

Jews Would Escape from the Collection Point

There was one occasion, when seventy-six of the eighty-two captured Jews fled and only six people were left. This was on the night of 6th to 7th June 1941. The *Judenrat's* Employment Bureau had received a demand to supply a large number of Jews to be sent away to Dęblin for work. The Jewish police captured eighty-two men and guarded them in the study-hall at Aleja 1. The detainees knocked a hole in the wall of the women's section upstairs and let themselves down with a rope. This incident scandalised the *Judenrat* to such an extent, that they ordered a special investigation, which was headed by Pohorille himself. Only six men had not managed to escape and, with an aching heart, they awaited some miracle... and they *were* actually sent away⁶⁰.

At the end of August 1941, 1,400 men were captured and they were imprisoned at the "Quellen" factory under appalling conditions. The factory halls were much too small for such a large amount of people. Many, therefore, did not have the "luck" to lie on the floors under a roof, and were forced to lie on the bare earth in the factory grounds. A bleak "cattle trade" ensued. German offices, German gendarmes, the Jewish Employment Bureau, the leadership of the Jewish police and the Jewish and Polish constables, who were guarding the grounds, [all] squeezed money from the detainees. A certain number were, in fact, freed by the money-takers. Others were released because their families provided substitutes. These replacements were poverty-stricken Jews, for a certain sum, were prepared to be sent out, as they believed, to hard and dangerous work, in order to be able to alleviate, with the money, the need and hunger of their families and relatives.

Six hundred Jews, who were concurrently being held at ul. Srebrna in seven old buildings, were in a similar plight. It was only after the multiple interventions on part of the TOZ and the German Employment Bureau, as regards the threatening peril of epidemics among the detainees at these concentration points, and the continuous written notifications from the director of the TOZ's sanitary department, Dr Adam Wolberg, regarding the same issue, that those, who had no means of buying their way out, were freed, after they had been held there for three and a half weeks.

At the beginning of July 1942, on Saturday at about eleven o'clock before noon, the Jewish police, across all the ghetto streets, spread the grim tidings that all men aged between fourteen and sixty were to report within half an hour to the New Market [Nowy Rynek] square and to the First Aleja. The ghetto became anxious. Men say goodbye to their wives and children. Adult offspring bid farewell to their elderly parents and younger brothers and sisters. Cries are heard throughout the streets, "We'll see each other again soon..." Thousands of Jews stream to the designated locations. Almost everyone is holding some paper attesting that the holder is employed at a "*placówka*". No one is dragging any packs with him. People are uneasy and yet each one believes that they do not mean him - he is not the one they will send away. *Schutzpolizei*, *Gestapowces*, Polish *Granatowa Policja** and also members of the

⁶⁰ According to a written report by Adv. Pohorille.

* [TN: Lit., "Navy-blue Police"; the Blue Police was the Polish police force serving under the Nazis in the Generalgouvernement.]

Judenrat and Jewish policemen are stationed at the large square of the New Market, the Old Market and the First Aleja.

All the assembled Jews stood in long rows, grouped according to the "*placówki*" to which they belonged. Higher-ranking police and Gestapo people inspected every group, and the *Judenrat* representatives gave the Germans different explanations. With effort and in great anxiety, the thousands of Jews followed, with their gazes, every movement of the police and Gestapo officers ambling about, headed by the *Stadthauptmann* at the time, Dr [Eberhard] Franke.

After waiting for three hours, everyone was released and sent off in groups to their work stations. The ghetto breathed freely. But not a whole hour passed and the Jewish police, at the request of the *Schutzpolizei*, ordered a certain number of workers from the "*placówki*" to report to the *Judenrat*'s yard which, at the time, was located at Aleja 11. Over 2,000 men presented themselves, of which a certain proportion were sent home, and the rest were led away to the former *Metalurgia* metal factory at ul. Krótka.

Those detained there were tortured for three days, with threats of being sent away to the camps in Germany. Many were terribly beaten by Germans without any reason. All efforts to gain knowledge of the detainees' future fate produced no results. Many of the captives made their way out to ul. Kawia, over rooftops and smooth walls, and from there escaped. After three days and nights, everyone was released.

