness and the same . . . dyed hair. People even remember when Kipnis was grey . . . I do not.

It was not his fault that he was no longer in vogue. Time and the younger generation had rendered him obsolete. As a former singer in the Warsaw opera, he was as outdated as the opera itself. His fine, light, erudite musical feuilletons and reviews were regarded as the best and the most objective in the Jewish press. In them he often evoked the epoch of Kaftal,[450] Caruso,[451] Anselmi,[452] Shaliapin,[453] Titta Ruffo[454] and others who enraptured and delighted the world in their time. Those times had now passed and with them Kipnis's past as an opera singer.

As performers and disseminators of Yiddish folksongs, he and his wife were no longer current. 'Brontshele', 'Oy, Avrom', 'Yoshke', 'Gee up, little horses' and many, many other gems which had enlivened and cheered up Jewish audiences in Poland 20 to 25 years ago, were now, with the passing of time, swept

449 This part of the document contains much information on these three persons; we only add short footnotes complementing the entries, at their ends.

450 Maria Małgorzata Kazimiera Gustawa (Margot) Kaftal (1873–1942), opera singer, daughter of Izydor and Felicja Kaftal.

451 Enrico Caruso (1873–1921), Italian opera singer (tenor), Metropolitan Opera soloist; one of the greatest tenors at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

452 Giuseppe Anselmi (1876–1929), Italian opera singer (tenor), composer of piano and symphonic works.

453 Fyodor Shalapin (1873–1938), Russian opera singer (bass), also famous for his outstanding acting skills.

454 Titta Ruffo (1877–1953), Italian opera singer (baritone).

off the stage together with their compiler and brilliant interpreter. The time had come for tango and foxtrot songs. It was a time when the Yiddish word and heartfelt Jewish traditional melodies had become foreign and uncomfortable to the ear in the homes of the Jewish bourgeoisie. As a scintillating feuilletonist and humourist, he was also becoming tedious. His Friday articles in *Haynt*,[455] his tales from a country house, his Chełm stories [jokes] and his conversations with *Pan Mecenas*,[456] all of which made people roll on the floor with laughter after a good fish dinner on Friday night – all of this with time had become less spicy, not because Kipnis himself had gone stale – God forbid – but because the younger generation had begun to distance itself from the Yiddish word. A Yiddish newspaper has become a guest in the home, not a daily friend. At best, the snobbish younger generation will bring home the *Nasz Przegląd*.[457] To please their children, 'backward-leaning' parents would content themselves with a quick glance at the newspaper on the way home, but they wouldn't buy it. The Jewish-Polish newspapers would often translate Kipnis's articles into Polish, but they had the taste of a cold *cholent* on Sunday . . .

And so with time a gap developed between Kipnis and his Jewish public, to whom Kipnis was so closely tied and who loved and cherished him as one of their precious possessions. The older generation spoke of Kipnis in earlier days, about dear Kipnis the folksinger and the jolly joker. The younger generation, however, the generation keen on sport and dancing, asked, *Kto to jest?*[458]

For us, however, Kipnis lost none of his appeal up to the very end. In any organised society you find three types of people. There are those who do not want to provide for anyone else. They don't want to work for others, but they like to appear willing. Then there are those who expect to be honoured, who

455 (Yiddish) *Today*; continuation of *Yidishes tageblat* (Jewish newspaper), founded in 1906; a daily published in Yiddish in Warsaw between 1908 and 1939, self-described as 'national and independent'; from 1920 it was the official organ of the Zionist Organisation in Poland. *Haynt* was also published in provincial versions, it had special editions for Palestine and several European countries. The most prominent Jewish politicians, journalists and writers collaborated on it.

456 (Polish) Mr Attorney; it was Kipnis's pseudonym.

457 (Polish) Our Review; pro-Zionist Jewish daily newspaper published in Polish in Warsaw in 1923–1939.

458 (Polish) Who is it?

expect to be asked to take this or that position or to be such and such for us. And finally there are those who push themselves to the fore. This last category, however, is divided into two: one part does it out of personal pride and self-interest, the other part out of devotion to something, out of fraternity and social progress. Menakhem Kipnis, the creator of the Association of Jewish Writers and Journalists at Tłomackie Street 13 during the last war, belonged to the latter category. Certainly, he wasn't all virtue, just like each one of us is not without faults, but there are very few people with the virtues which distinguished Kipnis. When the war broke out, Kipnis did not wait for recognition, did not merely seek to take care of his own needs (as other comrades did), but quickly [x][459] began to concern himself with finding a home, a meeting place for comrades, sweet-talked the wartime bosses looking for support in various forms for comrades and the wives and children of comrades who had left Warsaw.

[10] Kipnis was not alone in this work. Others managed the soup kitchens with him, but no one was regarded as more committed and devoted to the work, and no one but Kipnis enjoyed such sympathy and trust amongst the donors.

Recipients of aid, especially writers, are difficult people and it is hard to satisfy everyone. Comrades frequently levelled complaints against Kipnis, comrades who themselves would be incapable of producing anything worth a single penny, but Kipnis did not take it amiss. He did not take offence and did not walk out, but carried on working until his warm heart suddenly burst.

Jewish society has lost one of the most interesting and finest individuals of the last 30 years and we have lost one of our most devoted comrades, perhaps the most devoted.[460]

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I made my first acquaintance with Herman Czerwiński by . . . telephone. It happened on a certain afternoon in the editorial room, when the so-called

459 [x] organised soup kitchen for journalists, writers, etc.

460 Menakhem Kipnis (1878–1942), singer, writer, Jewish folklore enthusiast, photographer, member of the Grand Theatre choir, publisher of collections of Jewish folk songs, columnist for the *Haynt* daily; in the ghetto a member of the Shir (Song) choir, provided financial support to other writers. He kept a diary that was lost. He died of a cerebral haemorrhage on 15 May 1942.

Warsaw Chronicle, that soup made from Warsaw muck and mire, was being prepared. The telephone doesn't stop ringing, the door slams open and shut, people bring communiqués, bulletins, phone messages. We all sweat over our piece, and from the first floor, from the typesetters, comes the incessant shout: 'Copy!'

In the middle of the hustle and bustle, when you have to rush in order not to delay dispatch, the worst thing that can happen is that a colleague from another newspaper calls you to ask a favour. He wants you to give him details of one event or another with which you are familiar and he is not. You can't refuse, however, because tomorrow you might find yourself in the same situation. This journalistic 'clearance' of information is conventional: today I give you a theft, tomorrow you give me a fire, I give you a suicide and you give me a rape, I give you a hold-up and you give me a scam, etc.

On that very day my telephone rings and a soft actor's voice asks me for details about an event. It's Czerwiński speaking from *Nasz Przegląd*. Until then I had never met him and knew nothing about him. As I spoke with him on the telephone, I had the impression that I was not speaking to a Jewish colleague. You can normally recognise a Jew by his accent in a foreign language: either he speaks it very poorly or very well. He would speak Polish, let's say, better than a real Pole. Czerwiński, however, spoke like real *goy*, with all of the characteristic nuances, and he ended his conversation with the same excessive politeness and obligatory friendship.

Sometime later, we met face to face in the Warsaw district court. We were both replacing the usual court reporters from our newspapers. There was a difference, however: I sat riveted to the press bench during the entire session, while he arrived much later and shoved his large, heavy body between us. After sitting there for a short time, he made the acquaintance of his neighbours, bequeathed each one of them a cheap smile and left. Before he did so, however, he warned me that he would ring me later and that I should *po przyjacielsku*[461] tell him what had occurred in his absence. He thanked me in advance and assured me that he would return the favour. This continued as long as we were both working at the court. Later, each one of us returned to his regular work, and we didn't see each other again. Sometime later, I learned that Czerwiński

461 (Polish) out of friendship.

had once been a police *przodownik*[462] and was regarded in our circle as mediocre. He himself had made no effort to be accepted in Jewish society. I had the impression that he worked for a Jewish newspaper only because no one would let him work for a non-Jewish one. By nature he did not belong to us, in any case.

In November 1939, I returned from a prisoner-of-war camp. After two days of enforced rest in bed, I went out into the street to see what was left of Warsaw. I found out that there was a soup kitchen for journalists at Karmelicka Street 3. [11] Our comrades were gathered in two small rooms on the ground floor, their faces expressing fear and despair, an expression borne in general by all inhabitants of Warsaw. Some close friends rejoiced at seeing me, as though I had come back from beyond, since they thought that I had escaped from Warsaw on 7 September.[463] When they heard, however, that I had returned from the front, from *plen*,[464] they began to ask me questions, to chat with me, etc.

'What's new, *panie kolego?*'[465] says a familiar voice. It is Czerwiński, who is pleased to see me . . .

A year passed, a bloody, stormy one. The map of Europe has changed completely: the Fascist boot stands with one leg in Narvik and the other in Biarritz.[466] The map of Warsaw has also changed. The Jewish population has been squeezed into a separate district and deprived of freedom of movement. Tens of thousands of families have been completely ruined as a result of being resettled. Myself included, because I lost my job. I then decided to look for my friends and older colleagues; perhaps they would help me find employment.

The name Czerwiński rang constantly in my ears. He was an important Jewish figure, a bigshot in the *gmina*, a man of action and influence, a provider for refugees, and so on. I go straightaway to Grzybowska Street 26. There is confusion and noise in the large meeting hall now, but the council is not sitting. The hall is partitioned and divided into a number of departments, and Czerwiński has an office here as well. His doorman is the Jewish-Polish

462 (Polish) sergeant.
463 See footnote 210, pt. 1.
464 (Russian) captivity.
465 (Polish) Mr Colleague.
466 Narvik – a city in the northern part of Norway; Biarritz – a city in south-western France.

actor Minowicz.[467] He's also got standing! I was surprised that everyone calls him *Panie Redaktorze,*[468] editor Czerwiński. Has he no fear?

After a long wait, he appears in the hall and is immediately surrounded by dozens of petitioners, acquaintances, people needing his influence, backslappers. Czerwiński beams, he feels important. His voice is firm and commanding. He makes arrangements for this, gives orders for that. I wait for him to catch sight of me and to acknowledge my presence. I greet him with a nod, and he answers me in the same way. And that's it! I continue to wait, but he doesn't look in my direction. I get up my courage and approach him. '*Panie kolego',* I begin to stammer, 'Mr Ed . . .' The word sticks in my throat. 'I don't have time now', he answers me curtly. 'Perhaps you don't recognise me', I stammer again. 'I am . . .' 'Yes, yes, I recognise you, but I don't have any time. Send me a written request'. . .

I did submit a written request and waited for a number of weeks in vain, so I went to my friend Chilinowicz[469] and asked him to intercede with Czerwiński. Perhaps he, as an older, respected comrade with a Joint badge in his lapel, will be more effective. My friend Chilinowicz was indeed very friendly and came with me to Czerwiński. This time I achieved more: I got as far as a handshake. He spoke to Chilinowicz for a minute and then said, 'Now I can't do a thing. You have to submit a written request . . . , a *bumazhka.*[470]

We both left with sour expressions on our faces. *Bumazhka* has a double meaning: people often said that Czerwiński allocated positions for a *bumazhka*. I submitted another request and having become resigned concerning my friendship with Czerwiński, simply began to avoid him. By chance I met him on a few occasions. Sometimes he would look me boldly in the eye, waiting for me to greet him, but no, we don't know each other . . .

Czerwiński pushed himself with both elbows into Jewish society, imposing himself upon it. He became a theatre critic for Kraków's Jewish rag,[471] an area in which he could only display his ignorance. He advertised himself everywhere, sought publicity and praise and, even as an editor, pursued respect,

467 Edmund Minowicz (?–1943), director, theatre and cabaret actor, performed at the Femina Theatre on Leszno Street 35 and in other theatres.

468 (Polish) Mr Editor.

469 Bentziyon Chilinowicz.

470 (Russian) a piece of paper; a document; (Yiddish) a banknote.

471 Probably a reference to *Gazeta Żydowska*.

gratitude and recognition, but was met everywhere with rejection. At an evening in honour of Obarzanek,[472] he pushed himself between Stupnicki[473] and Elkhonen Zeitlin.[474] Posters announced the participation of: Stupnicki, Zeitlin and . . . editor Czerwiński. Hopeless! This is his time, only he can be editor. Stupnicki speaks in a conversational manner. He characterises the relationship between Warsaw and Łódź. He drops a few unkind words. Czerwiński tries to restore the mood with some sweet saccharine phrases addressed to the Łódź audience, but he is totally irrelevant. His voice is firm and almost brazen, but it doesn't speak from the heart. It rings alien, not Jewish . . .

And in the midst of it all, Czerwiński suddenly died of a heart attack. People reacted exactly as they had to the sudden death of Zabłudowski,[475] as if they had got rid of a odema. . . His close associates say all the same that he was not at all a bad man, even if [12] they did not share that opinion at all.

Czerwiński was given a fine funeral, but not by the society. German propaganda staged a Jewish burial parade with five cantors and Motl Pinkert in a top hat, and they filmed the whole parade. Is this not almost symbolic?[476]

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Today announcements with black borders were glued on the walls of the Warsaw Ghetto announcing the death of Tzvi Sholem Pryłucki. Passers-by stopped for a moment. Younger people shrugged their shoulders and walked on. Middle-aged people began to rub their foreheads. 'Which Pryłucki is it? Noyekh?[477] No, his father. Let's not have any more young ones die.' Older people stood

472 Yankev Obarzanek (1891–1943), native of Łódź, satirist, author of texts and lyrics in Yiddish. For a reference to the event of 8 February 1942, see ARG I 382 (Ring. I/1108/3).

473 Shaul Stupnicki.

474 Elkhonen Zeitlin, see footnote 449, pt. 1.

475 Beniamin Zabłudowski (?–1942), a pre-war social activist in many Jewish institutions, a member of the audit committee of the Institute of Judaic Studies in Warsaw, councillor for the Jewish Community until 1939; a member of the *Judenrat*, the head of the Housing Office, a member of the Labour Department Commission. See also *Jutrznia*, periodical of Hashomer Hatzair No. 1 of 14 February 1942, ARG I 1312 (Ring. I/731).

476 See also footnote

477 Noyekh (Noach, Noe) Pryłucki (1882–1941/1942), philologist, columnist, writer, ethnographer, lawyer, social and political activist, organiser of the *Folkspartey*, MP in the Polish Sejm, member of many Jewish social and cultural organisations.

perplexed. 'So he was still alive, the old Pryłucki? He was actually in Warsaw? I had no idea.'

Editor Tzvi Pryłucki had in fact been dead for several years in the minds of his loyal [readers] and was entirely unknown to the younger generation. However, Tzvi Pryłucki remains an immortal in the Jewish press, a monument which will last as long as Jewish life survives in the diaspora, as long as there is a Jewish press. His biography is a rich, fine and interesting one, and it will certainly be written by someone who was in contact with him for many years. I only knew him personally for the last 10 years before the war, and therefore in the last period of his life, when the 'old man' had retired from his professional and social obligations. And yet I learned much of interest from him.

When I took my first steps as a journalist on *Moment*, Tzvi Pryłucki was already no longer in charge of 'his' *Moment*. The publishing house was run by a cooperative board of directors consisting of three members representing the editorial staff, the administration and the printers respectively. The founders of the publishing house, Kh. Prużański and N. Silberberg,[478] were dead at that time, and the long-time, loyal collaborators Zagorodzki[479] and Biber[480] had also died. The structure and quality of the editorial team had undergone significant changes over the years. *Moment* had gradually ceased to be a bourgeois newspaper for the merchant class which sought spiritual quiet on business-free Saturdays and which thoroughly enjoyed its enlightening articles. *Moment* was also not a progressive newspaper which moved with the times. The majority of the editorial staff were writers by circumstance, people who took advantage of the post-war situation with its shortage of intellectuals to become writers. These writers had no thorough education, no professional training and family backgrounds devoid of intellectual stimulation. They were dilletantes and improvisers. They knew a little of everything but, all in all, not very much. They struggled over a Polish word as much as over a Hebrew word. Of course, there were exceptions. However,

478 Khaim Prużański and Elezer Zylberberg, Tzvi Pryłucki's business partners who supported him financially in the creation of *Der Moment*.

479 Israel Khaim Zagorodzki (1864–1931), publicist, journalist, translator, Zionist activist.

480 Salomon (Shlomo) Biber (1875–1931), Yiddish journalist and writer, associated with the Folkspartey.

as the daily organ of the Jewish street, *Der Moment* acquired the seal of intellectual inconsistency in its editing. *Der Moment* lost its direction. It served every shade of opinion, but actually none. It had a little of everything in it, but all together nothing. The older co-workers had begun to lose their influence and the young, progressive avant-garde were kept at bay. The people in charge had become in fact writers of circumstance, who presented themselves as professionals in writing for its own sake, in writing in the name of culture, literature and whatever you want to call it. Slowly writing as a livelihood, as an occupation, began to change.

In this time of incipient chaos and intellectual decline I met the lion of the pack Tzvi Pryłucki. He no longer occupied the editor's office but worked from home. However, when he came in – the 'old man', the editor in chief, tall and slightly bent – his sensitive ear caught everything and his sharp eye saw everything from beneath his pince-nez, and he was silent. He would speak to each person affably, in a soft tone. At the same time, however, he was insistent that his name, which appeared on the paper as managing editor, should not be besmirched.

When later I came into personal contact with him, I felt that the editor in chief was experiencing an inner tragedy in his old age. It is the perennial tragedy of the older generation which cannot come to terms with the reforms, the behaviour and the contempt for tradition on the part of the younger generation. The Yiddish press, like the press everywhere, had taken on an entirely different character in the final years before the war. Instead of being a medium for public information and enlightenment, it became a tool of the official propaganda machine. The comfortable, popular tone, the unchained word in its fullest sense, began to disappear, along with the subtle feuilleton, untrammelled political journalism and a literary artistic level. All this was replaced by erotic novels and crime novels which were aimed at 'attracting' and riveting the reader, holding him in the tension of passions. The paper became a battle ground of political and party leanings, of various social struggles, [13] often distant from former ethical and humanitarian concerns. The general cultural impoverishment had also left its imprint on the press. And this was the source of Tzvi Pryłucki's great suffering.

Unlike other newspapers where the formal editor appointed by the authorities was fictitious, a so-called 'sitting editor' – which meant that they could sit in prison if the censor so wanted – the 'old man' did not permit

anyone else to be responsible for his *Moment*. I used to sit in the mornings in his quiet, aristocratic home at Bonifraterska Street 31, or in summertime at Śródborów.[481] Not only did I write Friday's political articles for him, conceived on Tuesday or Wednesday and already outdated by Friday, but I also used to read him novels and other journalistic material. He would listen attentively and every once in awhile stopped me, erased sentences and expressions which grated on him and which seemed inappropriate to his sensitive ear. Every day he would read *Der Moment* from beginning to end. He would point out sloppy proofreading, and were he to find something in the reporting which could involve censorship or a later retraction, he immediately called the editors in alarm and intervened.

The proprietors made fun of the 'old man' behind his back, saying that he was already senile and fearful of anything that seemed *treyf* but which was now *kosher*. However, ostensible respect for the editor in chief, the 'old man', remained in place. The only truly loyal person was Y. Y. Propus,[482] his longstanding secretary and assistant, who did not let anything past unless the 'old man' had seen it, unless someone had sneaked it in and given it personally to the typesetters, something which has been happening frequently of late.

As a result of poor management of the publishing house, *Der Moment* was on the verge of bankruptcy. People attempted to salvage the paper by publishing a Polish-language edition with the endorsement of the Revisionists. The result was that Żabotyński[483] and Uri Tzvi Grinberg[484] had a platform from which to harangue the confused Jewish common man. A number of dubious 'Jewish *goyim*' devoured the rot, but the publishing house gained nothing. The proprietors were repeatedly obliged to reduce their salaries. Without a livelihood, there is no peace at home, especially since the *Moment* staff was a mixture of brash ignoramuses and mouldy intellectuals, bunglers, dilletantes and idlers. It was no wonder, therefore, that *Moment*, the lovechild of its creator Tzvi Pryłucki, lost its prestige on the Jewish street. For the older generation, *Moment* was no longer what it had once

481 Śródborów (Mińsk Mazowiecki County).

482 Yitzkhok Yankew Propus, member of *Der Moment* editorial staff, a Yiddish writer.

483 Vladimir (Ze'ev) Żabotyński (Jabotinski) (1880–1940), Zionist activist, creator and leader of the New Zionist Organisation, writer, poet, translator and publicist.

484 Uri Tzvi Grinberg (1891 or 1896–1981), Yiddish and Hebrew poet, publicist, publisher. In 1924 he settled in Palestine and wrote mainly in Hebrew.

been. For the younger generation, it was behind the times and unfit to tackle contemporary issues.

During that period, the last shreds of feeling and veneration for the 'old man' began to disappear. People stopped taking him seriously. The receiver Kahan,[485] a shady type and a careerist, had no regard for the past. He considered everything prior to himself to be bad, even . . . Tzvi Pryłucki, and one day Tzvi Pryłucki simply vanished as managing editor of *Moment*. He was replaced by Kahan's 'closest collaborator', the freshly minted revisionist Grafman,[486] and so ended Pryłucki's participation in 'his' *Moment*.

After the war broke out, the 'old man' remained in his home. His eyes did not witness the frightful destruction of Warsaw, of Jewish Warsaw. His eyes did not see the burnt-out *Moment* building at Nalewki Street 33, but he heard, he felt and suffered and bled. His daughter Ida recorded a memoir about his long, significant life. Tzvi Pryłucki had much to say and to recount. He was well acquainted with the life of the Jews. He was steeped in Jewish life and he possessed extensive wisdom but it was not given to him to express what he felt and what had bound him to Jewish society, nor was it given to him that Jewish society pay him their final respects, which he had indubitably earned. His funeral was modest and quiet, as were his final years, as was his departure from this world.[487]

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[14][488]

July 1942

Quiet, lateral Orla Street has become even more silent and more secondary since Elektoralna Street was walled off.[489] It is becoming a place of executions, a place where death sentences are carried out (in fact,

485 Attorney Marek Kahan; see: Marian Fuks, *Prasa żydowska w Warszawie 1823–1939*, Warszawa 1979, p. 199.

486 Avrom-Yitzkhok Grafman (1891–1941 or 1942), reporter, regular contributor to *Der Moment* from 1912.

487 Tzvi Pryłucki's memoir is part of the Ringelblum Archive, ARG II 510 (Ring. II/175). It was translated into Polish and published in Vol. 28 of the Polish edition. *Der Moment* was founded by Tzvi Pryłucki, Hilel Zeitlin and Moshe Binem Justman, published in Warsaw in 1910–1939; until 1935 it was an organ of the Folkspartey, then of the Revisionists.

488 The date added by Hersh Wasser.

489 After December 1941.

murders) in a form which has no equivalent in the civilised world. The tactics of the *Cherezvichaika,*[490] from which Western and Central Europe had distanced itself and which carried out its activities from 1918 to 1920 in the cellars of various prisons and chambers, operates openly in Warsaw, in broad daylight, on the street, in front of everyone's eyes, with an incomprehensible, cynical, satanic coldness and premeditation.

Night executions have gradually become an ordinary occurrence. They began at Passover and have continued. Almost no night passes when we are not awakened somewhere by pistol shots and, after a sleepless night, at dawn we catch sight of a body lying in the street, shot like a dog. *Ani ma'amin*[491] has already been recited by early morning. In addition to the current questions: 'Can one come out? Are they seizing people?', a further question is asked: 'Was today [. . .] night?'

However, more and more people are being shot in such a form [. . .] never before utilised and [. . .] the worst criminals. The quiet, lateral Orla Street has become the central location for these executions, because it is very convenient for barbaric murders for pleasure.

On the day that 110 Jews from Gęsia prison had been shot in Babice outside Warsaw for . . . assaulting the German police,[492] a small reddish car drove around 5 o'clock from Leszno into Orla Street. Its registration plate bore the word 'POL'. All the cars are already familiar to us, and people moved away while they could, not only from the road but also from the pavements. A police car brings nothing good. Next to the driver sat a uniformed German and [. . .] plain-clothed young man of about 35, bare-headed in a leather jacket. He looked straight ahead with a contented expression on his face, as though the world belonged to him. The car turned in at gateway No 4 and stopped. The uniformed German got out, followed by the civilian, who entered the gate first, followed by the German. People on the street stood and looked.

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490 (Russian) popular name of *Vserossiyskaya chrezvychaynaya komissiya po borbe s kontrrevolyutsiyey i sabotazhem* (also Cheka, VChK), the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, a Bolshevik central state security organisation responsible for the persecutions in Soviet Russia in 1917–1922.

