

The “Small Ghetto”

The north-eastern part of the former ghetto was designated as living quarters for the more than 5,000 Jews, who had officially been allowed to remain alive. Already, at the beginning of September 1942, the prominent Germans in Częstochowa had marked out, on a detailed map of the ghetto which they had demanded of the *Judenrat*, the area where the Jews left alive would be. This area encompassed several buildings of ul. Mostowa, the small Kozia alley, half of ul. Nadrzeczna, half of ul. Garncarska and a couple of buildings on ul. Spadek. The few buildings on Mostowa were the end of the buildings on Garncarska and Kozia, which belonged to the new ghetto, but bordered with Mostowa, and the buildings on Spadek also belonged to the same streets, but were on the spot where ul. Spadek crosses ul. Kozia.

Factually, the new ghetto consisted of three narrow, filthy parallel-lying alleyways, which were fenced, all around, with barbed wire and were guarded by Ukrainian fascists under the leadership of the *Schutzpolizei*. This area was given the name the ““Small Ghetto””. It was here that, at the end of October 1942, the Germans started bringing the Jews, who had been left alive, who were barracked at various “*placówki*”.

The “Small Ghetto” looked as if after a terrible pogrom. Doors and windows were torn off. All the houses were emptied. Only in the courtyards were there bits of old, poor furniture, broken children’s prams, torn pillows and bedspreads, broken utensils, single shoes, feathers and ordinary rags scattered about. In every courtyard, one sees human shadows rambling about looking for something. One hides a knife, another a spoon and a third some other item. Each one appears to have found a memento of his own home and he conceals it as if it was some sacred object. A woman holds a little child’s shoe and, sobbing, she murmurs that this is surely the shoe of her child. A woman drags a little child’s chair and talks to herself, “My child, my poor child, *nebech**...” Wherever one looks, one notices someone creeping by with an object, concealed under the coat or headscarf. These are fathers or mothers, filled with fear, carrying a doll they found, or another plaything, for their child who is lying hidden somewhere in a bunker. Thus, began life for those who had been sent over from the “*placówki*”, from *Metallurgia* and from quarantine into the “Small Ghetto”.

Little by little, those who had lived on these streets prior to the *akcje* and had, during the *akcje*, hidden there, started to crawl out from cellars and attics. Many Jews, who had hidden on the ““Aryan side”” and were no longer able to stay there, also began to smuggle themselves into the ghetto along with workgroups, as well as some of those who had dodged death in cellars and attics of the former ghetto and could no longer remain there. Hunger and hopelessness drove them out from their hiding places and anyone among them, who had the fortune of coming upon a workgroup, joined it unnoticed and thus smuggled himself into the ghetto. Many were, indeed, killed in the course of such “*wyprawy*” [Pol., expeditions]. Nevertheless, many were also saved in this manner and, by the end of 1942, there were already some 6,500 Jews in the ghetto, of whom over 3,000 were employed at various “*placówki*”, some of them at the ghetto workshops, which were run by the now-diminished

* [TN: *Yid.*, “woe”; expression of pity.]

Judenrat, and some were illegal and not registered. Six and a half thousand dejected shadows, who had stolen a little life from Destiny, were imprisoned inside a stinking cage.

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Life takes on a new form in the "Small Ghetto" - no one is allowed to conduct his own household here. All must work and draw their pathetic livelihood from the *Judenrat*'s kitchen, which has been set up at ul. Nadrzeczna. The wages for the work, which the *placówki* pay for each slave, are appropriated by the *Schutzpolizei*, which have become the only lord over us. The *Schutzpolizei* bends the *Judenrat* into half a kilo of bread a day per worker, to half a litre of coffee and to half a litre of soup at lunch. Those, who are not working, cannot be registered and they, therefore, obviously cannot enjoy the benefits of this provisioning.

Already, at five o'clock in the morning, all must be on their feet and march in groups, under guard, to the workplaces that have been assigned to them, which are outside the ghetto, where the majority are subjected to pain, mockery and spite. At nine o'clock in the evening, the cheerless melody of the trumpet, calling people to bed, is heard throughout the ghetto. Upon marching out to work and coming back, all groups are counted and inspected. From time to time, when people march into the ghetto, the resonating sound of workers singing is heard - which is neither an expression of drunkenness nor joy. This is the manner in which the workgroups deafen the cries of the surviving children, who are smuggled by them inside large bread bags into the ghetto, where new bunkers have already been prepared for them.