This mobilisation, as it were, of the Jewish workforce increased even more the unrest that had started to spread in the ghetto after the spring of 1942, when the terrifying news of the expulsion from Warsaw cut in like lightning. The feeling of uncertainty about tomorrow engulfed everyone as an electric storm. The question of working, one day a week, ceased to exist. Buying one's way out of work for money stopped. Each one strove to belong to a "*placówka*", where he could work regularly, thus being "covered" and not being threatened with deportation.

But, until that moment, when everyone had already set out to work at "*placówki*" - viz. up to about 20th August 1942 - "special operations", besides the abovementioned *akcje*, were conducted by the Jewish police, mostly at night. They captured people with whom to fill the vacancies at different "*placówki*". From just 18th June 1942 until 19th August 1942, the Jewish police carried out fifteen such "*akcje*"⁶¹.

The leadership of the Jewish police writes, among other things, in a letter dated 15th December 1941 (Nº8091) to the presidium of the *Judenrat*, regarding the results of the "*łapanki*" [round-ups]:

*"Among the captives, there those who are very often tattered and lice-ridden"*⁶².

Therefore, the police proposed that the *Judenrat* should set up a special isolation facility, where the captives should be held. This observation, by the police, characterises which echelon of the populace suffered the most from these "*łapanki*".

⁶¹ Daily reports by the Jewish police (Police Ledger).

⁶² Letter from Majznerowicz (Polish commander of the Jewish police) to the *Judenrat*.

Przewodniczący Rady Starszych

[illegible]

To

the management of the local Jewish Order Service

In connection with the relevant regulation of the Authorities, the Council of Elder requests that the Management of the Jewish Order Service order its subordinate officers not to allow the Jewish population to gather on the pavements and in front of the gates, while Russian prisoners of war are transported through the city, to disperse onlookers and to bring those reluctant to strict responsibility.

In view of the admonition of the authorities in this regard, we consider this matter to be very urgent, therefore we ask for the appropriate order to be issued immediately.

Chairman of the Council of Elders

Announcement

Regarding: the Creation of Jewish Residential Districts

[The rest is illegible]

21. Februar 1941

Ka/Br

1) Schreibe
An den
Chef des Distrikt Radom,
Herrn Gouverneur Dr. Lasch,
Radom,
Sehr geehrter Herr Gouverneur!

In der Anlage übermittle ich den gewünschten Plan 1 : 1000 mit der Einzelzeichnung des besprochenen Ghettoverlaufes. Die Zeichnung bringt zwei Möglichkeiten zum Ausdruck: den Abschluss des Viertels durch Vergitterung der nach der Strasse zu führenden Öffnungen (Fenster, Türen, u. s. w.) mit Eisengittern, wobei der Bürgersteig nicht ins Ghetto fallen würde. Ich habe diese Lösung einmal angeschnitten, weil die Aufstellung des Zaunes am Bordstein des Bürgersteiges immer den Nachteil mit sich bringt, dass, wie man es in Litzmannstadt sehen kann, die Juden auf den Bürgersteigen herumlümmeln, während die Arier in die Gasse treten müssen. Die zweite Lösung sieht die übliche Zaunführung am Rande des Bürgersteiges vor, mit eben dem obengeschilderten Nachteil. Die erste Lösung ist teurer und würde wohl auch auf grössere Materialschwierigkeiten stossen, da das Eisen unverhältnismässig schwierig zu beschaffen sein wird.

Bevor ich mich nun an die zuständigen Stellen um Beschaffung des Materials wenden kann, wobei ich mich auf den mir gewordenen Auftrag berufen muss, darf ich Sie um schriftliche Übermittlung des Auftrages zur Einrichtung des Judenghettos bitten.

Heil Hitler!

2) Wvlg.

An
den Herrn Staatsanwalt beim Sondergericht
in Tschenstochau.