491 (Hebrew) I believe; a rendition of Maimonides' thirteen-point formula of the Jewish principles of faith; it is often recited during morning prayers; it was recited by people sent to their death.

492 See footnote 276, pt. 1.

Suddenly a shot rang out. Confusion ensued; people [. . .] the gateways. The car moved off and drove up to the corner of Leszno Street. Only the uniformed German came out of the gateway, [. . .] unchanged and waited until the car returned with a Jewish *Ordnungs*-man. Together the two of them went through the gateway. The German quickly came out onto the street again, and with the same dispassionate coldness, got back into the car and drove off.

Only then did the shocked populace come out of the gateways and run towards gateway No 4 from which fresh, warm blood was flowing. Meanwhile, however, other Jewish militiamen had appeared and begun to disperse the curious onlookers. A short time later, Pinkert's[493] hearse drew up and took away the victim. The house janitor rinsed away the signs of blood, as if nothing had happened.

'Who was the victim?' 'Why did such [. . .] die?' No answer was forthcoming. We only know that the victim was Jan Kowalski, thus a Christian.

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Thursday 9 July, 9 a.m.

A hot July morning. Orla Street is still half asleep. A black [. . .] car drives into the street and stops by gate No 8. A young, elegantly dressed civilian of German extraction gets out of the car, followed by an old, bent, respectably dressed man who drags himself out of the car with his last remaining strength. Both enter the gateway almost unnoticed.

Two pistol shots awaken the inhabitants and their neighbours. People look out from windows and balconies. What happened? The young civilian comes back out of the gateway and [. . .] not a trace of anything extraordinary. He calls over a passer-by and, with an outstretched left hand, points to his watch. Within 15 minutes 'that there' must be cleaned up.

The car disappears. A corpse lies inside the gateway. In his jacket is a receipt for 30 zlotys from Pawiak, in the name of Józef Lewiński-Lewensztajn, 70 years old.

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493 Mordekhai (Motel, Model) Pinkiert.

[15]

Wednesday, [. . .] 5 in the afternoon.

Orla Street is as usual quiet and peaceful. A small passenger vehicle drives in from the direction of Leszno Street and stops by the gateway of No 6. Passers-by immediately sense something sinister. The number-plate bears the inscription 'OST', which indicates that the car is a private one. Three civilians get out of the car [. . .] perhaps not . . .

They come in and one of them orders the woman, [. . .] who is there with a small box of sweets and cigarettes, to pick up and leave. The three covert civilians stand and wait silently. Suddenly a shot rings out, and one of the three falls to the ground and begins to tremble convulsively. 'Mama', a murmur [. . .]

Leż!,[494] shouts one of the men standing there and shoots once again at the [. . .] who stiffens immediately.

What happened next is normal procedure. The dead body is consigned to a Jewish militia man, and the car disappears. A copy of *Das Reich*[495] and a release document from Pawiak was found in the name of Antoni Kurzawa.

Why? Nobody knows, just as nobody knows why people were shot in other gateways on quiet Orla Street.

ARG I 461(Ring. I/984)
Description: original, handwritten (Sz*), ink, Yiddish, 150×165, 145×222 mm, minor damage and losses of the text, 15 sheets, 15 pages. On the first pages of parts of the text are Hersh Wasser notes in Yiddish (ink) specifying the number of standard pages (st.): on p. 1: 4 st., on p. 4: 1942. 5 st., on p. 7: 1942. 3 st., on p. 9: 11 st., on p. 14: [...] st. June 1942. Attached is also a note in Polish by H. Wasser: 'The author of the records for 21 April–9 July [19]42 is the Jewish sport journalist S. Szajnkinder.'

494 (Polish) Lie down! followed by Yiddish in parentheses.

495 See footnote 72, pt. 1.

15 *June–July 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Eliyahu Gutkowski, diary (fragments): (a) 27 June–9 July; (b) 18–21 July. Events before the Grossaktion*

(a)

[39]

Saturday, 27 June

It seems to me that the murderers have a particular delectation for carrying out their major butchery precisely during the night of Friday to Saturday. For example, we found out today in the ghetto early in the morning that last night, 11 Jews were shot in the usual fashion: 2 Jews on Pawia Street, one young man and the older of about 22–23 years; one on Zamenhofa Street (he apparently worked in a German *placówka* in Rembertów and had the right to leave his home as early as half past four in the morning to go to his place of work[496] and it was precisely at five that the murderers killed him). Two women and an eight-year-old boy were also shot on that same street. A man was shot on Orla Street at around two o'clock. He was brought from somewhere else by two Gestapo men in a black car and was killed with two bullets. They then shone a flashlight on his face to convince themselves, it would seem, that he was actually dead. Apparently, 4 Christians were killed, and 7 Jews.

Recently there has been a massive increase in the general terrorisation of the Polish population on the other side. Mass murders have taken place at the Pawiak, especially of teachers. The other week, many people were seized in Warsaw in the following fashion: a detachment of SS men was marching down Mazowiecka Street in full parade fashion, accompanied by music. Suddenly a low whistle was heard, and all the gateways and crossroads were immediately occupied by the marching SS detachment. The Polish onlookers were seized with panic: they scattered in all directions like trapped mice in order to save themselves from the Germans' claws, but there was no way out. The Germans seized about 5 thousand Poles – men, women and children – whom they took away to Krakowskie Przedmieście Street, to a police command building.[497] There they freed the women and

496 That is, still during the curfew.

497 According to Władysław Bartoszewski, *1859 dni Warszawy*, Kraków, 2008, p. 354, there were around 2,000 detainees, of whom about 100 were sent to the Pawiak prison.

children, but only those men who had the appropriate *Ausweis* showing that they were workers and were registered in the Labour Office. The investigation took the following form: representatives of the Political Police[498] sat at one table with lists of names which they perused in order to find those surnames given by the detainees. There were even some men whose names did not tally with the name on the list, where only the surname was the same. Representatives of the Criminal Police[499] sat at the second table, and representatives of the Labour Office sat at the third. After the investigation, which lasted a few hours, more than six hundred men were detained. They were then sent away to an unknown destination.

The Germans also acted sharply to destroy the Polish underground press: [40] thus they put an end to the *Endecja*'s[500] newspaper *Szaniec*[501] and the printing works. The *Rzeczpospolita*[502] also had to cease publication. Editor Kwieciński[503] was shot on the Pawiak along with his 18-year-old daughter. He was the editor of the pre-war Front Morges[504] publications, *Nowa Prawda*[505] and others.

The Bolsheviks are fighting with extraordinary resilience and bravery on the eastern front: the Sevastopol Fortress garrison has managed in counter attacks to reconquer 5 forts. When the Germans stormed the fortress, they

498 I.e. Gestapo.

499 I.e. Kripo.

500 Popular name for the antisemitic political party, called National Democracy, ND, led by Roman Dmowski (1864–1939) in interwar Poland.

501 (Polish) Rampart; periodical of the Polish nationalist political extreme and the affiliated military organisation; published in the years 1939–1945.

502 Most probably *Rzeczpospolita Polska*, the official monthly of the Government Delegation for Poland, published from March 1941 to July 1945. It was a paper published unsystematically, associated with a resistance group called Polish People's Independence Action.

503 Franciszek Kwieciński (1884–1942), activist of the National Workers' Party, and from 1937, of the Labour Party (Stronnictwo Pracy, SP); during the occupation, he served as the latter's representative in the Main Conciliation Committee of the Home Army. Arrested and executed by Germans in Magdalenka in 1942.

504 Political agreement formed by representatives of centrist parties opposing the dictatorship of Piłsudski. Its initiators were Ignacy Paderewski and General Władysław Sikorski. The name of the organisation comes from the town of Morges in Switzerland, where Paderewski lived.

505 (Polish) The New Truth; daily newspaper associated with the Labour Party, published in 1937–1938; later replaced by *Nowa Rzeczpospolita*.

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lost 60 thousand men straightaway – both their own and Romanian forces, i.e., almost 10 per cent of their soldiers active in that sector. I have no words to express my delight at the heroism of the besieged Red Army! Also, the news about the African front is a bit more cheerful today. Churchill in his speech before the U.S. Congress[506] expressed the opinion that the fighting in Africa was not a cause for concern, since Rommel's army[507] was once again in exactly the same difficult position that it had been a year ago. Namely, they were short of supplies and men, as well as military equipment, while the Allies had at their disposal first-class equipment and fresh soldiers from the American troops stationed in the Near East, who would now be utilised on the front at Marsa Matruh.[508] He also said that a Second Front[509] might soon be opened.

A tremendous piece of news circulated in the ghetto today: yesterday at 5 p.m., Radio London aired a special broadcast about the persecution of the Jews in Polish and Russian territory.[510] Towns were named (such as Wilno, Równe, Hancewicze and still others)[511] and figures, rising to tens of thousands of victims. The broadcast ended with a call to the Jewish people to hold out, in the profound belief that the moment of salvation and revenge is nigh.[512] This means that finally news about our terrible suffering and pain, with its innumerable victims, has reached a world-wide public! May we hope, then, that our

506 The speech was delivered on 26 December 1941.

507 Erwin Rommel (1891–1944), German field marshal; commander of the Afrika Korps (Deutsches Afrikakorps – DAK). His troops struggled with poor supplies and low mobility, but due to Rommel's tactical abilities they achieved many spectacular victories over the Allied armies.

508 Marsa Matruh – a city in north-western Egypt, a seaport on the Mediterranean Sea; an important Allied trans-shipment harbour during World War II; in 1942 temporarily occupied by the Afrika Korps.

509 In the spring of 1942, in a series of speeches Winston Churchill announced the formation of the so-called second front against Germany in continental Europe. Eventually, the second (Western) front was created in June 1944.

510 A BBC radio broadcast from 2 June 1942 contained the first mention of 700,000 murdered Jews. This information was then repeated on 26 June, and the following day Shmul Zygielbojm, a Bund representative in the National Council, gave a speech in Yiddish on British radio, providing details of his party's report, which was the basis for information that appeared in the media at that time.

511 The towns were listed in the so-called April report sent by Oyneg Shabes to the Polish government-in-exile in London; see: *Oyneg Shabes. People and Works,* Doc. 66.

512 See ARG I 445/21 (Ring. I/503/1).

situation will finally improve a little? Will this be the end of the massacres and the deportation of thousands of our sisters and brothers in an 'unknown direction'? Possibly. . . . Probably not! It is also possible that this may have a [. . .] effect, but in any case, we are simply playthings in the hands of murderers!

[41]

Thursday 2 July [19]42

Another very turbulent night has passed. The murderers have fulfilled their promises and carried out what they had yearned to do: to banish from this world 110 young Jews – 10 policemen and 100 detainees from the prison on Gęsia Street.[513] Each one of the 10 murdered Jewish policemen was the so-called *grajek*, i.e. one who used to stand by the ghetto gates to protect them and who were on good terms with the German guard post. They would bribe the Germans with expensive gifts, and in this way, they [. . .] enable those Jewish smugglers with a large volume of goods to drive packed carts and cars into the ghetto. In addition to money, this would cost a pair of boots, a good watch, a fountain pen and other expensive items. The Germans were so corrupt that they would do anything for money. Needless to say, the *grajek* was paid handsomely for his pains, because not every policeman who stood by the guard post was good for such trade. It appears that the authorities have recently got wind of this practice; they ordered the Jewish police to surrender the 10 most important ones. It was understood that their fate had been sealed. Six were arrested on the spot, and four managed to hide, but this did not help with the Germans. They did not let the six detainees out of their clutches and demanded that the Jewish police hand over the four who had hidden. Meanwhile, they ordered other policemen to be held as hostages whom they threatened to put to death if the four missing men were not surrendered. This went on for a few weeks, and now the four have been found and the entire *minyan* killed.

The hundred martyrs in the prison were murdered not in the ghetto, but in Babice, a village on the road towards *Powązki*. Yesterday evening, the Germans demanded that the Cemetery Department[514] send 20 gravediggers to Babice to dig a grave for 100 slaughtered victims, and there the martyrs

513 See footnote 17, pt. 1.

514 The Cemetery Department of the *Judenrat* was chaired by Meshulem Kaminer and Zygmunt Hurwicz.

were buried. In addition, the same gravediggers also dug a mass grave in *Żolibórz*. For whom? It is not yet known; probably for Poles. It is interesting that the 100 slaughtered by the regime were principally members of the intelligentsia. This evening, an announcement appeared on the ghetto walls from Auerswald, stating that [41a] the mass murder was an 'act of vengeance' (*odwet*)[515] for the fact that the smuggling had not ceased and was still heavily supported by the Jewish police.

The slaughter distracted peoples' attention somewhat from the defeat of the English in North Africa, where Rommel's armies were advancing in full stride, without encountering any resistance in their path.[516] They are already close to the gates of Alexandria.[517]

In addition, the loudspeaker announced at 11 o'clock today that, after 26 days of uninterrupted attacks, Sevastopol has finally fallen.[518] And so, the legendary, heroic defence of the Soviet fortress in Crimea has come to an end. The Germans also announced today that on the 1st, they began an offensive in the southern and middle sectors of the Eastern Front.

[42]

Sunday, 5 July Our sages called us a stubborn, impatient people.[519] This was true of us before and is true of us now. In good and in bad, from darkness into bright light, we always react impulsively, without a thorough, more-or-less objective examination of the situation, and the same has just occurred. Just yesterday, after the shattering impact of Rommel's lightning-fast victories in Egypt, his bold occupation of one of the most important key positions – perhaps also the last – Marsa Matruh – before Alexandria, we stood beaten down and ashamed. And the English are such a bunch of worthless fools that they cannot carry out anything successfully, and even the heavily acclaimed American tank weaponry was incapable of not even halting, let's not speak

515 (Polish) reprisal.

516 On 1 July 1942, as a result of the Afrika Korps attack, the First Battle of El Alamein between the German-Italian and British armies began.

517 Alexandria – city in Egypt.

518 On 3 July 1942, the last Soviet defence line was broken. On 4 July German troops seized the city and the harbour, and the Red Army announced its surrender. This meant the end of the fighting on the Kherson Peninsula, and the Germans conquered the whole Crimea.

519 See footnote 310, pt. 1.

of attacking, the enemy's tempestuous march under such difficult conditions of climate and terrain. On the other hand, people wanted to cling to the vague possibilities accorded by Churchill's address to the U.S. Congress, in which he is said to have expressed his complete faith in the ultimate victory of the Allied forces on the African Front and to have said that the momentary German victories only presage a mammoth defeat of the Axis Powers! No, our weak nerves could not pass the test, and without any resistance we gave in to our sullen mood . . . Everything has been lost! And the biggest pessimists among us saw the German inimical flag fluttering with the swastika on it.

However, this evening (our) mood began to change radically: the Goebbels rattle-box[520] said that an American tank division was hurrying from Iraq to the aid of the English in Egypt, but since the English have not yet taken Alexandria, they held the [. . .] port 40 km away, and there a terrible battle ensued. A great weight has been lifted off our chests, because this morning [. . .] of the German war report newspaper, the Jews became more confident and immediately concocted a story whereby an American military force has taken Tobruk[521] – no more and no less – and Rommel's army was completely cut off from its base. [43] Whatever might actually have happened, in our internal collective life already rendered feeble by the war, these were symptoms of a neuro-pathological nature.

The fate of our best and dearest, our self-sacrificing children presses like a heavy, leaden weight upon our hearts and minds. You, dear shining souls, who risk your lives every minute and every second, who think only about how to bring help to our brothers and sisters, those about to be annihilated by the pitiless claw of Hitler's assassins in all of our established communities, from the shores of the Finnish Sea as far as Bulgaria, and from Germany to Smolensk and Crimea. And if you cannot manage to save the suffering, exhausted masses, at least bring a greeting and a final word from our martyrs before they breathe their last, and a description of their torment and pain. But – if you too should fall into the murderers' clutches, and if we should receive the terrible news, then our own wretched situation would be even

520 That is, a loudspeaker.

521 Tobruk – port city in north-eastern Libya; for more than half a year during World War II it was the scene of heavy fighting between the Allied forces and German-Italian troops under the command of Rommel.

more bitter and more difficult. It is hard for us to come to terms with the fact that you, you, 'our lovely and our pleasant ones, inseparable in life and in death'[522] – that you find yourselves at the disposal of these human animals. As I write these words, I am under the strong impression of the news about you – dearest creatures! . . .

The conversations between merchants on Nalewki Street characterise the heavy mood and disquiet which has taken root these last days in the widest circles of Jewish Warsaw. On Saturday I met with an acquaintance of mine, a manufacturer who works for Germans and also for himself. 'We are already lost, the Germans will put an end to us all, there is no additional way to do business, [. . .] and therefore all that remains is good food and to take pleasure from the world as long as we can.' The same man also related to me the contents of a letter which he himself had read and which had been sent to Warsaw by a Jew who lives – as he himself expresses it – in a house whose windows overlook the Jewish camp in Lublin.[523] The camp is very large and can hold around 150,000 people. At the moment, there are up to 60,000 Jews there. Many Jews are brought there in groups every day, but the number of people does not increase. The talk is that the number of Jews who arrive determines the murder of the same number of Jews already inside. [44] He goes on to write that it is known there that something terrible is being prepared for us in Warsaw as well.

In yesterday's issue of *Nov[oye] Slovo*,[524] those who had sold their souls to the devil wrote a propaganda article claiming that the Russians are beginning to realise that they do not really know why the war with Hitler is being fought. 'It is only thanks to the lies and massive boasting by the Jewish (how

522 In the original in Hebrew, from 2 Samuel 1:23.

523 The author is referring to the Majdanek concentration camp – KL Lublin, established in July 1941 (the name comes from the Lublin district Majdan Tatarski). Initially it was to be a camp for 150,000 inmates and prisoners of war, but became with time the largest camp in occupied Europe. The economic difficulties and failures on the Eastern Front prevented full implementation of these plans. It started as a penal camp for 50,000 Polish prisoners, and in October 1942 it became a killing centre for Jews. The victims were murdered using Zyklon B in gas chambers. According to recent estimates, by spring 1944, about 80,000 people had been killed in Majdanek, including approximately 60,000 Jews. It ceased to operate in July 1944. See: Beata Siwek-Ciupak, *Majdanek. Zarys historii*, Lublin 2013.

524 See footnote 216, pt. 1.

could it be otherwise?) propagandists (Lozovsky[525] who, according to them is merely a Jew and is always referred to as the Jewish thief and shopkeeper from Odessa), that the *Comintern* managed to persuade the Russians, poor naïve children, to go to war.' The article finishes with the following words: 'Kalinin[526] said that a certain amount of time was needed for the Soviet people to understand the meaning and character of wars.' With these words, Kalinin admitted that the Soviet people had not understood why they needed to fight Germany and defend the Soviet State. He said that all this only lasted 'a brief period of time'. The newspaper, on the other hand, goes on to say that there was nothing more to say than that, that for a short period the Soviet people did not understand why they had to give their lives for the well-being of Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt. And now they are beginning to comprehend: there is no reason for it at all, and, to the contrary, you have to do everything (exactly what Hitler's clever men would have wanted!) so that this madness of fighting might completely collapse and quickly disappear! However, as people say in connection with the current slogan, 'Lenin is dead, but his work lives on', it would have been better had he lived on and his work died!

The words cited above exemplify some of the propaganda material which is poured out twice a week by the dirty *tcharnosotnikes*[527] into the hearts and minds of peasants and the workers who still survive in the captured territories. How much Hitler's henchmen hate and fear the day of reckoning is evidenced in the 'articles', begging your pardon, which are presented to the reader and which are reprinted in dozens of rags (supposedly edited

525 Solomon Lozovsky (1878–1952), member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the Supreme Soviet; deputy minister of foreign affairs of the USSR; head of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, created in 1942 by the NKVD. See: Arno Lustiger, *Stalin and the Jews: The Red Book; The Tragedy of the Soviet Jews and the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee*, New York, 2003.

526 Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin (1875–1946), Soviet politician; member of the Bolshevik Party; in 1919, he became the chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the FSRR, from December 1922 – of the USSR; from 1938, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR.

527 (Russian/Yiddish) members of *tchornaya sotnia* (Black Hundreds), extremely reactionary and monarchist political movement of radically nationalist and conservative beliefs, existed in Russia in 1905–1912. Initially, the name referred to monarchist militias, but soon it encompassed the entire movement. The expression 'black hundreds' became synonymous with European radical right-wing, fascist and antisemitic movements.

by local masterminds!?) throughout the entire occupied territory.[528] Needless to say, in the most important [. . .], no single article lacks the word *yevrey*,[529] Israelite, and, almost always, *zhid*.[530] They figure everywhere, beginning with the so-called spec[ial] Russian articles and ending with information drawn from the occupied western and southern countries of Europe.

[45]

Tuesday, 7 July [19]42

There is no end to round-ups. Day and night Jews are dragged out their homes. They are not always suited for heavy, physical labour. Like sheep, they are driven to the district police station and from there to Tłomackie Street, where there is a medical commission (a Jewish doctor – like in liberal Germany, right?) which examines the detainees totally superficially, declares them fit for work and sends them off. Where is not yet known. Not to their deaths perhaps!

Last night the Goebbels rattle-box informed us that Voronezh (on the Don) had fallen. Something in the defeat suits the Germans wonderfully: they don't have to take care of a single man, and not one thousand *yekes* will have to lay down their lives there for Führer and Fatherland.

In Ozorków – so I've been told – 1,300 Jews remain out of 13,000. What happened to the remaining 9/10 is as yet unknown.[531] They were probably all killed in a fashion 'made in Germany'.[532]

There are rumours in the city that the situation of Jews in the provinces has become a bit easier, because no unsettling news has arrived from there of late. This doesn't prove anything, but our situation is so frightful that any more or less calming news gives us a little hope.

After the above-mentioned story, I heard more concerning Jewish provocateurs, 'may their names be obliterated'.[533] There is information about

528 After the German army attacked the USSR on 22 June 1941, *Novoye Slovo* was also sold in the occupied Soviet territories.

529 (Russian) Jew.

530 (Russian) derogatory: Jew.

531 Ozorków (Zgierz County). Industrial town, with half of its population (around 6,000) Jewish. The Germans established a ghetto there at the beginning of 1941. In May 1942, more than 2,500 of its Jews were murdered in Chełmno; the remainder were deported to the Łódź ghetto until August 1942.

532 In English in the original.

533 In the original, Hebrew abbreviation *yud, mem, shin*.

a couple of people from Łódź who run errands for the Gestapo and find Jews who have hidden themselves on the other side (Olek Kon from Łódź, son of the well-known lawyer Piotr Kon)[534] and with informing on Jewish women and young girls. There is also a certain employee of Dorotea in Łódź, and yet another informer who traffics in the circles of Jewish suppliers. The terrible forms of betrayals, denunciations and blackmail in the ghetto are a sign of their widespread operations and slaughter. In the time of Nicholas I and the cantonists,[535] there were [. . .] who openly gave permission for such creatures to be wiped off the face of the earth.

This evening the loudspeaker proclaimed that the Germans have taken Voronezh on the Don. This means that they have moved forward. True, 'no rest for Jacob!'[536]

[46]

Wednesday
8 July [19]42

The round-ups of young people from their homes has continued this evening. Today, the noble work of the Jewish abductors began in my courtyard. Who knows whether they – the Jewish policemen – are not reincarnations of their Jewish great-great-grandfathers, the kidnappers from the time of Nicholas I. Today, like yesterday evening, they seized only one of the two men they sought: a man who truly did not have his registration papers in order. It seems that he had not paid the fee for his forced-labour attestation. His protestations and wailing were of no avail, nor was his screaming to high heaven in the middle of the night, such that all the residents of the courtyard were terrified. They took him away and have probably already sent him to work today. In general, there is a marvellous thing about this work! Until recently, everybody was convinced, even the Jewish Labour Office, that those who were sent away during the first round-up about six weeks ago, suffered the same fate as those Jews sent to 'an unknown destination'.

For many long weeks, no one heard a peep from those who had been sent away. There was talk that they were deported in sealed railway carriages

534 Piotr Kon (1865–1937), lawyer, revolutionary activist, defender of workers and participants in the so-called Łódź rebellion of 1892, as well as 1905 revolutionaries, including the murderers of Mieczysław Silberstein, an industrialist from Łódź.