The ones, who distinguished themselves the most in this operation, were the workers of the *Möbellager placówka*, where four well-hidden bunkers had been set up in the building at ul. Nadrzeczna 88. Here is a good example of this situation, at the beginning of November 1942, when they smuggled in a large group of children. At the gate of the ghetto "wylot*", on the corner of ul. Nadrzeczna and Rynek Warszawski, where the "Wache" [guardroom] was located, there was then a large group of *Schutzpolizei* headed by Degenhardt. The workers loaded a cart with a great many packs of clothes, which supposedly belonged to them, and Machel Birencwajg, the leader of this workgroup, drove forward with this cart. The Germans began inspecting these packs and the "singers", with their clandestine bags, meanwhile sneaked into the ghetto and disappeared. Similar incidents happened while smuggling in food.

Initially, the number of people working at *placówki* was not precise, because there were some who did not report for work. Among those who did not present themselves for any work were the members of the Combat Organisation, who carried out their activity inside the ghetto itself, such as digging tunnels for the Combat Organisation for old people and children, who were hiding in bunkers and for common folk, who sabotaged working for the Germans, even though from time to time there were victims due to this.

The first victim for not going to work was a Jew by the name of Plat, who was shot in the ghetto by a *Granatowe* policeman, Sametkowski. The murder of a certain Mrs Cymerman and her fourteen-year-old daughter which the Germans committed also remained in everyone's

* [TN: Pol., "mouth/exit"; the word which appears in the Yiddish original is "ווייליאַט", but as this word apparently does not exist, we have chosen the most likely option.]

memory. The mother did not go to any work, because she had fallen into a depression - and the child did not work because she was guarding her mother, who had made several suicide attempts.

The execution of the former secretary of the Commercial Employees Union, Władek Blumenfrucht, made a severe impression upon everyone. Władek was gravely ill and unable to work. On 11th March 1943, Degenhardt ordered him to be shot. When the *Schutzpolizei* men came for him, he swallowed potassium cyanide. But the murderers still managed to lead him out, force him to take off his clothes and shoes, and only then shot him.

At the end of November 1942, the SS and Police leader of the Radom District, Böttcher, carried out an inspection of the "Small Ghetto" and declared it a "labour camp". From then on, the regime intensified ever more - the control became stricter and the number of workers was meticulously registered on a daily basis. The first accurate list of those working at *placówki* was made on 5th December 1942. Then, 2,832 Jews (2,474 men and 358 women) were working at twenty-seven *placówki*¹⁰⁴. The rest were employed within the ghetto itself¹⁰⁵ and a small proportion continued to stay hidden away in bunkers.

Almost every day, upon marching out to work, *Schutzpolizei* stood at the "wylot" and, under the leadership of *Wachtmeister* Überscher, who had become Camp Leader, they seized people from the lines and threw them into the former butcher's shop at house №7-8. Überscher, himself, caught here one and there another by the neck with the crook of his cane, like a dogcatcher, and dragged them into the butcher shop. The Polish commandant of the Jewish police at the time, Majznerowicz, would also often participate in these *akcje*. He followed Überscher's example and also worked with his stick. The Jews, who had been thrown into the "butcher's", were later sent away, in large groups, to Skarżysko and Bliżyn, from whence they never returned. Whole groups were frequently removed from the workplaces and sent away. Each "*wysyłka*" [shipment] was accompanied by casualties - some fell on the spot and others upon jumping from the vans or the latticed [railway] carriages.

The *Schutzpolizei* sent over the clothes of those shot, which were of no great value, to the *Judenrat*. One such transport of clothes was sent over on 1st March 1943, which contained 80 men's and women's items, one pair of boots, five pairs of slippers and three single shoes¹⁰⁶. The number of the person shot (every Jew in the "Small Ghetto" had a number) would be given to the Jewish Labour Deployment, in order that the one shot be erased from the listing of those who were in the ghetto.