Beiliegend übermittle ich ein Gnadengesuch des jüdischen Ältestenrates, Tschenstochau, mit der Bitte um Weiterleitung. Es ist mir bekannt, wann die Straftat begangen wurde, ob vor oder nach der Beschriftung der Tafeln am Ausgang des Ghettos. Sollte dies nachher geschehen sein bin ich nicht der Meinung, dass man den Verurteilten begnadigen soll. Unbeschadet der Feststellungen des Gerichts im jeweiligen Einzelfall bin ich der Meinung, dass bei den Juden schwer unterscheidbar ist, ob nicht neue Tricks versucht werden. Wenn bekannt wird, dass mit armen Juden Ausnahmen gemacht werden, wird das Verbot wahrscheinlich noch öfters überschritten werden.

I. V.

3. Februar 40.

I. An das
Polizei-Batl. 72
in Tschenstochau.

erl. P. In der Anlage erhalten Sie Abschriften von 2 Eingaben des Judenrates, die mir mit der Bitte übergeben wurden, zu gestatten, dass die Leichen der beiden Toten exhumiert und auf den jüdischen Friedhof beigesetzt werden dürfen. Da ich allein nur leider verpflichtet bin, dem Judenrate diese Frage zu entscheiden, bitte ich um Ihre Stellungnahme. Wenn auch die Schriftstücke nicht so abgefasst sind, so weiss doch nach meiner Überzeugung der Judenrat, dass es sich in beiden Fällen um die Erschiessungen in der Narutowicz-Schule handelt.

Der Stadthauptmann

II. Zum Akt.

21st February 1941

Ka/Br [Kadner/letter]

1.) Writing

To the
Chief of the Radom District
Herr Governor Dr Lasch
Radom

Most esteemed Herr Governor!

In the attachment I am sending the requested plan 1:1000, with the delineation of the course of the ghetto that was discussed. The plan shows two possibilities: the closure of the district by barring the openings leading to the street (windows, doors, etc.) with iron bars, whereby the pavement would not fall into the ghetto. I have touched upon this solution [only] once, because erecting the fence at the curb of the pavement always has the disadvantage that, as can be seen in Litzmannstadt [Łódź], the Jews loiter about on the pavements while the Aryans are forced to walk in the gutter. The second solution provides for the usual fence line at the edge of the pavement, with exactly the [same] disadvantage described above. The first solution is more expensive and would probably also encounter greater material difficulties, since the iron will be exceedingly difficult to obtain.

Before I can approach the relevant authorities to obtain the material, in which case I [shall] need to refer to the order I have been given, I would like to ask you to send me the order for the establishment of the Jewish ghetto in writing.

Heil Hitler!

2.) Follow-up

To
the Herr Public Prosecutor at the Special Court
in Częstochowa

I am enclosing a request for clemency from the Jewish Council of Elders, Częstochowa, with the request that it be forwarded. I [do not?] know when the crime was committed, whether before or after the writing of the signs at the exit of the ghetto. If this happened afterwards, I do not think the convicted person should be pardoned. Irrespective of the court's findings in each individual case, I am of the opinion that it is difficult to ascertain whether new tricks are being tried among the Jews. If it becomes known that exceptions will be made with poor Jews, the ban will probably be violated more often.

I.V.*

3rd February 40

I. To the
72nd Police Battalion
in Częstochowa

erl. P.** Enclosed you will find copies of 2 petitions from the Judenrat, which I was given with a request to allow the bodies of the two dead to be exhumed and buried in the Jewish cemetery. As I am unfortunately obliged to personally decide this question for the *Judenrat*, I ask for your opinion. Even if the documents are not interpreted in this way, I am convinced that the *Judenrat* knows that both cases relate to the shootings in the Narutowicza school.

The *Stadthauptmann*

II. Zum Akt.***

[Caption by the author:] ***This is in regards to Pelta from Mstów and Gnendla Baremhercyk.***

* [TN: Abbreviation of "In Vertretung", meaning "as representative", in this case of the *Stadthauptmann*; Kadner, by whom this letter was written, was the *Stadthauptmann's* deputy, as mentioned above (p.20) at the beginning of the chapter "The Ghetto".]

** [TN: We have as yet not been able to ascertain what this abbreviation stands for.]

*** [TN: Lit. "to the act"; the meaning of this phrase in this context eludes us. "Akt." is possibly an abbreviation.]