535 See introduction to Part I.

536 In the original in Hebrew, reference to Lamentations 5:5.

to Bobrujsk (in any case that was what was written on the carriages). Recently, however, many letters have arrived from them from the outskirts of Bobrujsk in which they inform their nearest and dearest that they are healthy, working and even content . . . It means that they have avoided the terrible fate of their brothers and sisters in Chełmno,[537] Bełżec,[538] Sobibór,[539] Trawniki[540] and other 'slaughter-houses'. Let's hope! In Hrubieszów[541] and its surroundings, thousands of Jewish children were slaughtered on the foul and cynical pretext that anyone who was not ready for a job and could not work, but only to swindle, had to be exterminated. It is possible that that ghastly example had a terrible effect on a large part of the Warsaw Jewish community which wanted to avoid that bitter fate by working in the Jewish camps. So, I spoke recently with L. who gave me some highly interesting details about the labour camp in Rejów[542]

537 The Chełmno-on-the Ner (German: Kulmhof am Nehr) (Koło County) killing centre was established in the autumn of 1941 for the annihilation of Jews from the *Wartheland*. It operated in two phases: in 1941–1942 and, briefly, in June and July 1944. The first victims – the Jews of Koło – were murdered on 8 December 1941. The exact number of victims remains unknown; estimates range from 152,000 to 225,000 people, including Romanies and Soviet prisoners. See: Patrick Montague, *Chelmno and the Holocaust: The History of Hitler's First Death Camp* (London, 2012); *The Last Stage of the Resettlement is Death*, Docs. 10–18.

538 Bełżec killing centre operated from March to December 1942 at the site of the former labour camp. Some 450,000 Polish Jews and several thousand Romanies were murdered in its gas chambers. See: Robert Kuwałek, *Obóz zagłady w Bełżcu*, Lublin, 2010.

539 The Sobibór killing centre operated from May 1942 to October 1943. Approximately 250,000 Jews, mainly Polish, were murdered in its gas chambers. On 14 October 1943, some prisoners of the camp attacked the German staff; several hundred people escaped. See: Marek Bem, *Sobibór. Obóz zagłady. 1942–1943*, Warszawa 2014.

540 Trawniki (Lublin County. From March 1942, there was a transit point for Jews deported to Bełżec. In May 1942, a labour camp was established at the sugar factory in Trawniki; Emanuel Ringelblum was imprisoned there in 1943, see: S. D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?* pp. 359–361.

541 See: *Accounts from the General Government*, Docs. 32–38.

542 In Rejów, a district of Skarżysko-Kamienna, a branch of a German private company HASAG (Hugo Schneider Aktiengesellschaft-Metalwarenfabrik) was established in 1940, which from 1934 produced for the German army. During the war, it manufactured ammunition, exploiting the work of prisoners of concentration camps and ghettos. See: Krzysztof Gibaszewski, *HASAG. Historia obozu pracy przymusowej w Skarżysku-Kamiennej*, Skarżysko-Kamienna, 2011.

(by Sandomierz), where a group of volunteer Jewish workers from Warsaw are expected now. (There are munitions factories there). [. . .]! Today there were fewer people seized on the street, but another 'round-up' is expected this evening.

There is no precise information about whether the Jews from Rzeszów[543] are beginning to be sent to 'an unknown destination'.[544] It happened after the murderers had 'legally', so to speak, extorted a million zlotys from the local Jews, [47] 'levy' because they had avoided the order to meet all of their communal and individual financial obligations. The implacable cynicism of the Germans breaks all records and will forever remain in history as an example of human barbarity and savagery.

And there is no encouraging news from the fronts. On the Russian front, the River Don (by Voronezh) has already been crossed, and they are turning east towards the Volga. If the Russian offensive in Oryol,[545] God forbid, does not succeed, then the situation of the entire Russian southern front – Rostov, Kuban, the Caucasus, becomes critical in the extreme, and who knows what this will herald. On the other hand, the situation of the English in El Alamein seems better. There – 80 kilometres from Alexandria – the advance of the German army has been halted.[546] And maybe they will even have to pull back, in which case their fate will be sealed.

Today I heard about Kock[547] and about German 'justice'. A week ago, the Germans killed 21 martyrs there, representatives of the town elders, and then sent a demand to the *kehillah* that they pay 21 thousand zlotys as compensation for the slaughter, a thousand zlotys for each martyr.[548] Vile contemptible fiends!

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543 The author uses the Jewish name of the town, Rayshe.

544 In December 1941, the Germans established a ghetto in Rzeszów. In July 1942, the *Aktion* began; about 6,000 ghetto prisoners were deported to Bełżec; about 2,000, mainly sick and children, were executed in the forests north of the town; then about 3,000 people were deported in August and November, of them about 2,000 to Bełżec.

545 Oryol – town in Russia, north-west of Voronezh.

546 The first battle of El Alamein ended on 27 July 1942; as a result, the Afrika Korps' offensive on Alexandria was halted.

547 Kock (Radzyń Podlaski County).

548 There is no confirmation of this information in the literature on the subject.

Today, during the night raid, Szeryński and Lejkin's 'knights' also paid an official visit to our *kibbutz*[549], looking for victims. Having frightened us, they fortunately left with only a few loaves of bread, a pay-off for not taking with them a young man who was respectful and totally legitimate. The 'knights' profess the rule from Talmud: 'All of Israel are responsible for one another',[550] – and therefore, since they didn't find the person they were looking for, they wanted to take a hostage, but the loaves of bread saved him . . .

It has now been confirmed that L. is in prison. This is very depressing. The mind doesn't want to accept the total horror of the situation, which is that she has been in prison for a good four weeks and only now did [we] receive any specific information. The provisioning conditions are terrible there. You can waste away horribly from the hunger which rules over the lives of the prisoners. Terrible questions come to mind: will she hold out? How will she bear the terrible torture and maltreatment of a dear, kind individual and comrades carried out by bestial human beings?

Last night on Leszno Street three Jews were shot, among them an older woman in a nightgown.

[48] This morning I heard that the Jewish Labour Office is supposed to have ordered [. . .] all Jewish women in the ghetto who were fit for work, and that the whole [. . .] should be organised [. . .] the necessary equipment. Given that there were no announcements posted on the streets and [. . .] to ascertain [. . .] from [. . .] that especially due to the fact that rumours abounded that the Jewish Labour Office was even giving out registration cards, also for [. . .]. As I found out later, this seems to be the state of affairs. In the meantime, no general administration will be set up, but the women who are working in institutions and receive monthly [. . .] cards, will be summoned to the Labour Office where they will receive work certificates. However, two female officials from the Labour Office have already been delegated, Szyszkowska and Entin, who will take charge of the matter.

Thursday 9 July [19]42

Although it appears that the English have finally overcome the dangerous situation on the front near Alexandria, nevertheless the oppressive mood in the ghetto has not lifted, in particular once the details

549 (Hebrew) community.

550 In the original in Hebrew, from BT, Shevuot 39a.

of the stupid English and American tanks became known. The story is as follows. Over the past year, the English and Americans have produced many large tanks, proceeding from the correct basic assumption that heavy equipment and airplanes would be most important in the imminent battle with the Germans. However, it turned out that the tanks could not withstand the new German anti-tank equipment which the Germans had used successfully to their advantage in the last battles on the African front, where they had been victorious. As regards the Russian front and the huge breakthrough which extended as far as the Don (and Voronezh),[551] the Germans have to thank (as they themselves say) their new tactic: namely not to carry out attacks in a few locations in the Oryol in order to shatter the enemy's front and to box in the tattered, tortured forces, but rather to batter them from the side now [. . .] from the opposing front with sufficient tank force and expulsive strength (Tadzin[?] -[. . .]). [. . .] they have applied the same tactics now against Timoshenko's[552] armies [. . .] now with success.

This evening, 667 Jews were brought from Tomaszów Mazowiecki[553] and from Biała Rawska[554] where they [. . .] and [. . .]. Most of them [. . .] other areas and also from Warsaw [. . .].

(b)

[60]

[18 July 1942?][555] Merchant Kagan from Grzybowska Street

Let the atrocious behaviour of our well-known moral critics be noted – the Alexander Zishes[556] and others – those who want to take advantage

551 From 23 June to 6 July 1942, fighting took place near Voronezh, culminating in a victory of the joint German-Hungarian forces over Soviet troops.

552 Semyon Timoshenko (1895–1970), Soviet military leader; in September 1939 he commanded the Ukrainian Front and participated in the invasion of Poland; in January 1940 he took the command in the winter war, preventing the failure of the USSR; appointed Marshal of the USSR in 1940; served as Soviet minister of defence from 1940 until July 1941. After the German attack on the USSR he commanded the South-West, Stalingrad and North-West Fronts, subsequently.

553 The *Aktion* in the ghetto in Tomaszów Mazowiecki was in the autumn of 1942.

554 The *Aktion* in the ghetto in Biała Rawska was in October 1942.

555 Most probably the second fragment of Gutkowski's diary begins with an entry from Saturday 18 July 1942; the beginning of the entry was not preserved.

556 Apparently, a reference to Aleksander Zishe Frydman (1899–1943), secretary general of Agudat Israel, journalist, organiser of religious schools, teacher of Hebrew. Member

precisely now of the so-called 'favourable' situation regarding the religious way of life, and, with Auerswald behind them, to observe . . . Shabbat. Such blasphemy has not occurred before, it seems! With the help of our tormenter and his murderous gang, that Jews who reproach piety and the fear of God should dare to defend Shabbat! Unheard of! Let these thieves of God reflect – if they ever think – upon a certain moral recompense for their base actions. Like boys learning Hebrew in heder, they will get their just deserts for their behaviour. . . .

3 Jewish men and 2 Jewish women were killed this evening at Twarda Street 44 by the *meta* on Sienna Street. This took place at midnight. Some *junaks* arrived looking for smugglers. Since they didn't catch everybody, they simply pulled innocent people out of their homes and killed them. So now there is an orphaned girl because of the two women.

A sad, curious sign on the funeral parlour next to the Jewish *gmina* on Grzybowska Street: *Biuro pogrzebowe pracującej inteligencji 'Kres wędrówki'*[557] – 'All country'.[558]

News has just reached us about a nice bit of affairs concerning a cancelled resettlement decree involving Jews in Warsaw. In the course of the last year and a half in the Warsaw ghetto, two gangster rings – agents of the Gestapo – have ruled the roost: Gancwajch *et consortes,*[559] who, after the night-time slaughter of 17/18 April,[560] had gradually left the arena by the time of the final liquidation; and Kohn and Heller, who are meanwhile still in the saddle (they made their pile of money in partnership with the Gestapo, bringing Jews to Warsaw from Łódź's hellish ghetto).[561] Over the past few days, they have spread a rumour that we who are in the ghetto are going to be subject to a gruesome decree – a pogrom followed by deportation (we already know what that means . . .). However, this morning an acquaintance told me that

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of Warsaw *Judenrat,* representative of the Agudah in the AJDC advisory council; he perished in a camp in the Lublin region.

557 (Polish, in Latin characters) 'Funeral parlour of the working intelligentsia "End of journey"'.

558 In the original in Hebrew; perhaps a pre-war reference to services on the territory of all of Poland.

559 (Latin) and company.

560 See footnote 154, pt. 1.

561 Name lists of people who left the Łódź ghetto to Warsaw between October 1940 and October 1942 have been preserved. See: AP Łódź, Przełożony Starszeństwa Żydów w Getcie Łódzkim, file No. 21, pp. 1–47.

this is surely their (Kohn and Heller's) blackmail scheme, from which they intend to profit and to show off what fine people they are, the 'merciful sons of the merciful'[562]. . .

Since the rumours which I mentioned above have not decreased since Saturday, but rather have increased (on account of a certain assembly of rabbis who almost gave them all credence), a meeting was held in a certain institution to provide security for the activists in this period of hardship. There were broad discussions regarding possible ways of surviving. [61] Certain decisions were also taken. The whole meeting took place in a very oppressive atmosphere, and the participants began to disperse, depressed and with heavy hearts.[563] A little relief followed the meeting. Somebody said that news had just come from K[ohn] and H[eller] that, in fact, things had changed a little for the better: the murderers had agreed to expel up to 3,000 Jews a day from the ghetto, instead of 10,000.

Sunday, 19 July [19]42 The mood among the social activists is very tense, although news has come from those inside the *kehillah* that nothing is going to happen, that all the rumours about deportation, pogroms, and the like are simply a figment of the imagination.

Night-time murders of individuals continue. Last night again, 8 or 9 Jews from various milieus were shot.

Fresh panic has broken out in the ghetto: as soon as a worker is employed in a 'shop', he has to get his work papers in order to confirm his status. Incidentally, it should be noticed that some time ago, crafty entrepreneurs had organised (fictive) shops, and large sums of money had been taken from individuals, with the assurance that they would be taken on as employees in such a shop. A lot of people have been cheated, and who knows whether such shops will emerge again in the near future.

Monday 20 July [19]42 Heaven and earth – and shops. I have the impression that the social activists have totally lost their way and their clarity of vision: shops are being set up at the last minute, as a result of which clever merchants take advantage of the opportunity. Who knows if anything will come

562 In the original in Hebrew, from BT, Kiddushin 4a; synonym for Jews.

563 Reference to the meeting of Oyneg Shabes.

of this? Entire lists have been drawn up of men who are to be employed in these various shops. Meanwhile, many contradictory and exaggerated rumours are spreading that the Gestapo have come to most of the shops and registered all the workers together with their family members. People say tonight there will be a pogrom, starting in the small ghetto. Notwithstanding Czerniaków's reassurances (early this morning he is said to have visited all the pol[ice]-administration offices, where he was given assurances that nothing would happen), our mood was despondent, like before a pogrom. Some of our close associates are going to organise the brushmakers' as well as the laundry shops.

[62] People in Lublin (Majdan Tatarski)[564] are asking for news. The first two telephone conversations were marked by great anxiety and sympathy for our fate. The third conversation brought some relief. They said that our situation had improved slightly. It would be worth sending someone there to ascertain in person the source of their information about us and the extent to which it is accurate.

I attended a meeting with R.[565] and L-n[566] about setting up a shop for comrades. Nothing came of this because the merchants (the boss of one such shop is supposed to have been abs[en]t) wanted to wrap up the 'business' as quickly as possible and skim the cream off the top for themselves.

There are two contentions regarding our imminent future: first, that a pogrom and deportation are being planned, which will certainly occur very soon; second, that there will be no general slaughter but that does not exclude (?) a continual 'silent *Aktion*', involving individuals and even dozens of victims during the night, because the Germans must have us, our work and our output, to provide various supplies for the military. Those people maintain that creating a panic will without a doubt bring harm to the Jewish population. Incidentally, there's a report that the *kehillah* is supposed to have announced that if these wild rumours continue, then, in accordance with an order from the authorities [?],[567] they would have to publish draconian directives against those who spread malicious gossip.

564 During the *Aktion* in the Lublin ghetto in April 1942, several thousand people were resettled to the suburb of Lublin, to Majdan Tatarski, where a new ghetto was established.

565 Probably Emanuel Ringelblum.

566 Probably Abraham Lewin.

567 Question mark in square brackets in the original.

People take leave of each other in the ghetto as follows: not 'good night', but 'a peaceful night'. It is symptomatic.

Today our comrade from Galicia was freed from prison. He paints horrifying pictures of Tarnów[568] and *Kraków*.[569]

Tuesday – 21 July [19]42

Description:

a) HWC 32.8: original, handwritten (LEG*), ink, Yiddish, pages [39–41], [41a], [42–48], minor damage and losses of text, 11 sheets, 11 pages;
b) ARG II 274 (Ring. II/200): original, handwritten (LEG*), ink, Yiddish, Polish, 150×195 mm, pages [60–62], 3 sheets, 3 pages.
Only these fragments survived. They have been only identified during the editing process and are published together in English for the first time.

16

20 July – 3 August 1942, Warsaw ghetto. David Graber, account "אַ פּאָר אײַנדרוקן און ערינערונגען" *[Some impressions and reminiscences], written in the Borochov school*[570] *during the Aktion; the last will*

[1] Some impressions and reminiscences

Jewish life in the Warsaw ghetto has been hard under the Hitlerites' bloody regime. Nevertheless, Jewish life has not died out. All the socialist organisations in the ghetto have initiated extensive, bold [?] activities. Youth circles, clubs and various organisations have grown and spread. [Ha]Shomer

568 The first *Aktion* in Tarnów was carried out on 11–18 June 1942. Some 3,500 people were deported to Bełżec, approximately 3,000 were executed on the spot, and about 6,000 were executed in a forest in Zbylitowska Góra near Tarnów.

569 The first deportation from the Kraków ghetto to Bełżec was carried out on 1–8 June 1942. Approximately 7,000 Jews from Kraków were murdered there.

570 Before the war, a six-class elementary school on Nowolipki Street 68, belonging to the Union of Jewish Schools. It was under the auspices of Left Po'ale Tsiyon, and in October 1941 it was transformed into a public primary school named after Ber Borochov (1881–1917), creator of the idea of Socialist Zionism, founder of the Jewish Social Democratic Labour Party Po'ale Tsiyon. The school was famous for its high level of education. Children's kitchen No. 145 organised by TOZ was located in the same building. See: *A Guide to the Perished City*, pp. 354–359.

and [He]Halutz Hatzair have distinguished themselves in the *kibbutzim*. Over the course of two years, they have published a series of papers. They recently ran a seminar and, in general, life in the *kibbutzim* has been organised in an interesting manner. It is curious that the illegal publications have carried out a lively polemic amongst themselves: they literally fought with words [. . .] our party (Left Po'ale Tsiyon).

[2] When the Soviet Union concluded a pact with Germany,[571] we did not censure them. We knew this was a necessity. Our opposing party,[572] on the other hand, saw this as a betrayal on the part of the Soviet Union; this was their greatest error, which became obvious when the Soviet Union went to war with Hitler, when the world recognised England's treachery and when the entire political orientation of [x][573] the masses threw itself behind the Red Army.

Oh! What a great day that was! The ghetto was thrown into a fever. People were kissing on the streets. The Polish police fraternised with Jewish merchants. For 3 days a rumour went round that the Soviet Union was victorious, that it was already outside Warsaw and [. . .] totally silent [3] until, on the fourth day, the silence was broken. . . . and the dream vanished . . . 'Germany's great victory.' Taken: Brest, *Białystok*, Lwów, Wilno, Kovel and Kovno[574] and the battles continue. From then on you could see small groups of 'politicians' in every courtyard debating late into the night, bringing back good news from 'reliable sources'!

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Such cheerful moments were few, however . . . During the first winter in the ghetto young people entertained themselves a bit at 'fives'[575] and dance

571 The so-called Molotov-Ribbentrop pact – a non-aggression treaty between the Third Reich and the USSR signed on 23 August 1939. Formally, it was only an agreement between the two countries, but an additional secret protocol, annexed to the official document, concerned the partition of territories of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Romania.

572 Probably a reference to the Bund.

573 [x] workers.

574 The towns and cities were seized by German troops in the first days of the invasion of the USSR in the summer of 1941.

575 From English: five o'clock tea; an afternoon party, usually starting at 5 p.m.

parties, but a pallor hung over the dancing. It was a bear dance. The ghetto at that time was concerned with the 'work battalions'[576] and *parówki*, starvation and poverty and finally the terrible typhus epidemic. Summer brought yet another plague: *obóz*. [. . .] There is much to be said about it. [4] It was steeped in blood and permeated with blood. There were more corpses on the street than loaves of bread. The population strode towards its demise in seven-league boots.

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But the second winter in the ghetto was quiet. The ghetto did not feel the presence of the walls. Commerce and smuggling went on full steam. Mortality was high, but at Szulc's and Łysobyk's[577] people ate their fill. What a sharp contrast there was. You could see scenes such as this: a shop with large display windows full of every sort of delicacy, in front of which lies a dead man propped up against the wall, and next to him, a woman and child sit begging.

[5] My participation in a committee which worked to collect museum materials about Jewish and Polish life under Hitlerite Germany is a separate chapter.

The work began the moment that we learned that the Wilno Institute,[578] with all its rich acquisitions, had been destroyed. My own work was rudimentary: packaging material and hiding it. But the work was so interesting! What didn't we have there? We learned so much. We used to sit until the wee hours with comrade Lichtensztajn,[579] reviewing material and discussing events. The most important items were the photographs of Jews being beaten as they worked on the streets and in the *placówki*. [6] We had a treasure trove of photos.[580]

576 The Work Battalion – an autonomous institution of the *Judenrat* created on 19 October 1939, whose goal was to provide workers for forced labour.

577 E. Łysobyk, restaurant at Nowolipki Street 51a.

578 That is, YIVO.

579 Izrael Lichtensztajn (1904–1913), teacher, activist of Left Po'ale Tsiyon, a pre-war editor of *Literarishe Bleter*, co-organiser of secret teaching courses in the ghetto, member of YIKOR and Oyneg Shabes. At the beginning of August 1942, he managed to conceal the first part of the Ringelblum Archive in the basement of the school at Nowolipki Street 68 where he taught and lived. His students Nahum Grzywacz and Dawid Graber helped with the task. See the introduction to Part II and Docs. 16 and 17.

580 There were probably at least 350 photographs; however, only 76 survived until today, beside some attached to personal documents; see: Tadeusz Epsztein, *Fotografie w Archiwum*

Later, we had descriptions, testimonies of Jewish life in the provinces, in Łódź and elsewhere. It was so difficult to read: how many lives we lost and how gruesome were the stories about life in the Łódź ghetto, the suffering of Jews in the provinces, the deportations, the gassing of the Jews in Chełmno reported by Grojnowski.[581] We were so broken by it! The next morning we could not work the whole day. (We were unaware that we would soon suffer the same fate). The events in Trawniki. The tragic fate of the Jews of Lublin.[582] How a community of 70 thousand Jews was annihilated over the course of a few days.

[7] And more and more stories, each one more heart-breaking than the next. The heroic resistance of the Jews in Nowogródek[583] and on Lubartowska Street in Lublin gave us some cheer.

We paid special attention to the illegal publications: Jewish, Polish, German and Russian.

In general, we constantly felt the pulse of the political struggle being waged, both underground and openly. The work was perhaps the most interesting and laudable in the Warsaw ghetto, aside from the emotional thrill which arose because the work was possibly the most dangerous and carried a threat of severe punishment. But it was worth it. As we worked, while burying the documents, we talked about how we could die in peace [8] having entrusted and secured our rich heritage. We imagined how, years later, people digging by chance would discover the treasure, or perhaps we, after the destruction of Hitler's Germany, would open the boxes, accompanied by the military orchestra under a com[munist] regime and, after printing copies of the documents, send the originals to Palestine, to our Borochov museum. Beautiful dreams, no? (If only they could come true.)

Ringelbluma, in: Vol. 36, *Uzupełnienia,* ed. Eleonora Bergman, Tadeusz Epsztein, Warszawa 2020, pp. 524–527.

581 Shloyme Wiener (Winer) (1911–1942), false name Jakub Grojnowski, the author of the first account about the Chełmno death camp, see: *The Last Stage,* Docs. 10–13.

582 The Lublin ghetto was established on 24 March 1941. The *Aktion* started on 16 March 1942.

583 In March 1942, the Gordonia newspapers in the Warsaw ghetto published information about a revolt of Jewish youth in the Nowogródek ghetto. Two hundred young people supposedly killed twelve German gendarmes. For the Zionists in the Warsaw ghetto, the story became an example to follow. In reality, there were no attempts at resistance in Nowogródek (Yehuda Bauer, "Nowogródek – The Story of a Shtetl", *Yad Vashem Studies* 2007, Vol. 2, p. 59; Maria Ferenc, Piotr Laskowski. "'Each Day the Ghetto Has to Find Consolation in Something': False News as Breaking News in the Warsaw Ghetto", *Radical History Review*, no 141, 2021).

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Another fine story is that of our collaboration with the partisan detachments (a Pan-Slavic organisation whose mission [9] was to sabotage and destroy the German front by subversion). Our work was minimal. What could we do as Jews in our ever-shrinking walls? However, being aware that we were not standing on the side lines waiting for the Messiah, but for when we would have to go into battle, we felt joy and enthusiasm at the news from the partisan groups in the regions of Lublin, Biała Podlaska and Kielce. We were delighted by the tremendous battle fought by the Serbs in Bosnia, by the classes on explosives and military exercises. Everyone was excited. Those who were admitted to the organisation were very happy. However, [. . .] not destined to end well. [. . .] [10] contact between the central committee and the Warsaw ghetto was broken off (apparently caused by a misstep on the part of Hashomer Hatzair).

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The [x][584] summer of 1941/42[585] was the darkest for the Warsaw ghetto. It began with arrests and shootings. A number of socialist activists died. Most of their arrests were the result of rivalries. What dirty deeds the Jewish informers and Gestapo people perpetrated! Each informed on the other and they all brought misery to the ghetto. That summer revealed a lot about the informers, schemers and [11] blackmailers who bled people dry. They were bloodsuckers on the backs of the poor, exhausted, embittered population.

