

XXXII

The Third Akcja

On 28th September 1942, the third *akcja* took place, following the same course as the two previous ones.

The residents of several ghetto streets were led out to the marketplace, where *Hauptmann* Degenhardt, surrounded by his assistants, made a selection of young people and professional workmen, who were retained and thus separated from their families. The familiar heartrending scenes, just like in the previous *akcje*, took place before the several thousand Jews were loaded into the cattle cars.

After the third *akcja*, *Hauptmann* Degenhardt visited the *Quartieramt* [Billeting Office] at ul. Wilsona, which was under the management of Inspector Lindermann. He ordered the Jews, who were employed there, to be lined up in rows. Panic ensued. The Jews, who were hiding there in the attics and cupboards, trembled with fear. Inspector Lindermann showed *Hauptmann* Degenhardt his Jewish workers and declared that the *Quartieramt* and the Jewish workers, who were employed there, belonged to the *Stadthauptmannschaft*, to which the *Hauptmann* replied that the times when the Jews had belonged to the *Stadthauptmann* and to the Gestapo had already passed. Now, all the Jews belonged only to him, whereupon he waved his baton in front of Inspector Lindermann's nose and left.

It was easy to predict the consequences of this incident. We already knew that every quarrel between Germans regarding Jews had a bad outcome for the Jews. That is also how the Jews in the *Quartieramt* felt - that their situation had changed for the worse.

Upon learning of the incident in the *Quartieramt*, the craftsmen of Aleja 14 also realised that their position, under Lindermann's "protection", had become very shaky, despite all his assurances.

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Mrs Mosiewicz, the actual manager of the workshops, appeared in the Craftsmen's House. The craftsmen wished to find out, from her, about the situation. She provided the best hopes and said that the *Stadthauptmann* was employing all means [so] that the Craftsmen's House should remain as it had been hitherto, and she was sure that nothing bad would happen to anyone here. Once more, she gave out orders to the craftsmen for German clients and said that all the craftsmen should work peacefully and help one another at work, so that the Craftsmen's House should remain active.

Once more, the craftsmen began to work, but very different clients arrived. Instead of the previous German civilians, in whose hands the fate of the Jews lay at the time, Gestapo men and gendarmes now appeared, with their wives and children. The craftsmen would take

advantage of their, so to say, “privileged” situation to find something out from the new “customers”, regarding the further fate of the craftsmen. The new clients gave everyone the best hopes. They actually comported themselves quite “decently” in the craftsmen’s workshops - nothing like their behaviour in the street, while driving the Jews along. But this, of course, was to make better use of the craftsmen and because their turn had not yet arrived.

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Hauptmann Degenhardt found out that Jews had hidden in bunkers, in attics and cellars, and he declared an “amnesty” for all those who, by a certain deadline, would come out of the hideouts of their own accord and they would be allowed to return to their houses.

Jewish policemen, accompanied by gendarmes and Ukrainians, went to all the courtyards and shouted, “*Jews, we’ve come to save you from death! Come out of the holes and nothing will happen to you!*”

Many emerged from their hiding places. They were in a terrible state - starved, fainting and neglected. They had to give up any valuable items that they had, whereupon they were allowed to enter the buildings that had not yet gone through the *akcja*.

But there were also others, who had good bunkers and food, who could last for several weeks. Those people paid no heed to the nice words of the Jewish policemen and remained in the hideouts.

Once the deadline of the “amnesty” had passed, the gendarmerie began to energetically seek out those in hiding. The Jewish policemen, who had their acquaintances amongst the gendarmes, with whom they would conduct various partnership deals, went together with the gendarmes throughout the courtyards and searched for the bunkers with Jews. They shouted in Yiddish that, if the hidiers would come out of their own accord, they would still be saved. They shouted into the cellars and attics until they came upon people who were already weary of lying in the hideouts and they emerged. When these people were already outside, they were ordered, first of all, to give up everything they owned - while the Jewish policeman would ostensibly reassure them that he would try [to convince] the gendarme to spare their lives if they yielded everything. Once they had already taken everything away from the victims, the gendarme shot them on the spot - the Jewish policeman would receive a certain percent from the robbed items.