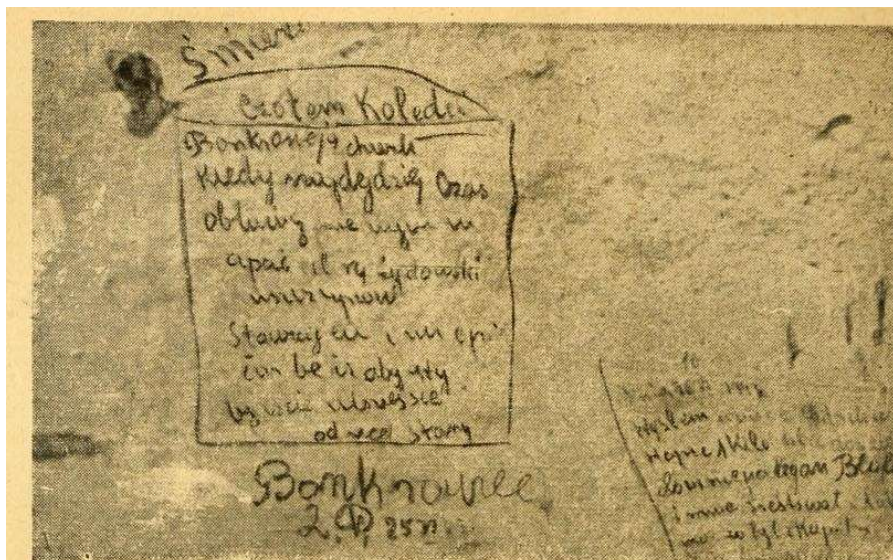
In the first period, before the ghetto became a labour camp, the number of workers at the *placówki* was steadily increasing. Everyone believed that he was safer working at a *placówka*. At the beginning of March 1943, after many Jews had already been sent out to the camps in Skarżysko and Bliżyn, there were still 2,304 men and 847 women working at *placówki* outside the ghetto¹⁰⁷. The permanent *akcje* that the Germans would conduct, and the fact that people were fleeing the ghetto with Aryan papers, caused the number of Jews to start decreasing.

¹⁰⁴ Daily reports of the Jewish Labour Deployment in the "Small Ghetto".

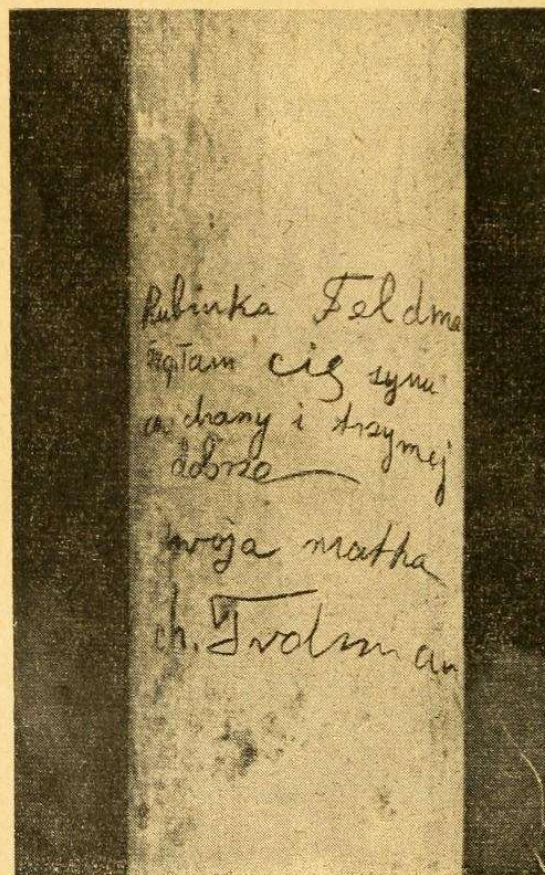
¹⁰⁵ Daily reports of the Jewish Labour Deployment in the "Small Ghetto".

¹⁰⁶ A precise list bearing the handwritten signature of Dawid-Nussen Berliner acknowledging receipt thereof.

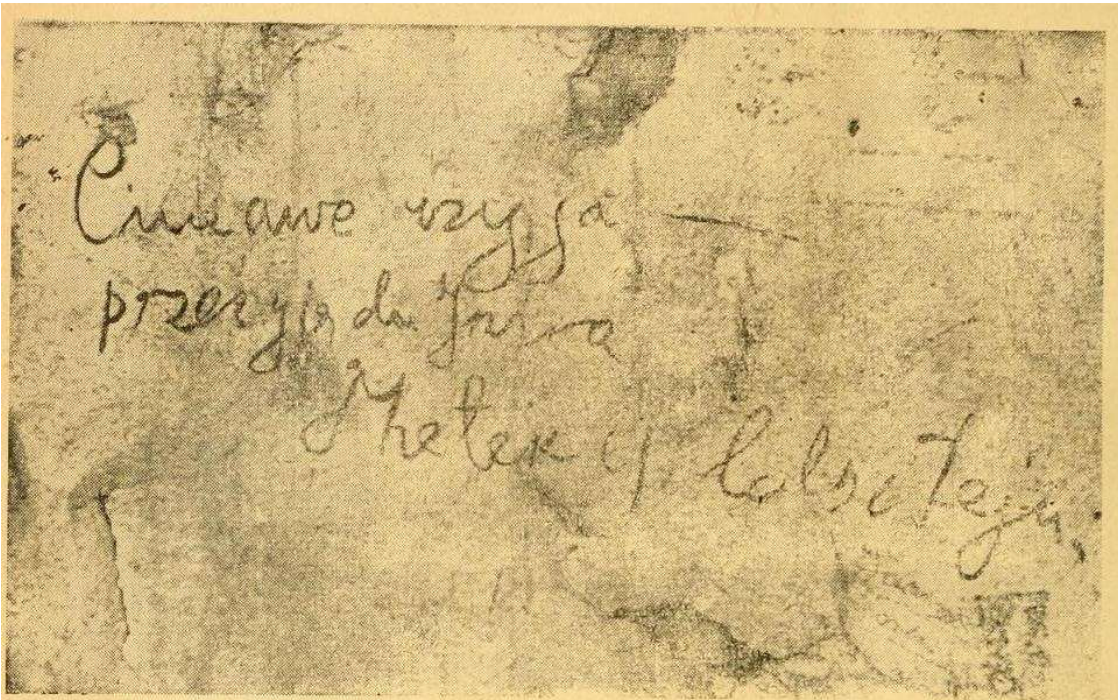
¹⁰⁷ Daily reports of the Jewish Labour Deployment in the "Small Ghetto".