As if the gendarmes and the Polish police who plundered the living and the dead did not contribute enough to our misfortune, our own *Ordnungsdienst* were also on our backs. They will be the subject of the vilest and most abject page in the history of the period. They plundered everything; nothing was sacred to them. The current couplet 'Money, money, money is the best thing' characterises them perfectly. They took money from smugglers and children who were begging on the other side, from bakers, [12] from shopkeepers for taking care of something. All cripples who had greased someone's palm could move about freely. *Szafa gra* everywhere. It is curious that if someone accused

584 [x] last.

585 As in the original. The author probably meant the spring of 1942.

a thief, the policeman would order the accuser to pay 100 zlotys for his arrest. If he didn't, the thief would pay more.

But that wasn't everything: the dirtiest episode concerned the rounding up of people for the labour camps, the most terrifying: work on the resettlement *Aktion*, to which I shall devote a few lines.

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Terror was growing and illegal activities alongside it . . . We were very active in our [13] underground work. We glimpsed liberation close by. We hurried to carry out a widespread recruitment campaign and ordered all our collaborators to prepare. I remember the enthusiastic reception given by the comrades . . . But we didn't notice the black cloud approaching. We did not pay attention to the constant shootings, and, in particular, we took no notice of the film '40 days in the ghetto' that the Germans had made.[586] We lived only for the future and disregarded the present. We did not organise or decide what action to take in a time of trouble; we did not anticipate it in Warsaw. We did not believe that in a community of 400 thousand, such extermination as had happened in other smaller towns, could be carried out, [14] but this is what happened . . .

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On Monday 20 July news suddenly circulated that 46 hostages had been arrested, for what reason we did not yet know. The next day everything became clear.

In the afternoon, all the refugee points were suddenly blockaded and everyone there sent to the *Transferstel[le]*.[587] The following day, posters appeared on the streets stating who was to be resettled and who not. Only then did the situation become clear, but not for everyone . . .

586 See Part I, entries for May 1942.

587 (German) Transfer Bureau, agency in charge of the traffic of goods entering and leaving the ghetto, located by the railway station. The *Umschlagplatz* came under its administration and the two became synonymous.

The leaders of the *Judenrat* were deluded. They convinced themselves that they would stay, [15] that they would escape deportation. They believed the assurances of the Germans that all Jews who were employed would remain.

Our masses were in revolt: not wanting to let themselves be led away like sheep, not wanting to allow the repetition of what had happened in Lublin.

Comrade Lichtensztejn's plan was judicious.[588] The plan was as follows: since we knew Hitler's tactics regarding the extermination of the Jews, and since we knew he would do us absolutely no favours and that we were nearing our end, we should die as heroes: we should set fire to the entire ghetto at night; the Jews should come out of all their hiding places, scale the walls [18][589] and attack the German gendarmes with knives and axes. Let them shoot us. We will know why. We will die as heroes. Our action will also surely incite our neighbours the Poles so that they might take advantage of the opportunity. We will then be recorded in history the same way as Nemirov.[590]

Our *Judenrat*, however, pretended not to understand. Meanwhile, the resettlement was in their hands, in the hands of the Jewish police. They betrayed us shamefully, they bear tremendous responsibility. History will have to hold them to account. No memorial will be erected to them.

[19] The Jewish police, commanded by one Józef Szeryński, a convert, and one Yosl Kapota (Ehrlich),[591] a pimp before the war and an informer and now a Gestapo man, behaved abominably towards the Jewish population. Acts of violence and robberies were daily occurrences. I will relate one incident that happened to me: there was a blockade of the courtyard where the kitchen in which I was working was situated located (the kitchens were the Party bases). During the blockade the police found a few outsiders whom we were trying to protect. One of the policemen then took away my papers and hit me to prevent me from seeing his number. He subsequently managed to disappear,

588 See ARG I 1450 (Ring. I/1190).

589 Pages 16 and 17 are blank.

590 Niemirów (Nemyriv, in the Vinnitsa region of Ukraine). A reference to the events of 10 June 1648, when during the Khmelnytsky Uprising, Jews intended to defend the local fortress, but as a result of deceptions were murdered by Cossacks. The anniversary of the slaughter was commemorated by Jews of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a day of strict fasting and mourning.

591 Józef Ehrlich (?–1943), Gestapo agent, see: K. Person, *Warsaw Ghetto Police*, pp. 19, 27–28, 122.

leaving me with [20] no identification when I had to pass a control. I only just managed to escape the order: *Na wóz*.[592] He returned after an hour and gave me back my papers. He also had the nerve to ask me for a loaf of bread for the favour! Yes! It was not for nothing that the SS liked the work of the Jewish *Ordnungsdienst* and promised to take them along to other towns to carry out the same dirty work.

It did not take long for the truth to be revealed. The SS[593] began to carry through the *Aktion*. Public officials no longer had any status. Later, the SS had no regard for anything. A Jew was simply *verfluchte*[594] and nothing more.

[21] It was not just the SS. This became obvious when the Jewish police dismissed all the kitchen staff and sent them to the *Umschlagplatz*.

Our leaders still pretended not to see what was going on . . . What cruel scenes took place when people were seized. Everyone wept, mothers for children, children for fathers. It was heart-breaking, blood curdling. People ran around the streets frightened out of their wits, their eyes bulging out of their heads, casting glances in all directions, their nerves close to breaking point and above all the hoarse, merciless shout, *Na wóz*.[595]

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On Friday 31 July, the *Aktion* took another form. In the early evening, following an order to evacuate Nowolipie Street and [22] while people were transporting their meagre belongings, gendarmes and SS men suddenly appeared, blocked off the street, and went into all the courtyards shouting: *Alles arunter!*[596] to the accompaniment of machine-gun 'music'. The petrified inhabitants came down. They were lined up, and irrespective of who was employed and who not, thousands of them, without exception, were led away. Some, however, managed to remain in their homes, and only then did they all see what was really happening, but it was too late! The hard-working masses were no longer there.

592 (Polish) On to the cart!

593 Throughout the text, the author uses the word *shturmistn* (stormtroopers), here rendered as SS or SS men.

594 (German) accursed.

595 See footnote 592, pt. 2.

596 (German, incorrect) Everybody downstairs!

In our own eyes we viewed ourselves as sheep. The *Aktion* grew more ferocious. The number of deportees rose from 6,000 per day to 10 and 15,000. [23] The evacuation cases repeated itself: an SS blockage followed by deportations of entire streets, shootings at every step of the way, but the worst thing was the pogrom on 1 August by the Ukrainian SS on Nowolipie Street, which had terrible results: entire streets emptied, innumerable people were dead. Here are the details of the pogrom at Nowolipie Street 23 which were related to me by a comrade, a CENTOS employee, who lived there but managed to escape.

Suddenly the SS men entered the courtyard and began to shoot in the windows, shouting: *Alles arunter*. They then searched the flats and attics and woe to anyone whom they found. Getting shot was the easiest way of dying: [24] they threw a few men out of the fourth or fifth floor windows with great ferocity and then shot at them, shot the sick in their beds and hacked off the hands and fingers of those who were with them. They took the covers off a woman who had just given birth and was lying in bed with her new-born and shot them both with a sadistic grin. The Jewish police continued to pay no attention and went on with their work of seizing people on other streets in order to satisfy the wolf. The worst thing was that at the last moment we were leaderless. They took away Zagan.[597] We were on our own.

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[25] However, the police also met their end yesterday, that is to say on Monday 2 August; when the inhabitants of Grzybowska Street were being deported, the families of the Jewish police were also taken. They walked away with bowed heads. They too saw their end coming, knowing full well that they would not be among those who remained. The mood on the street is dark. Resignation and despair reign. People present themselves voluntarily at the *Umschlagplatz* (they are given 3 loaves of bread and a kilo of jam).

And a moment ago, news came in of Jews who have arrived from Brest and Białystok, but the general opinion is one of scepticism about this.

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597 Shakhne Zagan.

[26] [x][598]

[27] My Will

3 August 1942 I am writing my will during the time of the deportation of Warsaw's Jews. This has been going on without interruption since 20 July.[599] I am writing at a time when no one can put their nose outside the door. People are not safe inside either. It is the 14th day of this cruel process. We have lost virtually all contact with our comrades. Everyone has to rely on themselves, to save themselves as best they can. Three of us are left: Comrade Lichtensztejn, Grzywacz and myself. We decided to write our wills, to collect a little material about the deportation and to bury it. We must hurry because we are not sure how much time we have. Yesterday we worked on this [28] until late into the night.

My biography

Dovid Graber. Born on 22 May 1923. Father – an organised labourer.[600] Mother – an unsuccessful artist, a very refined, clever woman. In general, life at home has been extremely happy, even until now. My parents have had no serious arguments, even during the hardest moments.

I grew up in a warm, relaxed environment. From the ages of 7 to 10 I went to heder. From the age of 10 I went to the Borochov school. I was a good learner, one of the top students, especially in mathematics, geography and physics. I also had good marks in Yiddish literature. I belonged to the Yungbor[601] from the age of 11 as well. During the split in the Po'ale Tsiyon,[602] [29] I belonged to the opposition. Twice expelled from school because of sanctions. After the party merged,[603] I left Po'ale Tsiyon and joined the Comintern, which gave me much satisfaction. There was no one in my unit who could eclipse me politically; I was able to lead everyone by the nose in that domain.

After finishing the Borochov School, I went to work in a factory as a metal lathe operator whilst attending professional evening classes. At the beginning

598 [x] I'm bidding farewell. I'm bidding farewell to the world!

599 In fact, from 22 July.

600 That is, belonging to a trade union.

601 Acronym for Borochov Youth, a children organisation of the socialist-Zionist party Yugnt (Youth).

602 In the mid-1930s.

603 In 1937.

of the war, I had completed 2 years of professional evening instruction. Under the Hitler regime, I worked in the erstwhile Borochov School kitchen. In the second year of the war, I rejoined the Po'ale Tsiyon and began to be active there. In time I became an instructor.

During this period, I was not separated from my family.

[30] I don't want any thanks. It will be enough for me that future generations remember our times, and that our pain and suffering not be forgotten in a liberated, socialist world. And also that in this period of decline, there were people found who had the courage to do such work. We did not stay up entire nights for thanks. With what enthusiasm Grzywacz and I, supervised and helped by comrade Lichtensztejn, dug the graves for the boxes! With what joy we received each new document!

We were aware of our responsibility. We did not shy away from any risk. We realised that we were making history and that this was more important [31] than individual lives.

The work was very interesting. Secrecy was of uppermost importance. Grzywacz and I knew only Lichtensztejn and comrade Wasser, but they were in contact with others. Only comrades Wasser, Lichtensztejn and the two of us knew where the treasure was buried. We would have let our limbs be cut off rather than give away the secret.

I can say with confidence that our work was the basis of and impetus for our existence at that time. (The work of the party suffered many crises, interruptions and simple neglect.) Our work did not stop for a single minute. In precisely the most difficult moments we worked even more intensively. What we were unable to shout out to the world we buried in the earth.

[32] I do not want any thanks.

It is not for thanks that I have given my life and my energy.

I would have liked to live to see the moment when the great treasure could be unearthed, and the truth shouted out so that the world might know everything and those who did not live through it might rejoice. Then we would feel like veterans with medals on our chests. We would have been the fathers, the teachers of the future. We would have been the grandfathers as in Mickiewicz,[604] the poet, who tells our children and grandchildren the story of victories and defeats, of living and dying. How intently they all would have [listened].

604 Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), Polish's greatest romantic poet.

We will not live to see it, however, and it is for this reason that I am writing my will. May the treasure fall into good hands, survive into better times. May it give an alert to the world about what happened [33] in the 20th century.

It is everyone's wish that, after publication, it occupy a special place in the Borochov Museum in a liberated Soviet Palestine. Then we will be able to rest peacefully, our spirit free.

Now we can die in peace . . . We have fulfilled our mission . . . May history bear witness to us.

Dovid Graber.
19 years of age.

—

A neighbouring street is blockaded. We are all agitated. Our mood is tense. We are preparing for the worst. We are all in a hurry. We will probably bury the last things soon. Comrade Lichtensztejn is nervous. Grzywacz is a little afraid. I am indifferent. I have a subconscious feeling that I shall escape all this misery.

Good day. As long as we manage to bury the material. Yes, even at this time, we did not forget it. We worked until the last minute.

Monday, 3 August, 4 p.m.

[34]
In the day camp of our kitchen. Year 1941. Summer in the courtyard of a former barracks, Zamenhofa Street 19. Grzywacz and I water the flowers.

[under the removed top photograph] Grzywacz. Graber.

Summer 1941 with my acquaintances on Leszno Street. Graber Dovid.

[under the removed bottom photograph] Zośka Dorn, a refugee from Lipno.

ARG I 415 (Ring. I/423)
Description: original, handwritten, notebook, Yiddish, 155×200 mm, 19 sheets, 34 pages. On p. [34] traces of two removed photographs.
Published: *Selected Documents*, pp. 59–67 (fragment).

17 *July–August 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Nahum Grzywacz, daily notes from 20 July to 3 August 1942, written in the Borochov school; autobiography and the last will*

[cover] Notebook written by Nahum Grzywacz

[1] Nahum Grzywacz, born on 28 October 1924
On Monday, 20 July 1942, the German authorities arrested certain members of the *Judenrat* in Warsaw, including leaders of all the social institutions (Jewish Social Self-Help), (TOZ), (Provisioning Agency of the Jewish residential district). After a few minutes, the director of the Jewish Social Self-Help (ŻSS), Dr Wielikowski, was set free. The mood in the ghetto was very tense.

21 July 1942 From early morning the mood was not [. . .]. Groups of people soon arrived at the gates to the courtyards and waited . . . Every Jewish policeman who walked along the street was assailed by a large number of people. After a few minutes, the Jewish police, under the command of Lejkin, blocked the refugee points and packed up the refugees like herrings into wagons for the *platz*.[605]

[1a] The atmosphere was terrible. Mothers and fathers leaving their small children in the morning to earn something to feed them, were taken away without them, and children in the street were taken away without their parents. The sound of howling and weeping could be heard beyond the ghetto walls. After a few hours, notices appeared on the streets to the effect that all Jews were to be resettled in the east. Those exempt from the resettlement order were those who produced goods for the Germans (in the shops) and worked for social institutions, etc. The notices were signed by the *Judenrat* in Warsaw.

22 July 1942 Resettlement proceeded at a rapid pace. Up to 7,000 people a day.

We saw people with their 15 kilos of luggage crying and wailing as they departed . . . 'Tell my mother I am leaving and I don't know where . . .'

605 I.e. *Umschlagplatz*.

[2] Around 5 in the evening, the quota was filled. We had already heard the first bits of news that all the sick, the aged, and children who were already half dead had been shot on the *platz*. The first transport left in sealed goods wagons . . .

23 July 1942 From early morning on, groups of Jewish policemen went from street to street, from courtyard to courtyard, rounding up men packed like herring and dragged them away like rags . . . The laments and screams were appalling.

You could already see patrols of gendarmes[606] and groups of SS men. People were running and screaming. But to whom . . .

On the same day at 8.30 p.m., the chairman of the *Judenrat* Czerniaków poisoned himself. The ghetto was astir. People were waiting for news. The *Aktion* was commanded by Szeryński. He was a colonel in the Jewish police and its former head. He was imprisoned for various crimes and released to carry out the resettlement. (A convert.)

[2a]

24 July 1942 Around 6 a.m., news of Czerniaków's heroic death resounded throughout the ghetto. Therefore, today's quota was increased to 10,000, a punishment for Czerniaków's death. The *Judenrat* met in extraordinary session on the night of 23 to 24 July.

The new Chairman is Lichtenbojm.

Vice-Chairman is Sztolcman.

Vice-Chairman is Wielikowski.

People are seized even if they have a work permit. The *Transferstelle* was black with people. Thousands of people shouted, 'I work in a shop, at Schultz's or Többens's.' People are being shot. Carts loaded with the dead are going to the cemetery.

This is bad. We all stand around with our things packed and wait . . . Off we go . . . The police go to work and fall upon the crowd. They kill, they beat. People scream and cry. *Na wóz*.[607] A number of people hide in their workplaces, but they are caught. [3] People are shouting, 'Where are my children? Tell them

606 Schupo (*Schutzpolizei*), German police force, part of the order police (*Ordungspolizei*).

607 See footnote 592, pt. 2.

I am leaving. . . .' The Jewish police are already taking money (bribes) from whomever they can, allowing them stay in their homes. The shops are besieged by thousands of people. People scream, 'I have a machine. I have a machine.' People are running; the gendarmerie hunts them down with force and violence.

25 July 1942 People are being rounded up, and they also volunteer, because hunger is so rampant: bread costs 55 zlotys.

The Jewish *gmina* set up an auxiliary police force. Blajman, the baker's,[608] is baking bread and sending it to the people to be resettled at the Plac Przeładunkowy.[609] People divide up the bread. They make deals: whoever gives more, gets more bread. It is not good. We are waiting for. . . . People are shouting, 'He's taking stuff. Come here! Go there!' People are going crazy. Every day the same thing. I, meanwhile, am amongst the fortunate ones because I am still here, but who knows.

[3a] While I am writing this note, I am sitting at work on 30 July 1942 at 6 in the evening. I am fully dressed and have something to eat . . . I see people running. I go down to the street immediately and learn that Smocza Street from Dzielna to Gęsia has been blocked by the gendarmerie. My parents live at Pawia Street 41. I quickly ask what is happening, and the answer is that it is blocked. I don't know what has happened to my parents. I am waiting to be able to go and find out. I hear a sudden commotion. People are on the move. I am already in the courtyard. It was only fear. Now I am inside the building, and I'm going to see what has happened to my parents. I do not know what will become of me, whether I shall be able to recount what happened to me.

Remember! My name is Nahum Grzywacz.

30 July 1942.

[1]

Saturday, 1 August 1942 On Nowolipie Street.

From early morning our mood has been very sombre. People ran from one street to another, and they had no idea where they were running.

608 Daniel Blajman (?–1942), owner of the largest mechanised bakery in the Warsaw ghetto, chairman of the Bakers' Association. He funded meals for the poorest ghetto prisoners out of his own pocket.

609 (Polish) Reloading Square, that is, the *Umschlagplatz*.

On Friday, 31 July 1942 around 5 p.m., an order was issued that everyone who was not employed by Schultz, at Nowolipie Street 44, must abandon their homes. And where were they to go? They were soon surrounded and guarded by large groups of gendarmes (*Sonderdienst*),[610] *junaks* and Ukrainians. Together with the Jewish police, [2] they went from courtyard to courtyard and ordered the janitors to shout out to the tenants to come down from their flats, because anyone found later would be shot on the spot (in their rooms).

A big commotion then ensued. People ran downstairs, people ran to hide, but after a few minutes, thousands of people had assembled, all with permits and documents from official institutions, the *gmina*, etc. They all were made to set off for the [3] *Umschlagplatz*, from where they are supposed to leave . . . and just as they had done until now, they shot all the elderly and sick there . . .

On Saturday morning, about a quarter of those who had remained began to move about. Around 2 p.m. the murderers (bloodthirsty animals) returned and ordered everyone down. Having seen yesterday the fate of their wives and children, fathers and mothers, the elderly and infirm, they did not come down but set about hiding themselves. After a few minutes, the Ukrainians began to look for people, with terrible consequences.

[4] A woman who had just given birth was lying in bed with her baby at Nowolipie Street 23. She was shot with her child without a word. On the fourth floor of the same courtyard, they chopped off a man's fingers and threw him out of the fourth-floor window. At Nowolipie Street 30, they went into a flat and demanded gold and diamonds. The owner handed them over, after which he was shot along with his wife. At Nowolipie Street 36 a man lay with his leg in plaster, unable to walk. He had been run over by a German car. In the same flat there was an old man [5] who, were he to be taken, would be shot on the *platz*, so he said to the injured man: 'I want to die in my own home and be buried in the Warsaw Jewish cemetery.' For 2 weeks he had carried a little flask of poison in his pocket.

At that moment a Ukrainian came in looking for gold, but the owner didn't have any. The old man took out the flask and tried to drink from it. A shot rang out! He lay in a pool of blood with the flask next to him. After a while, another shot, aimed at the injured man. By chance it didn't kill him.

610 (German) special service; police formed by Hans Frank, operating only within the General Government.

The injured man pretended to be dead, fell off the bed, turned his head away and lay in the blood.

[6] They left and continued from flat to flat, from cellar to attic, shooting 100 people from one courtyard, where Schultz's workshop is situated, at Nowolipie Street 44. He wanted his workers to live on site, resulting in the death of thousands of people. The streets were closed off by the Germans and SS men. Streets dead, people shot.

After two or three-hours' work, they led a group of people to the *platz*. Mothers set off after seeing their husbands and children lying dead. [7] Once the large group of people had been led away to the *platz*, the street was cordoned off again by the Jewish police. Hundreds of people witnessed the fate of their friends and relatives from the courtyard that connected Nowolipki Street 29 to Nowolipie Street 36.

A terrible scene unfolded as Pinkert's cart went from courtyard to courtyard collecting the dead. Large quantities of blood ran out through the cracks in the planks of his cart. Homes, stairs, courtyards and streets were all stained with blood. When a woman went to the courtyard where she lived, [8] she saw her husband, his leg in plaster, standing in the courtyard with a head wound. There was no one else in the courtyard at that point. She asked him what had happened. He was completely unable to answer, and when she went up to her flat, she met with a horrific sight: all the bedclothes red with blood, a river of blood on the floor, the skull of a man, and next to him, a small flask. She recalled her father and realised that this was his fate. [9] He had already been taken away. The shooting and removal of the body must have been carried out in a flash. She only managed afterwards to see the skull and the little flask. Her husband had escaped death through chance and quick thinking. She bandaged him up and had to move to Smocza Street 1. This was what two or three hours on one street – Nowolipie – looked like.

The German methods did not permit their workers to go to another street. They lived where they worked. Workers had to live on 100 grams of bread a day and some soup. What about his wife and children? [10] The same fate awaits us all.

2 August 1942

In the morning, shocked from the events of yesterday, people do not know what world they are living in. Nowolipki Street is blocked from Smocza to Karmelicka Streets but, fortuitously, only by Jewish

policemen. They examine the street in detail, seize people and lead them away to the *platz*.

The workers at Children's Kitchen No. 132 at Nowolipki Street 22[611] were taken away while they were working. News reaches us that on Grzybowska Street, from Gnojna to Waliców Streets, there are the same birds of prey as on Nowolipie Street yesterday, and they eat a few people for a midday meal and drink a little blood.

[11] In the afternoon the streets empty out. I wait for a minute on the balcony, and I see a group of people being led away. The group grows larger and larger. I am in the middle of counting when fear of standing there grips me, lest the same thing happen as did on Leszno Street, when someone was shot for standing on the balcony.

The final walkers passed by. A thousand rows with 3 people to a row makes approximately 3,000 people. I[612] see nurses from the dormitories. After them come 17 wagons with people [packed in like] (herrings). About 4,000 people set off from Grzybowska Street. [12] The procession is followed by one of Pinkert's carts with the first corpses. I[613] still have no idea what went on there, because it is already late . . . This is the method of the proprietors of the shops who, at the expense of thousands of families murdered and shot, instal their workers around the factory.

I am in the middle of writing when a terrible volley of shots breaks out on the street. There is nothing to be seen from the balcony. But of one thing I am proud: that in the most gruesome of days, I put my head on the line. [13] I was one of those (grave diggers) who buried the treasure detailing the torments suffered by the Jewish people in the Hitler's *gubernia*. In the days when dozens of people were shot for a variety of crimes, I[614] buried and hid the material in question so that you might know of the torture and murders perpetrated by Hitler's tyranny.

In the last few minutes I have learned that more than 20 men were shot by the Ukrainians in a horrifying manner at Grzybowska Street 11. I don't have any details yet, because this ended at 8 p.m. The next morning, [14] that

611 It was one of the kitchens run by CENTOS.

612 Changed from: we have.

613 Changed from: we have.

614 Changed from: we have.

is to say, 3 August 1942, from early in the morning the Jewish police blocked Gęsia and Zamenhofa Streets. At Gęsia Street [6/]8 there is a young people's dormitory.[615] One of the Jewish policemen shouted at them to come down, but they refused. So the policeman made a fuss, shouting, 'Can our wives and children come down and leave?' That was the result of the promise (made by Szeryński) that their wives, children and parents would be safe and avoid deportation. We saw on Grzybowska Street that [15] employees were forced either by the police or by colleagues to hand over their families.