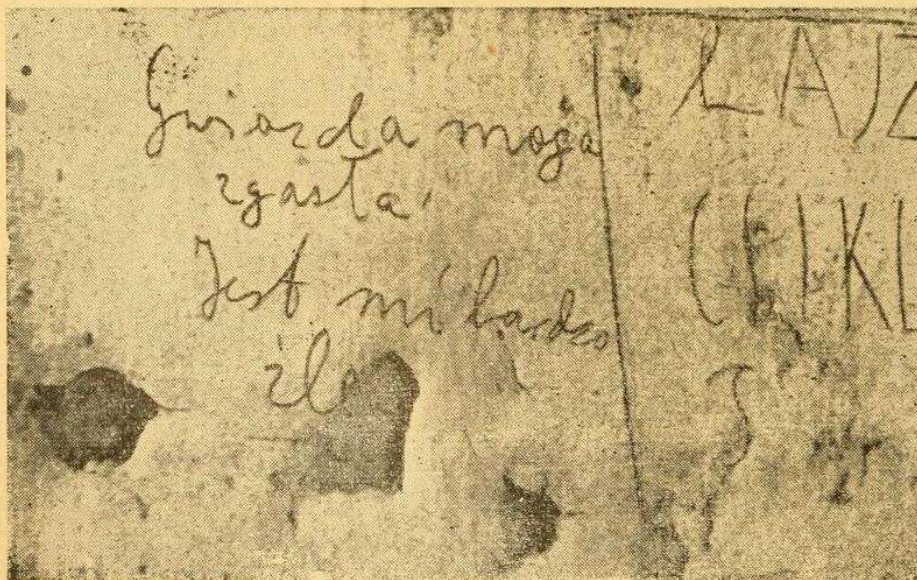
In the cellars of the Jewish police in the "Small Ghetto"



["Rubinko Feldman, goodbye my son. Keep well! – your mother, Ch. Feldman."]



At the "butcher shop":
"I am curious as to whether I shall live until tomorrow. Mietek Goldszajn"



At the "butcher shop":
"My star has been put out. I feel very bad."

At the beginning of April 1943, when almost all the bunkers inside the ghetto itself had been liquidated, there were no more than 4,043 people in the "Small Ghetto" (2,662 men, 1,346 women and 35 children of policemen and doctors¹⁰⁸).

Very often, rumours would spread regarding a deadline for a definitive liquidation. As soon as one deadline had passed, people already began speaking of another. The nerves cannot not withstand the constant uncertainty and apprehension. Notwithstanding, the urge for life and to survive is invigorated from day to day and from hour to hour. The drive to procure a little money and means, in order to have with what to flee and survive outside the ghetto, becomes stronger all the time. People steal sacks with things from the police storerooms, where the robbed Jewish "property and goods" are, and they sell them to Poles with whom they meet at *placówki*. Those who excel in this are the Jews working for the *Schutzpolizei* in clearing out the ruined former "Big Ghetto" and in sorting everything at the *Schutzpolizei* storerooms. From there, the sorted items are sent away to Germany. Some Jews actually amass large fortunes and they wish, through this, to blunt the horrific sorrow of yesterday and the suffering of today. For these people, life becomes a free-for-all. Gluttony and promiscuity run wild. One receives the impression as if these people were living in a dense, dark jungle.