The night of 2 to 3 August was extremely dark. Shots from automatic rifles and hand machine guns echoed from 10 in the evening until dawn. It seems that the SS went on a spree with another nice piece of work on Sunday. The SS staff office was located at Żelazna Street 103.[616]

We did not see a single Ukrainian in the ghetto from early morning, only Jewish police, there without the same ardour as on the first days of the deportation.

[16] The only one to show the same zeal was the convert Szeryński, who spurred on his curs to bite. A car drives down Karmelicka Street, where two policemen are walking along without biting anyone. Lejkin (the deputy of the Commandant of the Jewish Police) looks out of the car and shouts: *Wy cholery ja was nauczę wy będziecie się gramolić po ulicy ja wam pokażę*.[617] He takes his club in hand, hits them both over the shoulders, and drives on.

While I'm sitting and writing this, the streets around me are blocked. [17] We hear shots, we don't know from where. There is a constant flow of people taken away on carts. Laments have ceased. They are taking people with and without work permits.

The headquarters of the company Többens is located at Prosta Street 14. Többens follows Schultz's in terms of requisitioning a great many houses,

615 See: *Children. Clandestine Education in the Warsaw Ghetto,* ed. Ruta Sakowska, Warsaw 2021, Doc. 5.

616 In the years 1942–1943, the tenement house at Żelazna Street 103 served as a SS command headquarters (SD-Befehlstelle); it organised the *Grossaktion* in 1942. In the basement of the building was a prison for Jews captured outside the ghetto, and executions were carried out in the yard. The building survived the war.

617 (Polish, in Latin characters) You bastards, I'll teach you, you're going to crawl in the street, I'll show you.

even streets, for their people. I already know well what follows. Hundreds of people will be evacuated, hundreds will die on those streets, thousands will be deported . . . The threat hangs over the entire Jewish ghetto. Yesterday a large number were deported, among whom was [18] Professor Bałaban, a member of the Warsaw *Judenrat*. He was sent away as well. No one removed him . . .[618]

One day, when the convert Szeryński met comrade Zagan on Karmelicka Street, he shouted, *Na wóz*![619] and Zagan was forced to climb onto it. Once Szeryński had left, someone shouted, 'Comrade Zagan, if you would, please, get down off the wagon, because as you well know . . .' Two days later, when Nowolipie Street was blockaded, comrade Zagan was taken away along with his family and even after the intervention [19] they were still not released. Why not? Because they had sent a 'cat to fetch the butter', i.e., they sent a man who hates workers! In this way the Jewish *gmina* deals with those who are not subject to deportation.

I have a request for whoever finds this: please let my brother in Soviet Russia know that I and my family are alive, that is, up to 3 August 1942. I have no idea what will happen afterwards, because at any minute I can be . . .

[20] My will

I am writing my last will during the time I've described here for you. I sit and wait. We have lost contact with all of our comrades. Each person's life is in his own hands, because chaos reigns in the Jewish ghetto. A tree has been felled: we have been cut off from our work in its early years. Comrade Lichtensztejn, Graber and I decided that at this point in time we should describe the current moment, and so we have begun. Last night we worked at it until late, because we didn't know [21] whether we would live another day. I finished writing this on 3 August 1942, at 1:40 a.m. We have no personal desire to live, but rather to alert the world.

A brief biography

I was born in Warsaw on 28 October 1924 at Gęsia Street 87. A short time later the house collapsed, and we were out on the street. After some time we moved

618 Meir Bałaban; he died on 26 December 1942.

619 Here in Latin characters.

to Pawia Street 41/50, where I have lived until now. When I was 5 years old [22] I went to heder at Smocza Street 22. I remained there until I was 7. After that I was a student at the *gmina* school at Nowolipki Street 68.[620] 4 years later, I went to another school on the same street at No. 76. After 6 years there, material conditions did not allow me to continue my education. I worked in a tailors' workshop and at a certain point went to work at a print shop, where I remained until the war broke out.

When I was 9, I had joined [23] the Yungbor[621] and remained there until the war broke out. At that point, I began to meet with my comrades and to frequent a club which had set up a children's kitchen. I managed to make a contact and in 1939 started work in the kitchen.

In 1940 a group of us formed a club; I was one of the founders. Some time later the organisational leadership [24] [. . .] the club. [. . .] I was called upon to take a very active part in the work. I threw myself into it with enthusiasm. I was asked to help print the illegal newspaper *Yugnt-ruf*.[622] I was among the eldest members of the organisation and a member of its military group. I also dug a burial place in which to hide the treasure which you are about to read. C[omrade] Lichtensztejn, D. Graber and I knew the details. We were in contact until the last minute and, having written this notebook, hid it with care.
Respectfully
Nahum Grzywacz
3 August 1942

[inside the back cover]

In the year 1941, in the summer at a day camp, me with my [. . .] at work and eating; children are playing, directors [under the removed top photograph] Grzywacz, Graber.

620 See footnote 570, pt. 2.

621 See footnotes 601, pt. 2.

622 (Yiddish) Call to the Young, underground paper of Left Po'ale Tsiyon published from January 1941 to April 1942; see ARG I 1309 (Ring. I/684).

At a performance 'All windows to the sun' we laugh heartily with a group of children; the one with the envelope in hand is me. Nahum Grzywacz. [bottom photograph removed]

ARG I 416 (Ring. I/1018; 1337)
Description: original, handwritten, notebook, ink, Yiddish, 144×202 mm, 17 sheets, 32 pages.

18

August–September 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Anna [Grasberg],[623] diary, from 25 August to 4 September 1942; two letters, of 31 August and 6 September 1942 to Maria (surname and location unknown)

[3][624] I begin this on 27 August, as it is from this day on that I'm supposedly on leave. The departure of Rika[625] created a sudden hollowness and left me with a lot of free time on my hands. When we had stood in front of the factory gate that morning, we'd learned with horror that from that day on, women and children would no longer be admitted inside. It was a concession to the commissioner, but a concession that was a source of great torment for both women and children, condemned to their apartments and therefore exposed to the danger of being taken away.

623 Anna Grasberg (1906–1942?) was a sociologist, she worked at the Insitute for Social Economy in Warsaw. According to Wasser she had a double surname, Grasberg-Górna, but her husband's name was Norbert Grasberg (he was deported from Toulouse to Drancy and then murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau), and her maiden name was Minkowska. Her daughter, Irena Milewska (b. 1938 as Erika Grasberg), survived the war and lived in France. She had published a memoir entitled [*En]quête de famille*, Paris 2020.

624 The first two sheets (four pages) of the document are shorthand records of diary entries from 25 August – 4 September 1942, which could not be deciphered, but a few isolated words can be read: [1] Schultz, AHG, *przygnębieni* [depressed], *czyszczeniu* [cleaning]; [2] Wentland, Hallmann, Schultz, Durchkämp . . . ; [3] AHG, Miller; [4] OBW, Hallmann, Schilling.

625 Erika, the author's daughter. See food coupon issued to Erika Grasberg, ARG II 81.

Wanting to save myself at all costs, I worked on cleaning the courtyard at Miła Street 67. A poor, squalid tenement house, junk hurriedly thrown out of the windows into the courtyard spoke volumes about the material status of the inhabitants. Broken pots, dirty, duvets ridden with holes, lots of worn-out prayer books. Not a single secular book, not a single proof of any kind of prosperity. I collected rubbish, loaded it into baskets, and threw the whole lot onto a burning pile in the street. The dirt was so great that after returning, while washing myself, I would pick out fleas even [?] from my hair. The cleaning women from my unit and the type of work affected and depressed me so much that I decided to find another job, at any cost.

28 August

I managed to do it. Together with Edzia, a nice, honest girl, we were assigned to a unit working at an agricultural facility in the cemetery. The OBW factory runs a vegetable farm there, both for personal use and for sale. Mainly *halutzim* and *halutzot* work there, but more than a dozen additional people are selected each day to help pick tomatoes. At 7.15 [a.m.] a column of approximately 50–60 people set off down Gęsia Street, to the cemetery. At the street's end, on Okopowa Street, there is a guard post at the gate.

[3a] After a preliminary conversation between the group leader Fröhlich [?] and the sergeant, a gendarme starts his hike along the trenches in order to examine people on the move. *Habt ihr was verstecktes mit*?[626] The answer is always negative. Sometimes a meticulous search begins. They look inside bras, under skirts, in armbands, in kerchiefs [. . .]. The goal is clear. Most of those working in the cemetery smuggle outside items which are incomparably pricier here.

A peculiar outpost. Because of those 40–60 people [. . .] dozens of Poles sneak into the cemetery, in order to provide food (bread rolls, butter, eggs, sausage, fruit, etc.).

Immediately, an army of peddlers who buy everything we bring – so all types of underwear, clothes, rags, etc. They pay better than in the ghetto, yet still miserably; the difference is large, [. . .].

In the ghetto you can get maximum of 25 zlotys for a pair of good underpants. 15 for pillowcases, 25–30 for a tablecloth. At the cemetery – 40, 30–40, 50–75. The same discrepancy is seen in clothing prices.

626 (German, incorrect) Have you hidden anything?

Arriving at the cemetery means relieving tension, feeling sudden relief, a few hours of calm, carelessness – if at all conceivable, of good air, light work and [. . .]. This in particular is the main topic of the talks, it occupies the minds. Here breakfast is eaten just like before the war. We order breakfast, as it is the main meal. A bread roll of pre-war whiteness, tasted with butter and sausage, milk, cheese, bacon, ham, sour cream – all this is brought in huge amounts, to satisfy the greedy hands and stomachs of Jews who long for a proper meal.

[4] It is funny to look at how seriously those people, who just a minute ago had left the tragic ghetto conditions, treat the problem of the tucker, and how irritated they are that the delivery of rolls is delayed, etc.[627]

The difference in prices is very significant, for bread – 16 versus 26, or currently 70–60–50–40 etc., while in the most hectic period it reaches 1 – 15/8 [?].

For rolls it is 7–30; for butter 60–250, fatback – *ditto*, eggs 3.30–7; milk 20–40; sausage 100–200; potatoes 5–11 [. . .]; therefore people, in addition to having eaten on the spot, take very large amounts back with them in order to at least cover the expense by smuggling their own consumption costs.

Breakfast hours are 8 to 10–10.30. In the meantime, the manager called out time and again: "Girls, finish it up! Time to work!" Then, after the negotiations are completed, and money and stuff exchange owners, you grab a watering can and a crate, and again the column of people sets off to the former Skra sporting club field in order to collect tomatoes. The carefree task of picking up heavy fruit, lifting branches and looking for ripe fruit, seems almost grotesque.

In the rays of the August sun, deliberate search movements calm the nerves. At the cemetery, except for street 5[628] – the smuggling nest – there is an actual grave silence. No sign of anybody, no people moving. Gravestones stand solemn and serious, and graves are overgrown with lush plants, unkempt for weeks.

[4a] The work takes up between 2 and 4 hours, then it's knock-off. Rest begins, waiting for meals and local attractions: conversations about blockades, listening to stories about [. . .], about tragedies experienced, etc.

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627 [x] At the same time [. . .] beneath it they start to eat [. . .], imported things [. . .]

628 The cemetery at Okopowa Street is divided by lanes (streets) in the east-west direction, numbered 1 to 11.

In the meantime, we are chasing after traders or suppliers of whatever is smuggled in, i.e. potatoes, bread, sweets, etc., conversations . . . And then at 5–6 the return journey begins, with its inherent naive fear that they will find out, that they will find those cuts of fat we are forbidden to carry, or that one cigarette too many, etc.

In general, the guard posts are usually very indulgent and only in some cases do they search us scrupulously and harass. Returning to the city, counting people like sheep, crossing to the Jewish quarter and selling goods we brought back.

. . . unforgettable conversations with peddlers: 'That a gendarme (instead of cholera) get me, if it's another way round'. Being on familiar terms with each other, unprecedented, no offensive confidentiality, due to the fact that the smuggling trade is usually carried out by the very worst individuals, various Anteks and Jędreks [Poles] living in the Wisła land [Poland].

However, they've already learned a thing or two. They demand the best Czech silk lingerie, wool from Bielsko or England. Practical, clean, new things.

Despite all that, their attitude is rather loyal; they have no desire to cheat us, but rather have the desire for mutually effective cooperation.

[5] Dear Mrs Maria,[629]

It is hard for me to describe how worrisome I find the news about Rika's health and the problems you are facing.

It is a pity that working the land has prevented me from talking to you (I get back after 7), but I think that from Wednesday or Thursday I will be again [. . .] and I would be very grateful to receive a message from you.

As for the child's health, it is difficult to diagnose from afar. [Living] conditions can explain any infirmities. However, since from the time she was 14 months old Rika had severe peculiar reactions to a lot of things, and more recently it has been impossible for her to avoid eating improperly, I suppose it was a rather temporary reaction.

Her longing, however very sad, is explainable. But there this is impossible to prevent, because most children are gone.

629 The addressee was probably a Polish acquaintance, who took care of Górna's daughter on the 'Aryan' side.

Your troubles resulting from this are a source of ongoing concern for me. Did you have an opportunity to see any of the people we were talking about recently? In the [. . .] apartment, among the books that I would like to sell (if possible), there is an antique pendulum clock, so maybe this would make it easier for you to endure these new difficulties. M[s.] Kinast surely will do her best to sell it herself. She always liked Rika and the kids liked her too.

Other than that, nothing has changed. Mama can manage, but under very harsh conditions. Mine are also harsh. So be it.

As for Irka, you may rest easy. She has a job and she manages. She just feels the acute lack of money and asks again if it would be possible to send her some.

I am sending you and your child all the warmth and tenderness that I can afford, and I am asking you for a response, if possible.

Ania

31 August [19]42

[6] Dear Mrs Maria,

I am beyond happy that finally I have at least this opportunity to be in touch with you.

You understand how eager I am to speak or to exchange just a few words with you, to learn how you and the child are doing, where the little one is at the moment, if she still suffers from nettle-rash, which is the result of improper nutrition, and from the nostalgia and longing you mentioned during the telephone conversation you conducted, unfortunately, when I was absent.

Only now can I see fully how much Rika's presence filled my life. Nevertheless, I am happy that she is in the countryside, as the chance of her surviving in the city was almost none.

I have a lot of questions to ask, but due to the lack of time and patience I will ask only a few: what is your material situation; how are our friends, the Siennicki, Hulanicka, Kinast families? [I'm] working all day long, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and I am still thinking about you and I cannot, of course, find peace nor any answer to those questions. I am sorry that you are in such great trouble, but believe me, I could not act in any other way.

As for us, there's nothing new. The problem of my mother-in-law ceased to exist on 2 September. It pains me a lot because I was still hoping that I could save her. Now I try to make Mama as safe as possible, but looking

at things realistically, I have very little hope. I would like Rika, Mama and me to be together, somewhere in the countryside, where I could do any job, even the most arduous. Do you know anything about such positions? Possibilities? I know they are there, and that there are a lot of them. But I have no idea how to find one, especially for all three of us.

There are so many estates, peasant farms, and country inns! Couldn't we somehow get to such a place? Obviously, a larger estate would be ideal and more reliable, but that is a secondary matter. What's important is that it would probably be our only chance of survival.

Dear Mrs Maria! I know that I have burdened you with too much already and that I should not burden you further with any more matters. But, as I have already pointed out, our conditions explain so much. And the desire to live and survive – explains even more! I have no doubt that you will be able to properly understand this matter with your profound mind. The matter is very urgent; you can't even imagine how urgent it is. My job is rather impermanent; anyway, it is very unstable. Mama doesn't have a job at all, so she doesn't really have a ticket for life.[630] We have nothing to lose. Could you or one of your relatives help me, or rather – us? Because what will become of a child left without a mother at such a young age? And I would still like to live a little longer.

Please, forgive me for this letter and this new request. At the moment, you are our only chance so I will await your response in fear and trepidation. [7] The deliverer of this letter and package is apparently a very decent boy. Therefore, regardless of the enormous costs, I decided to send both. I would ask you to kindly confirm receipt of items according to the list attached,[631] and also to write something regarding the matter that is of utmost importance to us.

Kind regards and most cordial kisses to you, and to Rika – all the tenderness that I can offer.

Ania

6 September [19]42

ARG II 245 (Ring. II/209)
Description: daily notes: original; letters: duplicate or draft, handwritten, ink, Polish, part of the diary in shorthand notation, 159×198 mm, 8 sheets, 13 pages.

630 The so-called life numbers.

631 The attachment is not preserved.

19 *After 2 September 1942, Warsaw ghetto. [Leyzor Czarnobroda?], memories and reflections of the Grossaktion*

[*28 August 1942*] [1] I know that what I write will by no means create a full picture of this monstrosity, unprecedented in the history of mankind. It is almost impossible to convey the suffering and torment of a crucified nation dripping with the blood of hundreds of thousands who have been murdered. It's so difficult for me to collect my memories! A hideous slaughter is already underway for the sixth week. Today is 28 August. It started on 22 July. Why aren't we crying? Why don't we rip off our robes? We are about to face the same cruel fate as our families, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers gassed and murdered in torture chambers. Yet we cannot cry, we cannot squeeze a single tear from our eyes!

A human being can cry!

One cries in front of someone.

We are not people anymore!

We are pain, torment; we are bloody shadows of the murdered, loved ones and friends.

I would open my veins if I could, soak a pen in my own blood, and write these words, because the pages of our history, the history of pogroms and slaughter, drip with blood.

But here is the end, the limit. Maybe the fact of whether there will be Jews in Europe or not is not important from the perspective of history. But a civilisation of tens of centuries passed the verdict on itself, all its ideals, lofty phrases in the name of which humanity fought and died, vanish and shrink in the face of our incredible suffering.

We do not know justice.

We do not know truth.

We do not know pity.

The cursed enemy ripped all feelings from our chests.

Crazed with anguish we watched as our families were taken away. They stretched out their arms to us, [1a] begged and cursed, asked to be killed with us, to die together so that our home would become our tomb. We were torn apart.

The executioners promised us a few more days of life, a few more days of torment before death – at the price of our cursed slave work.

I'm writing this in a factory, hidden somewhere in a corner, in the only place where we are supposedly allowed to stay, where the torturers want to squeeze out of us whatever strength remains, out of us – people who have already died. A bloody, cruel joke by our sophisticated inquisitors.

Until recently, I had a morsel of faith in the better part of humanity. Until recently, I held a picture of a better tomorrow in my heart.

I tried to comfort myself and others.

I tried to talk myself into falsehood and lies. Because falsehood and lies are all that we have left beside torment and suffering.

Because falsehood and lies are everything that is left which is not meanness and disgrace of the strong, their insatiable thirst for the blood of their victims. Because falsehood and lies are all that we prayed for, what we wanted, what we believed, our illusions and dreams.

I don't believe in god, but if you're there, god, be damned! If you are there – be our god of revenge.

Because we are left with nothing but revenge.

Revenge – is all our thoughts, dreams, nourishment, our only desire and purpose.

Can we love – when the faces of our loved ones bend over us at the last moment before death, [2] at the last moment before the execution of the sentence?

Father, do you feel your child's arms growing cold inside yours, do you see the last flash of life in his eyes?

Mother, do you hear the last comforting word, the last word of your hope, the last moan of your body, of your only thought and care, of your dream of Immortality, of your only, true, sincere Love – can you see, as I, lonely, away from your breast, writhe in the convulsion of a monstrous death, and with the last breath of life your child utters the last word, the last word with which it bids farewell to this nightmarish world, and at the same time the first with which it greeted him: "Mama!"

Orphan, if you save yourself by accident, if you cunningly break away from the hangman's claws – burst your breast wide open, tear your heart out, soak it in your parents' blood. And learn to hate.

For to hate the world which brought humiliation, which dishonoured a human being, stained his sanctity, slaughtered and quartered women and children, forced mothers and fathers to watch their children being tormented to death, and which killed fathers and mothers in front of their children. To hate such a world – it should be your religion, your truth, the whole of you.

I don't know if I will survive.

Most likely this is a voice from beyond the grave.

The pogrom continues. The inquisition consistently [2a] seeks to destroy those who managed to survive; it squeezed us even more in a few workshops and factories, in order to deal with us with one cut of the guillotine.

There are those among us who believe. They believe in a miracle.

They pray for a miracle, for personal salvation.

But our homes [are] still destroyed.

Our families torn apart.

Our chests stifled with pain and despair.

Our hearts stopped beating; our brains stopped thinking.

We are like a stone, frozen in suffering and torment.

I write with difficulty.

Will I be able to at least partially to include all that I have experienced and still experience during these days?

No, certainly not, it is beyond all human strength and human reason.

And will these words reach you who have remained? Faithful Friend, will you bring them to light? Because for you I write.

I don't know if you exist at all, Friend.

I lost hope in everything, and in you, too.

Why now – when we are calling for you so loud – you are silent?

Will you really – never come back?

Have you really betrayed?

Should we rely on our own [3] strength, that we lack so much?

Maybe you're just hiding from a sniffing enemy in order to overcome him at the right time.

Or maybe you can hear us, and it just seems to us, tormented in our pain, that we have lost You.

Are you keeping vigil?

And you, our fellow countryman – poor Wanderer of the world – unknown soldier on the distant fronts of human misery and sorrow, you eternal revolutionary and fighter.

Remember!

22 July

For several days, people whispered here and there about the cruel sentence the enemy had given us and that the hour of its execution was approaching. Shots continued for several weeks. The anxiety is growing. At night, the executioners, without any reason, shot hundreds of people under the pretext of fighting against smuggling, they shot them right there on the spot, in their apartment, in the yard, [on] the street. Until recently, they did it in a "quiet" way, in prisons, labour camps, concentration camps, torture facilities equipped with gas or high-voltage chambers,[632] yet now they do it shamelessly, directly in public view, in order to terrorise, to break the rest, to demoralise Jewish people, who are already tired, hungry, decimated with epidemics and starvation. The ghetto size was reduced,[633] [3a] the number of exits to the 'other side' was reduced, to squeeze us even further, to prevent any attempts at rescue, or to escape to the 'other side'.

The enemy was preparing the final crackdown deliberately, consistently. Every day we were getting closer to the execution.

A number of clusters, or so-called Jewish districts, in hundreds of cities and towns have already been erased off the map of human settlements.

Why should we survive? Optimists claimed that the enemy would not try to annihilate the largest concentration of Jews in the world, that they would be afraid of human opinion, of 'dubious' revenge by the American countries on the Germans living there. Other 'humanists' could not believe nor understand how this form of barbarism is at all possible, claiming that the gas chambers in Chełmno, Bełżec, Treblinka[634] were a figment of imaginations, they were still deluding themselves, not able to come to terms with such a monstrous thought, with such a monstrous prospect of the next few days. Among the comrades who do understand and soberly assess the reality – the question arises: 'What should we do?'

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632 Rumours circulating in the ghetto. See Ferenc, *Każdy pyta,* pp. 353–354.

633 See footnotes 276, pt. 2 and 434, pt. 1.

634 Rendered as 'Tremblinka' throughout this document.

Should we let them drive us to slaughter like cattle?

Fight? How? Unarmed, unprepared, shattered, demoralised, without outside help, without any chances [4] of success?

Get out on the streets with a hundred people who have nothing left to lose, cry out, howl, let ourselves be shot on the spot, inspire the masses to follow us. Let the ghetto flow with our blood, the blood of everyone without exception. Is such death better than torture in Treblinka or anywhere else?

We, the few, understood it, but many deluded themselves that they could escape their destiny, that the so-called resettlement concerns only several tens of thousands, the so-called unproductive.

Rumours spread more and more each day. Insiders claimed they came from 'authoritative sources'. On Saturday, 18 July, Czerniaków, the chairman of the *gmina*, officially informed the Order Service and officials that the German authorities denied that the resettlement was to take place. It was even said that Czerniaków and senior officials fled, etc., etc. Things calmed down temporarily. But it didn't last long.

Everyone wanted to remain ignorant as long as possible.

The public executions became increasingly common. Finally, on Tuesday the 21st they turned into the fatal pogrom. At noon, news of the arrest of councillors[635] flashed through the ghetto like lightning. A sinister premonition began to grow in everyone. Gestapo cars scattered through the streets, [they] caught pedestrians inside [4a], usually those with learned expression on their faces, very often they burst into apartments of doctors and lawyers, and next shot them on the spot or took them away.

At Chłodna Street, number 24 apparently, physicians led by the eminent professor of medicine from Poznań, Dr Raszeja,[636] a Christian, gathered around a sick doctor. Bandits murdered them all on the spot, including the sick doctor. The streets were utterly deserted. The trams were empty. Here and there even shops were being closed. The price of bread went up. Food items disappeared from display windows. Groups of people were gathering in front of each

635 Czerniaków noted on 21 July 1942: 'Before 12 [o'clock], officers of the OD showed up and ordered the arrest of the councillors present in the building, in my office. Soon the councillors in my room were arrested, in groups'. See: *Czerniakow's diary*, p. 304.

636 Franciszek Paweł Raszeja (1896–1942), Polish physician, orthopaedist and surgeon, Professor at the University of Poznań; shot by the Germans on 22 July 1942 at 26 Chłodna Street in the flat of the antiquarian Abe Gutnajer during a medical consultation.

gateway, sharing the smallest bits of news. There were so many different news items, often contradictory. But in each message words we all knew so well were repeated: pogrom, slaughter, deportation.

'Friends from the other side' assured [!] that several dozens of train cars were waiting at the station, that the whole ghetto was to be liquidated. Still, one thing surprised me.

There were still many amongst us who believed that everything would end well. Where did this hope come from? After three years of unspeakable suffering and crucifixion, I finally understood.

The enemy is afraid of this.

The ghetto did not break our spirit after all, even in the harshest living conditions the *modus vivendi*[637] established itself.

Quite a lot of time would be needed [5] for everyone to expire from hunger and disease, or as a result of systematic pogroms, carried out from time to time.

The executioner picked up the knife and placed the noose, the inquisition decided to execute the sentence quickly because who knew what time will bring.

Only recently did the English radio broadcast around the world a report about the horrors that German bandits have perpetuated against Jews in conquered countries.[638] The broadcast gave figures lower than the actual numbers, but with specific facts of inhumane pogroms and slaughter. For us – convicted prisoners – this was comforting.

They know, they remember us after all. We have friends and even if we die – the sword of revenge will behead our executioners.

Or maybe . . .

Or maybe . . . the words of protest will stop, idle protests will cease, and actions will begin . . .

Maybe . . . from the other side . . . from behind the walls . . . actual help is approaching?

Our hopes were in vain. In the afternoon, notifications were glued to the walls, signed by the Jewish Council, saying on the order of the authorities

637 (Latin) mode of living; way of arranging of mutual relations enabling the co-existence of people with different views or interests.

638 See footnote 510, pt. 2.

all Jews not employed in German factories or in the *gmina* institutions would be deported east.

[6] Thursday, 27 August. When I arrived at the factory, I noticed great anxiety among the workers. An upcoming blockade to take place in the workshop was frequently mentioned. Many workers, especially older ones, were absent. Two sinister words, equivalent to a death sentence, placed a heavy burden on all our hearts:

A blockade . . .

A layoff . . .

The layoff was to involve several hundred workers, with the management itself to carry it out. Elders were supposed to be in the first line of fire, followed by non- professionals. As an ominous enjoinder – news about the liquidation of workshops. I noticed a weeping girl. She said that her brother, the only other member of her family who was still alive, a first-class professional, was yesterday plucked out of the Leszno Street factory, formerly 'Braun and Rowiński'.[639] The German authorities' promise that the 'resettlement' would not apply to employed persons, turned out to be another lie. A young professional. The woman was completely broken, she loved her brother very much. I envied her. At least she was able to cry her eyes out.

She believed, she wished at least, that her brother would meet a different fate than everyone, as they would most likely send him to a labour camp, that after all he was young, strong, that maybe he would survive . . .

Until recently, the 'labour camp' was a curse, a place that rarely anyone came back from, and now they are dreaming of getting there . . . Even the hardest work, even torture – everything is better than annihilation.

[6a] Or maybe death would be better . . .

Most of us were already tired of waiting, resigned. 'Let it end, once and for all . . .' Death – eternal peace in place of this overwhelming anguish.

Old workers were relatively in the best shape. Their egoism, so far removed from true class consciousness, convinced them that they would avoid our fate, that they really were needed, as they were carpenters, working in their profession for years, the workers' aristocracy, the chosen ones – and

639 The Braun and Rowiński company ran several factories in the Warsaw ghetto: a knitwear factory at Leszno Street 78, an underwear factory at Nowolipie Street 80, shirts at Ogrodowa Street 51. These factories were later taken over by Karl Georg Schultz's workshop.

in this gloomy moment they looked at us, a handful of intellectuals carrying boards here and there, with contempt and hatred.

I constantly pictured my father in front of my eyes. He did not believe. He was terribly afraid of fate. The factory ate him alive. He toiled away with the last of his strength, sometimes 16–18 hours a day, 'an unproductive individual', 'parasite' . . . It is really hard for me to imagine a man more merged with his work, with his profession, than my father . . . From the age of eight onwards he worked in workshops and factories. A factory was his school, his home; he even slept there when he was young . . .

And now I look at these old workers, pseudo-proletarians, who curse us out for taking their bread, their bowl of soup, which for many of us is the only source of food all day.

[7] Should I tell them that in my house there are often quarrels about a single piece of stale bread . . .

Should I tell them how difficult it was for me, a son of a worker, to get this little bit of education, this cleverness, which they are now mocking . . .

Should I tell them that I have always been thinking about them, the workers, the proletariat, that perhaps I'm more connected with the struggle of the working class . . .

Demonstrations, police beatings, bullets, secret organisations – all in the past . . .

Is it not enough . . .

Will they understand? . . .

No, for they [are] far from being aware, they are not forming the conscious proletariat, they are not builders of the new tomorrow – but the same petty bourgeois, just accidentally crammed into factories. How much strength you need to educate them, as they are not the new, imaginary man, but are still clad in their old, rotten rags.

I recall the Shakespearean character from *The Tempest* – Caliban. They are a real Caliban, whom you can deceive, buy over, manipulate, tame with a bowl of soup, a piece of bread . . . and who will serve faithfully . . .

How much harder is to teach him how to fight, to create a new world, restore his human dignity, lift him from this terrible degradation . . .

And yet the future of humanity is tied to him.

[7a] When they dispense soup, arguments will start again, pushing me out of the line, cursing me, swearing, complaining that if we weren't there

they would have received more soup, more bread; that the Germans are giving, and we, the new ones, who came here just to 'hide ourselves', take even these scraps away from them.

How naive, how infinitely stupid! But anger, despair and hunger must find their outlet.

Everything feels like a nightmare. Together with the others, I lift boards, move them from place to place, from place to place. There are no more than a dozen workplaces – and yet several hundred people are busy.

There is no 'productive' (a popular term nowadays) job.

We toil away, hustle – the convicts . . .

We wait . . . Any minute now . . .

The sound of several rifle shots comes from the street. The *Aktion* has begun.

6th week, 36th day – and every minute is anguish, waiting for torture and death.

All of a sudden . . . The *Werkschutz* comes in. They're giving a sign. A blockade?! Nobody knows.

Everyone grabs a board.

Machines are working in full swing.

Table saws cut boards unnecessarily.

The boards are scattered in order to re-arrange them.

Just so there is any movement, work 'in full swing', just so we can avoid our fate . . .

What are we fighting against the enemy with? With even greater humiliation, subservience, or with maybe cleverness [8] and cunning . . .

Finally, two *Sonderdienst*[640] officers appear in the company of a commissioner and the factory manager, Mr Landau.[641] Some relief. A commission, not a blockade. Or maybe it's even worse.

A 'visit' at the factory takes a short time; the 'guests' return to the office. Work stops automatically. We are waiting again . . .

Someone comes from the office with the news that the 'guests' sat down to have a 'feast' with vodka, liqueur, wine. We breathe a sigh of relief, realising what it means, that it's possible that we'll be able to escape the blockade.

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640 See footnote 610, pt. 2.

641 Aleksander Leyb Landau.

It was a reporting committee whose opinion regarding the deployment of blockades is authoritative.

I remembered a stage play by the Soviet poet Peretz Markish,[642] *The Feast* (in Yiddish: *Maltsayt*). The poet describes a small Jewish town in Ukraine during the pogroms by Petlura during the civil war. Almost only the elderly stayed in the town, as young people were taking part in the revolution. The revolutionaries are heading towards the town, and meanwhile the 'bandits' are entering the town from the other side, so we know what awaits the residents. The Jews decide to organise a great 'feast' for the 'guests' in a local synagogue, getting them drunk and dragging the feast out in various ways until relief comes. The plan succeeds.

But today things look much worse.

The enemy is more sophisticated, and the saddest thing is . . .

They were expecting relief any moment, [8a] it was a measure in the general struggle – and here – from when and where will relief come? Are we just postponing the execution of the sentence?

We are fighting for the last spark of life, just like a hopelessly sick man tries to strike the dying spark of his life with the help of medicine.

During a midday meal we learn that a blockade took place in our apartment block on Miła Street. A dozen or so children, who had miraculously survived the previous blockades, were taken away. Mothers of the kidnapped children came running with lamentations, but as always their prayers and pleas were in vain.

Stunningly, we looked at the tears of mothers almost indifferently, as these sights have become too common, and they have become etched in our memory too strongly. Almost all the doors at the flats were broken in by the executioners, with the active participation of the Jewish Order Service, members of which resorted to the common practice of robbery. The 'feast' was over.

The 'nice guests' have already left.

642 Peretz Markish (1895–1952), a Russian Jewish poet, playwright and writer, writing mostly in Yiddish; co-founder of the *Khaliastre* futurist literary group; co-founder of the literary weekly *Literarishe Bleter*; during the war a member of the Jewish Anti-fascist Committee; executed in Moscow on 12 August 1952 along with a group of other Yiddish writers accused of nationalism during the Stalinist trial.

After the meal, the management announced that all workers have to gather in the square in the afternoon, after work, to thank Commissioner Hensel for his efforts to alleviate our fate.

Oh, the irony!

They torture us, they murdered our families and our fate is almost sealed, and for that [9] we are supposed to thank them?!

At 6 [p.m.] all the workers gathered in the square. Commissioner Hensel spoke first. He stated that our factory was not included in the *Aktion*, that the workers were to get to their duties, that the marauders and saboteurs would be severely punished, that he would try to make right by the workers . . . He even spoke in a miserable tone about the personal misfortunes that each of us encountered and interjected the speech with a phrase *die Zeiten gehen vorbei*.[643]

I don't know if he was sober when he said all that, or if the 'libation' had disarmed him.

Or maybe deep down he is more decent and honest than the rest of his scoundrel brethren.

But what followed filled me with astonishment and disgust.

Almost everyone, except maybe a few, began to clap and cry out: 'Long live Hensel!'

Old workers, former trade union members, now applauded and shouted in honour of their executioner.

They should have at least stayed silent.

Stood and remained silent.

They are happy . . . They don't understand that this is an ordinary non-binding, oft-repeated promise, that has never been kept.

Does human stupidity have its limits?

[9a] Will we forever remain miserable prey for deceit and lies?

Be happy, slave!

You still have a few days of anguish ahead of you. A generous enemy will give you that.

I went home.

I had to jump over the fence to get to my mother and sisters!

The streets were empty.

Workers returned in packs from factories to their 'blocks'.

643 (German) The days pass by.

Tired, exhausted with torment, work, hunger, they barely dragged their legs – hunched, bent under the weight of inhuman suffering, their faces, petrified in pain, looked around frightfully from time to time.

On the corner of Smocza and Pawia Streets a *junak* beat a young woman on the face with a riding crop.

She wasn't even crying.

At home . . . A new family moved into the small room where my sisters and mother 'live'. They broke the door, beat the mother, bribed the Jewish policemen. The eldest sister did not want to let them in; she resisted. The Jewish policeman knocked her down to the floor, scratched her face and hands.

The new 'family' consisted of husband and wife. The husband is a pimp, the 'wife' is currently working in a shed with her husband.

That is how the ones that remained look.

[10] Crying, screaming, quarrels, berating one another, turning into louts and wild beasts.

Friday 28 August

[1][644]

1 September 1942

It has been widely claimed that the *Aktion* will continue to this day, and that from the 1st [September] on everything will 'somehow' 'normalise'. But how? No one could answer. Meanwhile, its end is nowhere near. On the contrary. Bandits in green uniforms prowl the streets and shoot at each passer-by. These frolics continue especially at night. And today the day began in a very depressed mood. 3 years of war. For the 3rd anniversary of its outbreak many of us expected great changes, the formation of a second front. Alas. None of these fantasies came true. I slept in the factory because I couldn't get back [1a] home last night. Continuous shooting. At night, I had such a bad stomach ache that I was writhing in pain . . . Here are the effects of 'good' nutrition. In the morning I ran to my mother and sisters. No better news here. Two younger sisters were writhing in pain, they had very high fevers, my mother's face was changed unrecognisably. They had to go to work, there are no sick leaves. It may be safer in the factory. Every patient whom the torturers find in bed – is shot on the spot. We are not allowed even to fall ill. The sisters told me how things are going at Schultz's . [2] Instead of a litre of soup,

644 Beginning of the second notebook.

their unit receives a few spoonfuls. Provisioning officials mercilessly steal provisions intended for male and female workers. They rarely receive bread. Most of the employees are starving horribly. But there are others who got inside the workshop with the help of thousands of zlotys, who gorge themselves with food, who do not lack butter, bacon, white bread. They do nothing throughout the day, and eat while everyone is watching. Their work colleagues faint from hunger, and they do not even offer them a piece of bread – just like wild beasts.

A mother and a nineteen-year-old son live in the next room.

Monstrous scenes break out there [2a] several times a day. The son forcibly tears away a piece of bread she managed to get. He hits her face and breasts. The mother comes from a very intelligent family, once part of the intellectual elite.

Just now I witnessed a similar scene. Despite the terrible pains I had to go back to the factory, though I felt a buzzing in my head, and my stomach turned. I reached my manager Wacławski and asked for a sick leave. He yelled at me, starting with insults. The work we are doing is more of a comedy, after all . . . With the last of my strength I refrained from giving this boor a rebuttal. Unfortunately, I am still too dependent on [3] him. I gritted my teeth and walked away.

Werkschutz signalled that women and children should hide, because the *Aktion* had begun. Again . . . the 40th day. They are blocking the 'Franke and Schulz' metal factory on Smocza Street 37.[645] It seems that the pogrom and the slaughter will last forever. Women and children face the cruellest fate. They spend all the day hidden in cellars, bitten by vermin, without access to fresh air, without the chance to cook a warm meal.

Meldekarts are already stamped by SD – they are given to women employed in the factory. Some are happy. They still believe in the authority of a document, of work, of a German police stamp.

[3a] A drowning person clutches at straws.

One of the older workers gave me a comforting message. His son, a metalworker by profession, works on the other side in an arms factory on Belwederska Street.[646] A total of 800 Polish workers work there. Recently, there has been a change in the attitude of Polish workers towards Jews. Revolutionary moods are rising. After a bombing by the Soviet bombers, revolutionary slogans

645 Metalworks factory, it employed 240 workers.

646 The arms factory was located at Belwederska Street 14.

appeared on the factory walls. Many of his work colleagues offered to obtain Aryan documents for him. But the Jewish worker does not believe them. There are too many reasons for this. Will the distrust ever end?

[4] I'm lying on plywood hidden in the cellar. A bunch of old friends are sitting next to me. I hear snippets of their conversation. They are talking about theatre, literature, history, politics . . . So even some of those people have also survived, after all . . . Even in the face of death they are able to rise much higher than the general public, and this eternal desire of education, the desire to learn does not let go. But will these few survive? Before my eyes dozens of friends, actual people, great individuals in their daily work, scientists, researchers who did not like publicity, known to a precious few, but very useful nevertheless – all of them taken away, murdered.

I learned yesterday that my good friend [Aureliusz] Kac and his mother were taken away. He also [4a] was one of them. Thoroughly educated, fluent in 10 languages, a rare erudite in the field of literature and theatre studies. We spent many evenings, even recently, discussing such interesting matters. For me and the few belonging to the closest circle of his [friends], those were unforgettable experiences. We were becoming human beings again. At least for a few hours a week we forgot about the life of misery in the ghetto, about the walls, about hunger and captivity.

I remember a particularly sombre evening when we learned about the death of one of the members of our circle. Hearing that news, Aureli read us a short, touching [5] poem dedicated to the memory of our late companion, written in Russian. It began with the words: *Ushol drug*[647] (a friend passed).

We were pondering over the word *drug*. There is no equivalent in other languages. It's something much deeper, more encompassing than 'a friend', 'a companion'. . .

And now again, *ushol drug* . . .

. . . Mr. S. arrived with the news that the Russians had captured Szack.[648] Political radio news is scarce. Apparently the situation on the central front has improved significantly[649] . . .

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647 (Russian, in Cyrillic characters) A friend passed away.

648 Szack (Shatzk) (Volhynia, now in Ukraine). On 25 June 1941 the town had been captured by the Germans and was won back by the Red Army on 21 July 1944.

649 This refers to the developments of war between Third Reich and the USSR on the Eastern front.

. . . Carpenters receive[650] a double meal on midday, as professionals. But will ½ kg of bread a day, and [5a] two watery soups be enough to feed their families . . . for the moment they are happy that they are being favoured, that most workers receive much less than them . . .

Two German officers arrived in the company of 5 Jewish policemen to the house at Miła Street 58, occupied by our workers, and took everything from the apartments, including bedding. After their departure, the apartments were empty. I wonder why they did it. They didn't find any valuables there . . .Yet, the force of habit . . .

In the evening after work I managed to get home. I jumped over the fence, managed to escape the attention of the Jewish policeman's guard and the *Werkschutz*.

[6] The family was concerned. At Schultz's, talk about layoffs is common, and there is even news about prepared lists of the laid off. To make matters worse, they took my cousin with his wife this morning, from the outpost. They left a six-year-old girl, all alone. Hardly any of our relatives remained. [x][651] The youngest sister has a fever, 40 degrees, the older one can barely move her legs, the arthritis has returned. Mother despairs that there is nothing to eat. The eldest sister returned well past a curfew, risking her life she got 2 kg of potatoes from an outpost worker she knew and . . .

. . . Around midnight I was awakened by a long howl of siren. An airstrike alarm.[652] After a while [6a], there came a continuous hum of heavy bombers. The air is torn by a terrible rumble. Detonations are now coming fast, one after the other. A glimmer of hope enters my heart. Three years ago I survived my first raids. I was terribly afraid. They seemed to me the pinnacle of cruelty, but now – no, we learned of cruelty far more monstrous than such bombings, and it is better to die from a bomb than in the 'torture room' in Treblinka.

There are 'ours', after all . . . I can't hear crying, lamenting around me like I heard it then, I can't see half-demented eyes, faces crazed with fear. On the contrary . . . Bitter joy. . . We are not alone . . .

Detonations are getting stronger. Nobody gets out of bed yet.

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650 [x] apart from the soup, an additional quarter of bread.

651 [x] I don't know what will be. [. . .] Hunger, diseases, layoff.

652 See footnote 534, pt. 1.

[7] Everyone has the strange conviction that they will not bomb the ghetto. They are our friends. They will bomb only the German district and military facilities.

But Schultz, Többens and other factories are also military facilities. Our roommate, a tailor, already dreams of what she will do after the war: 'You know, as soon as the war is over, the first thing I will do is to fill my stomach. At least once I will be full. A whole loaf of white bread, with a thick layer of butter. Oh, I won't hold back on butter, oh no!'

All of a sudden, a terrifying roar rips through the air. A bomb exploded somewhere very nearby [7a]. Unfortunately, we have to get up and be prepared, just in case.

In the yard, in the gateway, a lot of people are whispering together.

'What would they look for here in, the ghetto . . .' says someone.

'And what can you hit from such an altitude?'

As if in response, the whole building shook to its foundations. The glass fell out of almost all the windows. Cries and moans came from very close by: 'Help, help . . .'.

On pale faces – looks of uncertainty.

'Oh, it doesn't matter, let them bomb, destroy. Everything is better than such a life. Let the end finally come . . .'

'And yet you would like to survive all this. Live to see [8] the end. And maybe breathe again . . .' – an uncertain voice sounds in the silence.

'What are they looking for here? . . . Look how brightly they are lighting the street with the rockets. As if in broad daylight! If I were up there I would know what to bomb. I would show them, our torturers. Take Szucha Avenue.[653] . . . Destroy them all, turn everything into ruina . . .'

Planes fly over our heads. There is almost no doubt left that the air raid is also covering the ghetto.

The cries 'help, help' are getting clearer and clearer. It turns out that a cluster bomb was dropped into the neighbouring house. Shrapnel shells devastated the apartment. There are some killed and wounded.

[8a] We run over to help. There are no stretchers to transport the wounded, no bandages, no doctors . . . And the screams, cries, moans . . . We clear away stones and debris . . .

653 At Aleja Szucha 25 were the headquarters of SD and Sipo of Warsaw and the Warsaw District, as well as an infamously harsh detention centre.

In the dark, stepping on the bodies, we pull out the wounded, covered in blood. Nothing can match the horror of this sight.

There are already several casualties.

Disappointment on the faces of the residents, as they gathered in a petrified crowd: 'And we also had to suffer many casualties. We waited for this moment, the moment when we would hear the noise of planes, of detonations . . .'

Everyone stands still, as if petrified, and looks on the bodies of the killed and the wounded. One looks and almost can't believe that what we see around us is real. No, it must be a misunderstanding.

[9] Why the corpses, moans, laments?. . .

Why the destroyed apartments?. . .

Planes above us again. But this time people are not waiting with the firm certainty that the bomb will not hit them; they scatter in all directions. Everyone is looking for their loved ones, just to stick together.

Whispers, conversations, expectations, uncertainty, and in this gloom, a glimmer of hope that maybe the war will end soon, that peaceful days and nights will come.

The calm, the calm I longed for so much!

'Maybe if the raid lasted day and night, day and night, it would finally be over; maybe they would forget about us . . .'

'Oh, they won't forget about us', sighs a second voice, 'at the last moment before [9a] the agony, the murderers won't forget.'

'Listen, there is almost no anti-aircraft artillery. They were smart three years ago, and now. . .'

And indeed . . . Anti-aircraft artillery is almost completely silent. Only occasionally do we hear several shots fired from machine guns.

Besides, the enemy is not so powerful, he can be defeated.

Detonations follow quickly, one after the other, one after the other . . . People are trying to guess where they are coming from.

'If only the whole of the *Umschlagplatz, Transferstelle* were bombed'. . .

'Yes, the *Umschlagplatz*, blast the *Umschlagplatz* with bombs . . .' – others repeat.

[10] 'And there are people in the train cars . . .'

'A bomb is better. The end is swifter . . .'

Finally, silence. After several minutes, the air-strike alarm is called off. The raid lasted 2 hours. The sky is bright with the glow of fires caused by

the bombs. The night silence is interrupted by more and more distinct groans and cries: 'Help us? Help?'

What were these victims for? How cruel is our fate. Still, it's easier to fall asleep now. Maybe it really will end?

Funny, the source of all this sudden hope. All because of one raid, but are raids decisive in this war at all? They're not!

And yet, a warmer wave of faith runs through the heart and lulls it to a more peaceful sleep. Sleep peacefully, [10a] you convict, as the avenger is getting ready to finally deal with your executioner.

2 September

Going to work in the morning, I noticed a greater liveliness, fervour among male and female workers hurrying to the workshops, . . .

Everyone upon meeting a friend asks: 'Have you heard? . . . An airstrike . . .', 'Eh, rather strong, and our "friends" showed off pretty well.'

But unfortunately – I learn about many victims and bombed houses in the ghetto, on Wołyńska 18, Gęsia 38, Muranowska, Dzielna streets . . . On Leszno Street, next to Többens' workshop. There is no information about the number of casualties, but they are certainly numerous . . . They had so far managed to save themselves from the *Umschlagplatz*, but were killed by bombs.

[11] And in our factory, groups of workers are vividly discussing the raid. But everywhere, on almost all faces, there is an expression of incomprehension:

'Why did they drop bombs on us? Why us? Did they miss their targets? Somehow it is difficult to reconcile. They should've known that we are waiting for them, that we are not the enemy . . .'

'Eh, who cares about us, who cares whether we live at all? Who cares, an aviator? He doesn't care. If he's supposed to drop bombs, he does just that. And his fate is not perfect, either . . .'

'And yet they have more important targets to bomb than us, factories, railways . . .'

'He won't always hit . . .'

Someone may be telling for the tenth time how a bomb exploded a few steps away and that he had barely escaped death.

[11a] Someone brings news from the city: during the air strike the gendarmes hid in the *Umschlagplatz*, so the convicts took advantage of the situation and fled the square. At first the Jewish policemen, 'our' people,

even at such a moment released them only after receiving a 'bribe', but later the crowd attacked them and they had to let everyone pass . . .

Will they be saved? Will they not be caught again tomorrow?

. . . Alas. They remember us well. They are blocking Schultz, where my mother and sisters work. I feel very anxious. My youngest sister stayed at home with a very high fever, but will my mother, who looks much older than she actually is, with completely grey hair – will she survive?

Let it be evening already.

Mother has grey hair . . . Recently, [12] a German officer watched the ward, where mother works with other older women, and threatened manager Rudnicki[654] that he would shoot him if he did not remove *graues Haar*[655] from the room.

ARG II 244 (Ring. II/205; Ring. II/207)
Description:
Ring. II/205: original, handwritten, notebook, pencil, Polish, 145×205 mm, sewn, 16 sheets, 18 pages;
Ring. II/207: original, handwritten, notebook, pencil, Polish, 145×205 mm, 14 sheets, 24 pages.

20 *August–October 1942, Warsaw ghetto. [Menakhem Mendel Kohn], "טאָג־בוך" [Diary]*

[1]

6 August

Midday on the 16th day of the bloody resettlement of the Jews from the Warsaw ghetto. I am sitting here in the cellar where there is supposed to be a hiding place from Hitler's murderers. They are expected any minute from the little ghetto where they have been running rampant

654 Probably Henryk Rudnicki (1899?–?). On 16 August 1942, he and his wife arrived at the *Umschlagplatz*; he managed to escape; she was taken to Treblinka. Rudnicki left the ghetto in January 1943 and went into hiding, where he wrote a diary, published as: *Martyrologia i zagłada Żydów warszawskich*, Łódź 1946.

655 (German, incorrect) grey hair, here meaning: old people.

since 7 a.m. In the few hours that they have been working, these blood-thirsty animals have driven out thousands of victims to the *Umschlagplatz*, from where they are to be transported in sealed wagons to the extermination site called Treblinka. In the 15 days since the *Aktion* began, more than 100,000 Jews, men, women and children, have been slaughtered in the most horrific fashion. Hitler's beasts use every means possible: they shoot and slaughter the elderly and the infirm on the spot and in the bloodied *platz*. Or they lead their victims to the cemetery, throw them alive into pre-dug graves and kill them with machine guns. Now a Jewish policeman runs up, saying that Hitler's animals are still wreaking havoc in the little ghetto. They are due in the large ghetto at 5 p.m. A dreadful panic ensues in the courtyard. First of all, the children are hidden, because they are the tastiest morsels for Hitler's murderers. I decide not to go into the cellar. I don't want to take up space where more children could be hidden. Children should be the first to be saved. Thinking this, I run to find another hiding place. I run to Gęsia Street 30, where there is a carpentry shop belonging to a friend of mine, L.[656] There I meet hundreds of people, among whom are many friends and comrades, seeking a safe haven there to avoid being found by Hitler's savages. Well!!! I see that there is no room for me there. My friends of yesterday look at me with such distant, even piercing glances, as if I had forced myself into their territory where only they are entitled to be. One has to run somewhere else. Without thinking it through, I run to Gęsia Street 45, where TOZ is located. [2] There I find my best friends and comrades, Dr Bloch[657] and Dr Ringelblum, who give me the bad news: the gang has already spread its destruction into the large ghetto on Leszno and Przejazd Streets where, a few hours previously, I had left my friends, among whom are the wives of Drs Ringelblum[658] and Bloch, who now stand before me despondent, not knowing what has happened to them. Disregarding the grave danger, they run into the street to ascertain the fate of their wives. I stay there for a short while and realise that to return home would be impossible. It is already 8.30. The curfew is drawing near. Where can I spend the night?

656 I.e. Aleksander Leyb Landau.

657 Leyzer (Eliezer) Lipe Bloch.

658 Judyta (Yehudis) Ringelblum, née Herman (1909–1944), Polish-language teacher at Jewish schools, Left Po'ale Tsiyon activist; wife of Emanuel Ringelblum; they had a son Uriel (Uri) (1930–1944).

Not to sleep, but to sit through the night. I have no choice but to go to my friend L.'s carpentry shop at Gęsia Street 30. I will surely find many of my friends there. Perhaps one of them will invite me in, I think. I turn from one to another there for 10 to 15 minutes. I tell them that the place where I live is now blocked by the savage Hitler thugs. They are dragging out young and old alike to the killing square, so it is out of the question for me to go home. Zamenhofa Street and the lower numbers on Gęsia Street have been surrounded by the SS and SD murderers. They shoot whoever passes by. I notice that my friends and acquaintances begin to turn away from me. Where do I go now? Without spending much time thinking about it, I decide to run to the Borochov school-kitchen at Nowolipki Street 68,[659] not far from Gęsia Street. There they will certainly take me in happily, I think. And so it was. When I came in, comrade Licht[ensztajn], a teacher, and his two graduate students Dovid and Nahum[660] – fine young men – received me very warmly. They make hot coffee for me and make up a bed. We lie down in mortal fear and try to figure out 'their' plan for today's *Aktion*, and we come to the conclusion that [3] Hitler's bloodthirsty sadists will not manage to come to Nowolipki Street 68 today. We had prepared temporary hiding places for any eventuality. Day had only just broken when I woke up, washed and ran to see what had happened to my close friends, comrades and acquaintances. Is anyone missing? As I run, I hear that hundreds of my friends and acquaintances have been seized and taken to that unknown 'well-known' destination. They will all be slaughtered in the cruellest fashion.
Menakhem.

[1]

18 August

Bloody Tuesday in the *Emilstadt*[661] brush factory. The manager of the brush factory, a Mr Cukierman,[662] tells me how the slaughter

659 See footnote 570, pt. 2.

660 Dawid Graber and Nahum Grzywacz.

661 Emil's Town, similarly as below: Emil-shtetl (Emil's village); Emil Weitz (Wajc) (?–?) was called the 'brushmakers' king'. He financially assisted Jewish institutions (including the Joint) and supported culture and Bund activities in the ghetto. In January 1942, Weitz and his Jewish and Polish partners funded and later financed the model orphanage Dobra Wola (Good Will), located in a tenement house at Dzielna Street 61.

662 Cukierman was most probably one of the founders of the brushmakers' workshop.

in the workshops took place on that bloody Tuesday: 'At 12 noon, the head of the brush factory, a *Wehrmacht* Colonel B-r[663] told me that the SS and SD assassins have asked for 500 Jews from amongst the workers to be taken to the *Umschlagplatz* for resettlement in the "known direction". I refused categorically. I said, I grew up with these men. We have lived together for 30 years. I appeal to your conscience and ask for your assurance that you will do everything possible to ensure that no Jews are taken from the workshops.' The head, Colonel B-r, answered that he had done a lot for the workshops, but that he was not willing to sacrifice himself for them. At 4 p.m. on the same day, the Jewish hunting dogs, the police, arrived on the site. They began to seize people allegedly over 55 years of age, including the writer of these lines, who was miraculously freed. 2 hours later, a crowd of SS men arrived with Ukrainian thugs, those savage two-footed animals, and set upon the workers in the workshops, chasing them out into the large courtyard, beating them as they went, and then began to decide who should live and who should die.[664] They condemned to death 1,600 men, women and children of various ages, who were immediately sent to the death square and from there to the death camp. Among the 1,600 sent to their death [2] was my best friend and Oyneg Shabes comrade, the 33-year-old Rabbi Huberband and his wife.[665] That same day, many more people dear to me were driven into that bloody hell which Hitler's assassins created in the Treblinka death camp. Leaving the bodies of 8 Jews shot on the spot, the murderous gang set off to a second place to collect more people. I call *Emil-Shtetl* that block of houses where the brush workshops are located (Świętojerska Street 28, 30, 32, 34 and 36, Franciszkańska Street 19 and 21), because the creator and proprietor of all the workshops was a Jew from Tarnów, Emil Weitz, the sole supplier of brushes in the General Government for the *Wehrmacht*. It would be worthwhile to write specifically about the branches of commerce which the war developed.[666] Should I remain alive, I shall do so. Menakhem.

663 Most probably Hermann Brauer, from Leszno; his workshops in the ghetto manufactured supplies for the army; after most of the workers were deported, the shop moved from Nalewki Street No. 28/30 to No. 38.

664 Reference to the *Unetaneh tokef*, the liturgical poem recited on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

665 Shimon Huberband; his second wife was daughter of Rabbi Yakov Zylbersztajn.

666 Such papers were written, see e.g. *Warsaw Ghetto. Everyday Life*, Doc. 35.

[1]

4 September 1942. Emil-Shtetl. 44th day of extermination

At 11.30 a.m. in the *Emil-Shtetl* brush workshop at Świętojerska Street 32, we hear that a blockade by the SS with their Ukrainian thugs is imminent, and that it will include a small number of Jewish policemen. They are coming to 'clean up' our workshop. At 12 o'clock, we already hear their savage cry, *Herunter*[667], i.e. all workers have to go down to the courtyard for an 'inspection' to determine who, in their opinion, should remain in the workshop, and who must be sent to the Treblinka death camp. Everybody runs quickly down, myself included, disregarding the great danger, because people of my age (about 60) are liquidated on the spot. However, I stood calmly in line and was able to observe in detail how 'their' inspection, may their names be erased, was proceeding. First of all, the entire area of the *Emil-Shtetl* brush workshop had been surrounded by SS bandits and their Ukrainian thugs, needless to say all armed with machine guns and revolvers. Some of them, I saw, even had hand grenades.

[2] A number of cars carrying senior SS men drove up to the workshop. They organised us, a crowd of some 3,000 people, in rows of five, sparing no blows whilst doing so. They shot about 10 times in the air to heighten our fear and despair. Those of us there who had previously been given a number[668] on their lapel were forced to one side. Those who had no number on their lapel were beaten by these worst of all murderers and forced over to the other side. They gathered together about 360 of them, men, women and a small number of children, and sent them off immediately to the Treblinka death camp under a strict guard. Those with numbers on their lapels were sent back to work in the workshops. As we came back into the courtyard at 32 Świętojerska Street, we learned that the murderers had shot 12 victims, amongst whom those who were weak and unable to run. They shot those on the spot. [3] We assumed that events like this only took place in our brush workshop. We learned, however, that the day had been terrible in all of the workshops. On that day, 'they' sent hundreds of thousands to the execution camp at Treblinka. Many hundreds of weak and ill people were shot on the spot by these miscreants; they left a few survivors to work for them in the workshops. Menakhem.

667 (German) Down[stairs]!

668 See Doc. 9, the entry for 11 September.

[1]

6 to 13 September, the 46th day of the annihilation of the Jews in Warsaw.

Everything that has gone on up to now pales. Everything vanishes from memory. The events of the last 7[669] days will obliterate the memory of the bloodbath committed by Hitler's savage animals in Warsaw over the rest of the 45 [days]. With unmitigated barbarous depravity, Hitler's miscreants threw themselves upon the last 100,000 Warsaw Jews. This continued for 7 days and nights without a break. It is literally impossible to convey in writing what the eye has seen. No fantasy can depict the savage fury which the executioners have meted out to us in Warsaw over the last 7 days. When you are still in the throes of a nightmare, it is very difficult to write. The wild animals chase you, want to rip you to pieces with their machine guns or to gas you. Nevertheless, I shall try, and perhaps I will be able to impart even a small portion of that which I saw and experienced, to write it down so that the whole wide world can read it and know what revenge they should exact from the bloodthirsty sadists for everything that they have done to us Polish Jews in general, and to the Warsaw Jews in particular.

[2]

6 September

At 3 in the morning, commotion and panic in our workers' block at Świętojerska Street 28 to 58, the *Emil-Shtetl*. We learn that the SS hangmen have issued an order to all of the workers' blocks in the ghetto: all workers have to be out before 10 a.m. and must march from their workplaces to Ostrowska, Wołyńska, Lubeckiego and Smocza Streets. There, a selection is to take place from among all the workers in the workshops. Panic. The SD murderers will assess who should continue working in the workshops, who should be deported to the death camp at Treblinka and who should be shot on the spot. At 11 a.m. we were all at our assigned places, about 80,000 men and women and a very few children, because they had already been murdered earlier. The heads of the workshops begin to prepare signed identity documents. The SS gang finished with the greater part of the assembled crowd over the course of the day, and a small percentage was sent back to the workshops. The majority were driven into the *Umschlagplatz* where the goods wagons had already been prepared to take them to Treblinka, to the death camp.

669 See Doc. 9, the entry for 11 September.

In the process, the murderers [3] shot many hundreds on the spot. They did not manage to deal with the workers from the brush workshop, of whom I was one, on the same day, so the crowd of 5,000 people lay down in the street and in the filthy courtyards. All night, murderous shots crackled over our heads. We crawled on all fours into cellars and ruined houses in an attempt to hide from the murderers' bullets. Looking death in the face, we lay there all night hearing the whistles of the locomotives carrying today's victims to Treblinka, to the death camp. In a few hours, no memory of them will remain. Tomorrow the same fate will be ours. We suffered through the night in this nightmare. At dawn, our brush workers crawled out of the filthy, damp cellars and courtyards and set out for the office at Ostrowska Street 11, where we have to obtain documents to show to the SS thugs who arrive at 9 a.m. every day to carry out an inspection. We learn that the murderers have reduced the workforce by 2,200. Of the 5,000 they have approved 3,000. [4] The remaining 2,200 are to be immediately shipped off to the death camp.

7 September At 10 in the morning, 5 senior SS men arrive with a group of Ukrainians and begin a selection of who will live and who will die. They let through 2,175 and then stop. The murderers declare that the quota has been filled. Of the 3,000 whom they had approved a few hours previously, there are 825 people remaining. They too are to be sent to the death camp. This group, the writer of these lines included, are driven under heavy blows to the nearby Lubeckiego Square, whence we will be herded into the goods wagons.

We are a crowd of 1,000 people who stand and wait for a larger escort to take us to the goods wagons. The author of these lines begins to incite the crowd to escape, to hide in cellars. Better to be shot on the spot than to go to the death camp. I create a commotion, I raise my voice, I throw my bags away and run as fast as I can. 12 of my comrades follow my advice. Under a hail of bullets, we run to find a hiding place. One of us was hit in the leg and falls. For 6 days, [5] we lie around in dark, dirty cellars. Bullets whistle over our heads. For the time being, we are alive. Thousands of our brother and sisters from the brush workshop have been shipped off to the death camp where they are exterminated the same day with poison gas. And then, on that same day, they are tossed into 30-metre-deep pits. I will describe in another chapter how this murder was carried out. Three gravediggers escaped from there, and one of them has described in detail how it was

done.[670] History up to now has never known such horrifying atrocities. [6] The whole wide world has to know what horrifying, sadistic crimes Hitler's assassins are capable of.

Until Saturday 12 September, the savage persecution continued without a stop. The estimate of those deported to the death camp in the last 7 days is 50,000. Today, Saturday 12 September at 3 in the afternoon, I came out of the cellar at Miła Street 64. The guard of thugs in the ghetto streets has been removed. This was interpreted to mean that the mass extermination *Aktion* has come to an end and people began to appear on the streets of the ghetto. [7] I went to Gęsia Street 30, to the carpentry workshop of my friend Comrade Landau. The next day, a Jewish policeman took me to the brush factory at Świętojerska Street 32. When the guard caught sight of me there, he was speechless, because they had already given me up for dead. I must point out that everything that I write is t h e w h o l e t r u t h, u n e m b r o i d e r e d. It is impossible for any of us to describe everything in detail. Each survivor lives in mortal fear. No one knows what will become of us in an hour's time. Menachem.

[1]

1 October 1942

Now, when the mass annihilation *Aktion* carried out by Hitler's beasts in Warsaw has ended, it would be appropriate to summarise their two months of murderous work and to assess the destruction of Warsaw Jewry perpetrated by these murderers. Before 22 July, in the days before Hitler's murderers began their extermination campaign against Warsaw Jewry and before the Treblinka death camp, Warsaw counted 390,000 Jews. Now, after two months of annihilation, Warsaw can count barely 40,000 Jewish souls. In the course of two months, they have murdered 350,000 Jews, of whom 50,000 are estimated to have been killed in the ghetto itself, and 300,000 Jews – men, women and children – were gassed to death in the infamous Treblinka death camp.[671] This figure applies to the city

670 See: *The Last Stage of Resettlement is Death,* Docs. 19–25, accounts by escapees from Treblinka.

671 'According to German sources, during 46 days of the *Aktion,* 253,742 Jews were deported. According to Jewish sources, the ghetto population decreased by over 300,000, including 10,300 dead and killed in the ghetto, 11,580 sent to *Dulag*, and approximately 8,000 who succeeded to get outside the walls.' Quoted from *A Guide to the Perished City*, p. 730.

of Warsaw alone. In Treblinka they gassed 6 to 8 thousand Jews a day and threw their bodies into 30-metre-deep pits dug out by machines. If someone was still alive, they were tossed as well into the pits [2] which were slaked with lime. It was Jewish gravediggers who threw the Jews into the pits and who were themselves shot at the end of each day. Fresh gravediggers were chosen for the following day, and this continued day in, day out. Hitler's exterminators carried this out in order to erase the traces of their murderous activity. However, the animals did not succeed in this. Some of the gravediggers managed to escape. How they escaped is a separate chapter, but they told us survivors in detail how the work had been carried out as follows. There in the camp where everyone sees death before their eyes, Hitler's uniformed murderers step out and make moving speeches, promising the unfortunate masses that they are being sent east for agricultural labour, that they will be well looked after there, that the women will occupy themselves with the children while the men will work. Everything that they have with them of value – gold, jewellery, money of all sorts – must be deposited there on the spot and will be returned to them when they arrive. However, since they are dirty, they must undress and have a bath. [3] After their bath, they will be given other clothes. With these sorts of cynical speeches, they drive 6–8 thousand Jews into the gas chambers every day. In the space of 5–6 minutes, swollen in death, they will already be tossed into the pits. The world cannot imagine even in its wildest fantasies a fraction of the slaughter which Hitler's hangmen practice on us Jews in Poland. Hitler's savage beasts write about this in their despicable newspapers and represent it to the world as the 'resettlement' of the Warsaw Jews, as they call it, casting it in an entirely different light. However, in the end, the world at large will learn the bitter truth, and a new kind of retribution will be invented for Hitler's assassins. However, we Polish Jews will not live to see it, or so they say. Our brothers across the seas must do this for us. They will do it, of that we are convinced. Our millions of victims fall under the blood-spattered hands of Hitler's bandits with this thought in mind. Jews of the wide world take cognizance that in the course of 60 days, [4] Hitler's savage assassins have murdered 350,000 Warsaw Jews and more than 150,000 Jews from around Warsaw: Radom,[672]

672 In April 1941 two separate ghettos were established in Radom, with approximately 40,000 inmates. Most of them were murdered in Treblinka; only about 400 survived the war.

Kielce,[673] Częstochowa,[674] Będzin,[675] Piotrków,[676] Otwock,[677] Węgrów,[678] and elsewhere! 500,000 Jewish lives have been jettisoned in the most reprehensible manner imaginable. The handful of Jewish survivors in Warsaw live in fear, not knowing what will become of them tomorrow. The murderers bark like mad dogs, saying that by 1 December Warsaw and the entire Government will be totally purged of Jews. We live with the sole hope that the long-awaited miracle will take place before 1 December.
So help us God![679]
Menakhem.

ARG II 249 (Ring. II/208)
Description: original, handwritten (MK*), ink, Yiddish, 97×324, 146×185, 145×203, 103×270 mm, 18 sheets, 19 pages.
Published: *Selected Documents*, pp. 80–86.

673 The Kielce ghetto, established in April 1941, had approximately 27,000 inmates. About 20,000 of them were murdered in Treblinka.

674 The Częstochowa ghetto, established in April 1941, had approximately 40,000 inmates; their number increased to 48,000 (including Jews from neighbouring towns) until mid-1942. More than 38,000 were murdered in Treblinka.

675 The Będzin ghetto was established in early 1940 as an open ghetto (closed in autumn 1942) with approximately 25,000–30,000 inmates. Most of them were murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

676 The Piotrków Trybunalski ghetto was established in October 1939 as the first one in the occupied Polish territories. It had approximately 25,000 inmates, of whom 22,000 were murdered in Treblinka.

677 The Otwock ghetto (Warsaw County) was established in 1941 with approximately 12,000 inmates including both local Jews and patients of local sanatoria. At least 2,000 died of hunger and diseases, at least 8,000 were murdered in Treblinka; most of the remaining people were murdered on the spot by the Jewish police.

678 In Węgrów (Sokołów Podlaski County), an open ghetto was established in December 1940, with approximately 11,000 inmates; of them, 8,500 were murdered in Treblinka.

679 In the original in Hebrew.

21 *After 6 September 1942, Warsaw ghetto. Author unknown, report by a workshop employee on the selection process on 6 September 1942 in the so-called 'cauldron'*

[1] The night of 5–6 September, 4 a.m., I'm awoken by some commotion in adjacent rooms, on the stairs and in the yard. My neighbours inform me that by 10 a.m. all Jews are to assemble on the streets adjacent to the *Umschlag*, within the borders of following streets: Gęsia, Smocza, Niska, Nalewki.

It looked like the last act of a 6-week playtime with the Jews of Warsaw. Indescribable panic fell amongst the people, and two groups can be distinguished: the first, those who learned during the *Aktion* not to attach themselves to things such as clothes and bedding. These decide to grab only the most necessary things. The second group still strongly believes in the possibility Jews being placed in a new ghetto, and most importantly, is unable to leave any property to its fate. And that's why they're packing money, along with bundles, and even bedclothes. One proof that everyone has lost their mind and nobody knows what to do – in the yard an elderly man, over 50 years old, stops me, a man who under any other circumstances could be admonishing me, as he towers over me with prudence and wisdom, but now is desperately asking what to do. In general, as I noticed during the *Aktion*, a calm person very strongly affects nervous people – they cling to him as if seeking help.

The biggest surprise, however, is the fact that the Jewish police, secure and untouchable up till now, must also leave their block and gather on Wołyńska Street. Police families, protected until now, are pulling their bundles towards the marked spot. [1v] However, the police still have much confidence and believe until the last minute that they will survive.

6 o'clock. Usually deserted streets today are full of people. The remaining time: just 4 hours. Large 'regiments' are pushing down Smocza, Nowolipki, Zamenhofa Streets. A ghastly sight. Baggage, bundles, packages, junk made the most terrible impression on me. People still believe that maybe, maybe. And on Smocza Street – a different, striking sight. Along both sides of the street Jewish policemen direct the traffic and guard the perimeter, while sitting comfortably in their chairs. For many weeks, these chairs, mute witnesses, marked the path of Warsaw Jews to the so-called Large *Umschlag*.

They usually march divided into workshop teams, and around eight o'clock it was announced in front of the *Gmina* [building] that several, 9 apparently, workshops and outlets have their own blocks in new perimeters. Of course, Többens, Schultz. And my workshop, too. The remaining outlets, not listed, are seemingly doomed to destruction. People are plunged into utter despair.

I am standing on the balcony over Miła Street. View of Miła, Lubeckiego, Niska Streets. Countless people stream down the street. The wave of people resembles cattle driven to a slaughterhouse. Here and there some groups have already settled on the streets, on the pavement, among ruins of burned-down houses. Camp-like arrangement. In places, individual workshops already seize houses intended for them. It is worth noting how [2] violently new arrivals behave towards previous residents. The former feel confident (they don't know what's coming), the latter are losing the ground under their feet. I saw how in a house intended for Röhrich[680] and previously occupied by O.B.W. employees, a Jewish *Werkschutz* battered old women on their heads – as they had left their apartment for a moment and now wanted to go back.

My workshop gathers on the ruins of a burnt house. The moods amongst people are changing. At the moment, as before the expected blockade, we feel as if we were driven to another location, just as before. People look around their new apartments and complain about the lack of water, toilets or electricity. The previous day there was a terrible blockade, which decimated our workshop. A large number of wounded families are among us, in greatest sorrow. Everyone is dead tired, the heat is terrible, there is no water.

Around noon, German owners of the factory arrive. Mood of anticipation. People are already at the end of their tether. They would agree to stay in the worst hovels, a few families squeezed together, just to survive. Next to me, a lady who is probably used to greater luxury than I am, is indignant when I tell her that the stench in the new rooms is unbearable. 'In Łódź, people lived in worse conditions', she replies.

One of the Jewish directors brings the good [2v] news: we may be returning to the old block in an hour. Eruption of indescribable joy. Only punctured here and there by anxious questions: will they let everyone through. People are

680 Kurt Rörich's saddler workshop at Nowolipie Street 18; prior to July 1942 it employed approximately 500 people.

starting to frantically fix their appearances. Everyone wants to look as 'workman-like' as possible. Men take off their ties, women put on headscarves and place aprons over dresses. I remember that, succumbing to the general mood, I went to my friends' apartment and asked for a headscarf and apron. I was told to take whatever I wanted; the most expensive and the most beautiful things were scattered on the floor, all the apartments looked like a scene after a pogrom, people were frantically sifting through their belongings to pick out the most valuable items.

The managers tell us to line up in fives. When today, after the fact, I think of the joy the people felt for themselves or for their loved ones, the joy with which they went to their deaths, a shiver runs down my spine. Men tossed up their hats, parents hugged their children.

A crowd of strangers (today called: 'savages')[681] assembles together with the workshop; they want to move back to their old apartments. The German owner of the factory declares that if a stranger is found in any given five, the whole five will be eliminated. People are overwhelmed with fear. There are questions: 'Do you have an *Ausweis*? Who are you?' etc. Everyone moves away from strangers, as if they were lepers. There was a woman in my five who didn't belong to the workshop; she was forced out of the ranks, and one of our foremen, Fels, gave a lecture on the superiority of the so-called local patriotism, [3] because why should 'ours' fall victim to 'strangers'? I wonder who is ours, and who is a stranger.

Joyful mood disappears. Bad premonitions overwhelm all of us, as sinister green SS uniforms approach from afar.

We are now standing at the corner of Niska and Miła Streets. To this day, this place fills me with dread. There is an outpost assembling next to us, *Ostbahn*, I guess. Lined-up men present their strength and vigour, like slaves on a market. The majority have athletic builds, wear sports shirts and flex their muscles. German *Werkschutze* walk through, examine their chattel, and I'm waiting for a scene taken straight from *Uncle Tom's Cabin;*[682] will they

681 There were two groups of residents in the ghetto after the *Grossaktion*: the registered and the 'savages'. The first group were those who had been officially assigned to workshops. The second group had no permission to live. Of the approximately 60,000 in October 1942, about half had the official status.

682 Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1851 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, depicting the plight of Black slaves in the United States.

look at their teeth, checking if they're healthy, like horses? A nightmarish sight: so many big and strong lads cower in their line in front of a handful of Germans.

We take a few steps forward. It's difficult to walk, backpacks are hurting us, small children loaf about under our feet, the heat is hellish and searing.

We stop at the very corner of the street.

The control has begun. It is carried out very quickly. I am standing quite far away and it is difficult for me to see what exactly is going on. As I approach the control area, I begin to discern a crowd of people on the right, and the crowd is growing. Women and children, very few men. Mainly children. Now I can see clearly familiar faces. Two Ukrainians guard the front of this group, directed to the train tracks. From all the fives, more and more victims are sent in this direction. It's my group's turn. In front of me – a very young [3v] woman with a beautiful child in her arms. An SS officer's whip falls down on her head. A Jewish policeman pushes her quickly out of the ranks, the woman is followed by her husband. A boy is pulled out of the line and cries out 'Mama!' His mother has been let through and is afraid to turn back and look at the child. Exceptionally, there were no shots fired during the selection. It was said that in some places people were dropping like flies.

We are controlled by two SS officers. Each, of course, whip in hand. A moment passes and the sentence arrives. Our whole five is rushing towards the released. They make us kneel. We lie on our knees, one five behind the other. SS count us up like cattle led to slaughter. The company was allocated 750 people. Jewish policemen assist with the counting. Never before, during any of the blockades, did the Germans treat Jewish policemen this way. They hit them at every opportunity. Those of us who are kneeling think that this hell is already behind us, but we are mistaken. At one point, a German discovers a child hidden in one of the fives. He pulls the child out, along with the mother. Parallel to the kneeling row there are carts and rickshaws with luggage, the porters are standing by the carts. At one point one of the Germans kicked a rickshaw. Suitcases fall to the ground. From under the heap, a 5-year-old boy appears. A Jewish policeman takes advantage of the German's inattention and pushes the child into some five, between two girls with backpacks. These huge backpacks cover the boy. [4] I can see, however, how the boy's head trembles. It is worth noting that this policeman is the boy's uncle.

We don't look back anymore. Only screams and crying can be heard. A car stops next to us. A chauffeur gets out, clad in an SS uniform. His face, like every SS-man's face, is monstrous to a Jew. He speaks broken Polish, like Prussians. He passes by us, he watches closely, one moment and a new victim jumps up from her knees and runs under the lashes of his whip towards a group of the condemned. All women. People hold their breath. The chauffeur searches the coat that someone is holding next to me, he checks if there is another child hidden there. He moves on.

Jewish policemen bring terrifying news – they are demanding 30 more women from among those released. And again, you have to experience the torment of fear, that this time it may be me . . . One after the other tired figures rise and go to their imminent death. Now the operation is managed in part by Jewish headmasters; it is often up to their decision who will stay. A young girl dragged out of the line is calling to the director (Bergazyn):[683] 'Mr Bergazyn! You knew my father!' The director throws up his arms helplessly. A woman is struggling with a policeman. The German runs up, the whip falls, the woman runs, afraid of a bullet.

Lejkin arrives by a rickshaw, controls the efficiency of his 'little soldiers', preens in front of the Germans.

Our knees hurt, backpacks get heavier and heavier, hearts constantly tremble in fear – when will it end, [4v] when will we go?

We can hardly believe when they tell us to get up, and we're on the move. We walk down empty Smocza Street. The sight is terrifying. On both sides – chairs left by the policemen, and gutters full of backpacks, brand new, recently sewn, stuffed, now lying around, abandoned by those who were sent to Treblinka.

We are on the move, we can see our gate from afar. We are all walking: mothers without their children, children without their parents, husbands without their wives, we have avoided death yet again.

ARG II 270 (Ring. II/206)
Description: original, handwritten, pencil, Polish, 158×195 mm, 4 sheets, 8 pages.

683 Eliasz Bergazyn, supervisor of a carpenter's Hallmann's workshop on Nowolipki. Assassinated by ŻOB in January 1943.

Glossary

'13' see 'THE THIRTEEN.'

AJDC (JDC, JOINT) – abbr. American (Jewish) Joint Distribution Committee; charity organisation established in 1914, active in the interwar period, remained in Nazi-occupied Poland officially until the United States entered the war, then underground; re-established in Poland several times after the war.

AKTION (German, lit. action; pl. *AKTIONEN*) – a term in Nazi-occupation newspeak; a German operation aimed at total or partial destruction of a Jewish population of a town, ghetto or camp, linked with terror, torture, pillage, confiscation of belongings, mass murder on the spot and/or in killing centres. In Hebrew, Lewin refers to it also as *mifal* (lit. action).

AKTION ERNTEFEST (German, lit. operation harvest) – code name for the murder of more than 42,000 Jews in labour camps in the Lublin area, on 3–4 November 1943; the last stage of Aktion Reinhard / *EINSATZ REINHARD*.

ALEYNHILF (Yiddish), abbreviated name for *Yidishe Sotsyale Aleynhilf*; see ŻSS.

AMALEKITES – biblical people, living between Canaan and Egypt; emblematic enemies of ancient Israelites, and of Jews in general.

ARYAN (from German *Arier*) – term used in Nazi racial theory, meaning mainly Germanic people; opposite of a Jew; a non-Jew.

BLOCKADE – here: surrounding of a street, or a building block by various ghetto police during an *Aktion*, with the aim of maximising the number of victims sent to death.

CENTOS (Polish, acronym for *Centrala Związku Towarzystw Opieki nad Sierotami i Dziećmi Opuszczonymi*) – Central Association for the Care of Orphans, established in 1924. Its activities were partially supported by AJDC.

CHOLENT (perhaps from old French *chald,* now *chaud,* warm) – traditional Shabbat dish, usually meat, potatoes and beans, prepared on Friday during the day and kept warm overnight often in an oven at a baker's.

COUNCILLORS – here: members of the *Judenrat* (Jewish Council).

EAST – here: undefined place to which Jews were assumed to be deported during an *AKTION;* synonym for a killing centre or death.

EINSATZ REINHARD (German, lit. operation Reinhard) – code name for the murder of Jews of the General Government. It started in March 1942, its last stage was *AKTION ERNTEFEST* in November 1943. It resulted in approximately two million victims.

ERETZ ISRAEL (Hebrew, lit. Land of [People] Israel) – biblical Promised Land; Palestine.

GAZETA ŻYDOWSKA (Polish, *Jewish Gazette)* – periodical in Polish, published in Kraków officially from 23 July 1940 until 28 August 1942 and distributed in the entire GG; despite its publishing all the discriminatory German decrees, it also contains rich data on Jewish life throughout occupied Poland and remains as important testimony and a source of information.

GESTAPO (German, acronym for *Geheime Staatspolizei*) – secret political police of the Third Reich. See also *SICHERHEITSPOLIZEI.*

GMINA (Polish) – the smallest unit of territorial self-government.

GMINA [ŻYDOWSKA] (Polish) or *KEHILLAH* (Hebrew) – lit. community; traditional self-government organisation of Jews of a given town.

GRAJEK (Polish) – lit. mediocre musician, player; derived from the saying *SZAFA GRA.*

GROSSAKTION (German, Great Campaign) – also called the Great Deportation; it began in the Warsaw ghetto on 22 July and lasted until 21 September 1942. Jews were transported to the Treblinka killing centre, where they were killed in gas chambers. Approximately 275,000 people were murdered in that operation.

GROSZ (Polish, pl. GROSZES) – Polish currency, 1/100 of a ZLOTY.

GUBERNIA, General Government, *Generalgouvernement*, GG – central part of Poland occupied by the Third Reich, following Hitler's decree of 26 October 1939. It existed as an administrative unit until the end of World War II. The GG was divided into four districts, with authorities located in Kraków, Lublin, Radom and Warsaw. The fifth District, Galicia, i.e. mostly former Polish voivodships of Stanisławów, Tarnopol and Lwów (in the USSR from 17 September 1939), was included in the GG from 1 August 1941. The central authority was governor general Hans Frank, residing in Kraków.

HALUTZ (Hebrew, pioneer; female *HALUTZAH*, plural: *HALUTZIM*) – member of the Zionist pioneer socialist youth movement *Hehalutz*, which sought to prepare young people for settlement in Palestine, especially by preparing them to work in agriculture.

Hashomer Hatzair (Hebrew, the Young Guard) – Zionist socialist youth movement, founded in 1913, established in Poland in 1922. Its members played a significant role in organising civil and armed resistance against the Germans.

Hotel Polski affair – German trap organised during the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto in spring 1943 in the old hotel (established 1808) on Długa Street 29, aimed to plan seizures of Jews from their hiding places. Among the Jews, the owners of passports of the neutral countries were promised to be exchanged for German citizens interned by the Allies. Most of the people who reported to Hotel Polski eventually perished in Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz; of approximately 4,000–5,000 inmates just 10 per cent survived.

Huns – European barbarous and destructive nomadic invaders of the 4th–5th centuries C.E.

JDC, see AJDC.

Jewish police, see *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst*.

Jewish Self-Help, see ŻSS.

Joint, see AJDC.

JSS, see ŻSS.

Judenrat (German, pl. *Judenräte*) – Jewish Council, German-appointed authorities for Jews of a given town or labour camp; sometimes referred to as *gmina* or *kehillah*, also as Council of Elders.

Judenrein (German, free of Jews) – term used in German reports after deportations, to state that a town or city is literally cleansed of Jews.

Jüdische Hilfskomitee, JHK (German, Jewish Welfare Committee) – the official German name of ŻKOM (Jewish Municipal Welfare Committee), a Warsaw branch of the German-licensed, Jewish Social Self-Help in Kraków. In March 1942, other social institutions operating in the ghetto, including CENTOS and TOZ, were formally incorporated into ŻKOM.

Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst (German, Jewish Order Service) – uniformed service staffed by Jews, established by Germans to keep order inside ghettos, usually referred to as Jewish police.

junak (Polish, lit. brave young man, pl. *junacy*) – popular term for the workers of the Construction Service (*Baudienst*). They worked at road construction, laying railway tracks, and river engineering, and also participated in German police actions.

kehillah, see 2. Gmina.

kibbutz (Hebrew, lit. gathering) – settlement in Palestine or Israel, established from the early 20th century, based on collective work and ownership of means of production; the settlement or agriculture unit in the diaspora where people prepared for the work in Palestine; after World War II, a centre where survivors waited for emigration to Palestine.

LABOUR camps, forced labour camps – camps established in the General Government: from August 1940 in the districts of Lublin and Kraków, and from the spring of 1941 also in the district of Warsaw. Jews between 14 and 60 years of age who were subject to forced labour worked on road construction or drainage projects. Most of the people sent to the camps who returned to the ghetto were in very poor shape, both physically and mentally. Prisoners were often beaten; in some camps, executions were carried out. As there were no volunteers for the camps, from the spring of 1941 ghetto inhabitants were rounded up at random, typically at night, with the assistance of the Jewish Police and the Polish Police. The victims were usually those who could not afford a bribe, and thus were the poorest among the ghetto's inhabitants.

Landrat (German) – county head.

Leszno 13, see the Thirteen.

(LIFE) NUMBERS – usually pieces of paper with stamps, sometimes metal marks, given by Germans to workshop owners for distribution among workers in order to save them from deportation; in the end, they proved worthless.

LITVAK – popular name for a Jew coming from territories of the former *Lite* (often wrongly assumed to be the present-day Lithuania), i.e. north-eastern Poland, western Belarus, south Lithuania and north-eastern Prussia, part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the 16th–18th centuries.

ŁAPANKA (Polish, round-up) – seizure of random passers-by for forced labour or for street execution.

META (Yiddish and Polish, from thieves' slang; lit. end, destination) – hideout, place of concealment, also of stolen goods

OSTDEUTSCHE BAUTISCHLEREI WERKSTAETTE, OBW – carpentry workshop at Gęsia Street 30 and 75–79, run by brothers Aleksander and Józef Landau. During the *GROSSAKTION*, many OYNEG SHABES members found employment there.

OYNEG SHABES (Hebrew, Joy of Shabbat) – code name of the underground archive of the Warsaw ghetto, also called the Ringelblum Archive, from the name of its organiser and leader, Polish-Jewish historian Emanuel Ringelblum.

PAWIAK PRISON – the largest German political prison, on Pawia Street in Warsaw (hence the name). During the German occupation, approximately 100,000 people were confined there, of whom 37,000 were murdered, including Emanuel Ringelblum and his family.

PLACÓWKA (Polish, pl. *PLACÓWKI*) – detail work site.

PLACÓWKARZE (Polish) – forced labourers assigned to a *placówka*.

POINTS OR REFUGEE CENTRES – in the Warsaw ghetto, shelters for the resettled and refugees. Due to the shortage of appropriate rooms, the shelters were located in former prayer rooms, cinema halls or private quarters. They were terribly overcrowded and usually devoid of any sanitary facilities, factors which contributed to very high mortality rates.

PRAGA – district of Warsaw on the right, i.e. eastern bank of the Wisła (Vistula) River.

RASSENSCHANDE (German, race defilement) – term introduced by the Nazis to refer to forbidden sexual relations between non-Jews and Jews; defined as a crime in the September 1935 Blood Protection Law, one of the Nuremberg Laws of that year.

RATION CARDS – introduced by the German authorities in Warsaw on 15 December 1939; until February 1940 they were identical for all inhabitants; gradually they discriminated the Jewish population; in 1941 the food assigned to Germans had 2,613 calories, to Poles – 669, to Jews – 184. The ration card system resulted in extensive smuggling which brought in more than 80 per cent of the food available in the Warsaw ghetto.

RESETTLEMENT, see *WYSIEDLENIE*.

SEPTEMBER CAMPAIGN – Polish-German war of September 1939, launching World War II.

SHE'ERIT HAPLETA (Hebrew, lit. surviving remnant) – biblical term deriving from Leviticus 26:44–45, reflecting the idea that God will never destroy the Jewish people entirely; after World War II, the term is used in reference to Holocaust survivors.

SHOMER (Hebrew, the guard; fem. SHOMERET, pl. *SHOMRIM*, fem. *SHOMROT*) – member of *HASHOMER HATZAIR*.

SICHERHEITSPOLIZEI, SIPO (German, security police) – in the Third Reich the term referred to the GESTAPO and Criminal Police.

SOUP KITCHENS – kitchens run by Jewish welfare organisations, supplying inhabitants of the ghetto with free or inexpensive soup. The first kitchens were organised as early as during the siege of Warsaw. At the peak of their operation, in August 1941, soup kitchens gave out 128,000 portions of soup a day in the Warsaw ghetto.

ST BARTHOLOMEW NIGHT – reference to the night of 23/24 August 1572 when the Huguenots, French Protestants, were slaughtered by Catholics in Paris.

SZAFA GRA (Polish, lit. the jukebox is playing) – popular saying in the Warsaw ghetto, meaning that a sufficient bribe was paid, usually to the Jewish Police.

THE THIRTEEN, '13', LESZNO 13 – in the Warsaw ghetto, the popular name of the Office for Combating Usury and Profiteering; the Gestapo agency was established in December 1940, dissolved in April 1941; its activity amounted to blackmail, extortion and smuggling; the name derived from its address, Leszno Street 13.

TÖBBENS – Walther Caspar Többens, an industrialist from Bremen, founder of workshops in the Warsaw ghetto which manufactured clothes and uniforms as well as haberdashery for the Wehrmacht. His workshops were located at Leszno Street 74

(so-called 'little Többens') and Prosta Street 14 (so-called 'large Többens'), they employed several hundred people. During the *Grossaktion*, the number of workers increased significantly, as employment in the workshops was supposed to protect one from deportation. The workers were resettled to the labour camp in Poniatowa, where in November 1943 they were all murdered during the *Aktion Erntefest*.

Todt Organisation – entity comprised of construction companies and state enterprises, founded in Germany in 1938 and dealing in the construction of military facilities. During World War II, it extensively used forced labour.

Toporol (Polish, acronym for *Towarzystwo Popierania Rolnictwa*) – Society for the Support of Agriculture, an association founded in 1933. In the ghetto, it was primarily responsible for the agricultural education of youth, organising courses in farm work, agricultural training, and fruit and vegetable horticulture. Such work was carried out on all available vacant spaces in the ghetto as well as on spaces where debris was cleared away by its students. Toporol also arranged gardens for schools and day-care facilities.

TOZ (Polish, acronym for *Towarzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej w Polsce*) – Society for the Protection of Health of the Jewish Population in Poland, established in 1922.

Treblinka II (Sokołów Podlaski County) – killing centre, in operation from July 1942 to August 1943. During that timeframe, approximately 800,000 Jews were murdered in gas chambers, mainly from the General Government, including 270,000 from the Warsaw ghetto, as well as about 2,000 Romanies.

TSYSHO (Yiddish, acronym for *Tsentrale Yidishe Shul Organizatsye*) – Central Jewish School Organisation, established in Poland in 1921, secular Yiddishist educational network, supported by the Bund.

Umschlagplatz (German, lit. reloading site, also referred to as *Umschlag* or *platz*) – railway siding and warehouses at Stawki and Dzika Streets in Warsaw. In the summer of 1942 it served as a gathering point for Jews who were to be deported to the Treblinka killing centre.

Volksdeutsch, Volksdeutsche (German, lit. ethnic German[s]) – person(s) of German origin living outside the borders of the German state before 1939, who declared German nationality after the Nazi seizure of power.

WARSAW GHETTO – officially called the *jüdische Wohnbezirk* (JEWISH RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT) – the largest Jewish ghetto in Nazi-occupied Europe. It was established on 16 October 1940 and sealed on 15 November 1940. The ghetto comprised an area of 3.4 km² (1.3 sq mi) and at its peak held 460,000 Jews, including more than 120,000 deportees from surrounding towns, and also from abroad. They lived in immensely overcrowded conditions, and were ravaged by starvation and illnesses. Despite the dire situation, the Warsaw ghetto was home to much cultural and social activity, underground presses, etc. The ghetto area was reduced several times, resulting in late 1941 to the division into the popularly called large ghetto and small ghetto, connected from February 1942 by a wooden bridge over Chłodna Street. Starting in 22 July 1942, over two months approximately 280,000 ghetto inhabitants were deported to the Treblinka killing centre. The last chapter in the history of the Warsaw ghetto was the uprising, which broke out on 19 April 1943 and was the largest Jewish revolt of World War II. Thereafter its remaining buildings were razed to the ground.

WARTHELAND—western Polish territories incorporated into the Reich in October 1939. It consisted of the former provinces of Pomerania, Silesia, Poznań, Łódź, the northern and western part of Mazovia, and the Suwałki region.

WEHRMACHT (German, lit. military power) – the entire military structure of the Third Reich.

WERKSCHUTZ (German, factory protection) – guard composed of German, Ukrainian and Jewish units, serving as police in German workshops in the ghetto.

WERTERFASSUNG or *WERTERFASSUNGSTELLE* (German, indirect translation: recycling station) – company set up by and subordinate to the SS, tasked with gathering and sorting property left by deported Jews. Its head was Obersturmführer Franz Konrad, a commander of the Warsaw ghetto. The institution employed approximately 4,000 people; almost all were deported in April 1943.

WYSIEDLENIE (Polish, resettlement, deportation) – at the beginning of the German occupation, the word was used to mean expulsion of large ethnic groups of people, Polish and Jewish, sometimes entire communities, especially from the territories incorporated into the Third Reich, to the GENERAL GOVERNMENT, and then Jews from small towns of the Warsaw District to the Warsaw ghetto; in reference to the Holocaust, the term was used in relation to the deportation and death in the killing centres in Treblinka, Bełżec, Sobibór, Majdanek (on the GG territory), Kulmhof and Auschwitz (on the Third Reich territory).

Yeke (also *yekke*) – popular Jewish term for German Jews, here a reference to Germans.

YIKOR (Yiddish, acronym for *Yidishe Kulturele Organizatsye*) – clandestine Jewish Cultural Organisation, established in the Warsaw ghetto in December 1941; it promoted Yiddish language and culture, organised concerts and events devoted to famous Jewish writers; it supported the clandestine schools with Yiddish as a language of instruction.

YIVO (Yiddish, *Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut*) – Yiddish Scientific Institute (now YIVO Institute for Jewish Research), research centre concentrated on the study of the history and culture of East European Jews, founded in 1925 in Berlin, with headquarters in Wilno and branches in approximately 30 countries. From 1940 on, its branch in New York assumed the role as its headquarters.

yovn (Hebrew/Yiddish, pl. *yevonim,* lit. Greek(s) – a traditional derogatory epithet denoting coarse and brutal foreigners, especially soldiers or troops; here it means German(s).

Zakład Zaopatrywania (Polish, Supply Unit) – an office established in December 1940, dealing with supplies of goods for the ghetto from external companies. It was affiliated with the *Judenrat* until September 1941. At its head was Abraham Gepner.

zloty (Polish, pl. zlotys) – Polish currency. See also grosz.

Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa, ŻOB (Polish, Jewish Fighting Organisation) – military grouping, established on 28 July 1942 during the *Grossaktion* by youth Zionist organisations *Hashomer Hatzair*, Dror and Akiba for self-defence and armed resistance. Most of the fighters perished in the Warsaw ghetto uprising of April–May 1943.

ŻSS, YSA, JSS (Polish, *Żydowska Samopomoc Społeczna;* Yiddish, *Yidishe Sotsyale Aleynhilf;* German, *Jüdische Soziale Selbsthilfe*) – Jewish Social Self-Help, organisation for social aid for Jews in the General Government, active under other name(s) from September 1939, officially established 29 May 1940; it served as the umbrella organisation for CENTOS, TOZ and other Jewish associations; it was liquidated by the Nazis on 29 July 1942 and replaced by the Jewish Self-Help Office of dubious activity, which lasted until spring 1944.

Religious terms

ADMOR (Hebrew, acronym of the title: our master, teacher and rabbi) – honorary title, used especially in Hasidic circles; often a synonym of *TZADDIK*, or *rebbe*.

MINYAN (Hebrew, number, quorum; pl. *MINYANIM*) – prayer group of at least 10 adult men (in many contemporary circles, also women), required for public prayers and for reading the Torah.

ROSH HASHANAH (Hebrew: beginning of the year) – Jewish New Year; commemorates the creation of the world and the Day of Judgement.

SHAVUOT (Hebrew, lit. weeks) – festival celebrated seven weeks after *Pesach*; commemoration of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai; originally, celebration of the end of the harvest.

TZADDIK (Hebrew, lit. just, righteous person) – *Hasidic* spiritual leader, often called *rebbe*.

YOM KIPPUR (Hebrew, Day of Atonement) – day of fasting and prayer on the tenth day of the month of *Tishrei* (September/October); in Poland often called a Day of Judgement; it concludes the celebration of the Jewish New Year.

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