During this same period, a second lifestyle develops here - a life in bunkers and cellars. Here sit those young people, those men and women, who do not wish to forget their sentiment of revenge and their drive to continue the struggle against Hitler's dark fascism. Boys and girls - practically still children - transformed these cellars into a *kuźnia* [forge] of the resistance idea. Work is done here tirelessly day and night. Weaponry is procured. Risking their lives, they smuggle in bullets and dynamite, which are stolen from the German munitions factories. Without experience and with bare hands, homemade grenades are produced. Large tunnels, with exits outside the ghetto, are also prepared, which are to serve in the eventuality that they will be forced to retreat from the battlefield. Taxes are levied and funds are raised for weapons, and traitors are "finished off". The combat units multiply and become a force, with which everyone in the ghetto is forced to reckon. The mood in the ghetto is gradually altered by the impression made by this phenomenon, which is called the "Combat Organisation". The number of fighters becomes larger from day to day and their preparatory work - more intense.

In the sphere of cultural activity, very little is done in the "Small Ghetto". Nevertheless, that which *was* done is well worth mentioning. From time to time, a few dozen people would gather in the evenings in different dwellings, invite over the few individual surviving singers from the former TOZ choir, and hold a concert. The two Jakubowicz brothers, particularly, distinguished themselves in this field, reciting and singing their own compositions, in which the horrific experiences and events were reflected. A few of their songs became so popular, that even Germans were already singing them. Their most popular song was *Vu ahin zol ich geyn?** The religious Jews also conducted a certain activity. They would organise prayer quorums and celebrated communal holiday meals. They did not let the only Peisach we lived

¹⁰⁸ Daily reports of the Jewish Labour Deployment in the "Small Ghetto".

* [TN: Yid., "Where am I to go?" (We have transliterated the title as it appears in musical sources, although in Poland it would have been pronounced differently); the original song was very popular in Poland and is still known to this day. According to Benjamin Orenstein in his book "Churban Czenstochow", chapter "The Jewish Communal and Cultural Life in the Big Ghetto, the "Small Ghetto" and the HASAG-Pelcery Camp" (p.203), these songs were not actually original compositions but parodies of well-known themes, that were adapted to the life in the Cześćochowa "Small Ghetto".]

through in the “Small Ghetto” [just] pass by - they baked *matzos* and celebrated collective *Seders*** collectively.

A chapter, by itself, was the feeding point for children, which was set up in the building at ul. Mostowa 9, where the doctors were living. Here, a feeding point was set up for the thirty-five children of the doctors and policemen, who had officially been left alive. The wife of the dentist Dr Kijak occupied herself with the home economics, and the Fröbelian teacher Helcia Wajnrajch with the education. Bit by bit, the illegal, starving and emaciated children in the bunkers began to scrape their way out of their hiding places and reported to this point for something to eat. By the beginning of November 1942, this point was already visited by over sixty children. The writer of these lines was in charge of this feeding point. The feeding point became a three-class primary school with a pre-school, which encompassed 120 children. Besides those already mentioned, Mania Bernsztajn and Tenia Wajnman (formerly lecturers at the Jewish Gimnazjum) and the two former primary school teachers, Kajzer and M. Zombek, also worked there as schoolmistresses. The latter is a daughter of Dr Kijak, of renown in Częstochowa. The Labour activist, tinsmith Herszl Frajman, set up a bath, in that same building, for the children of the school.

Everything went well, until the following incident occurred: one day, in the first half of November 1942, before noon, Degenhardt appeared in the room of the kindergarten, accompanied by Überscher. Both stopped at the doorway, looked at the children and said nothing. Finally, Degenhardt stammered (he was a bit of a stutterer), “*Was machen sie denn hier?*” [So, what are they doing here?]. Everyone was silent and was sure that a tragedy would happen. One of the doctors notified Kopiński regarding this, who arrived at once and began explaining to Degenhardt that, here, the legally remaining children were being fed. With his cynical mock-seriousness, Degenhardt inquired of Kopiński as to why the children looked so pale. Überscher then remarked that these were surely children from bunkers, who had starved there and not seen light before their eyes for a lengthy period.

After a brief, but difficult, [moment of] awkwardness on the part of all, Degenhardt, to everyone’s astonishment, ordered special lunches to be cooked for these children and promised weekly food rations for all the children - even for those who did not come to the feeding point. From then onwards, all children did, in fact, receive rations of flour, eggs, butter, sugar and honey, which were given out once a week at the *Judenrat* warehouse, and one glass of milk a day for each child. The supervision over the school and kindergarten was given over, by the *Judenrat*, to the former director of the Jewish Gimnazjum, Dr Anisfeld - but all this was a trap.

This “Garden of Eden” for the children lasted until the beginning of January 1943. On 4th January 1943, in the morning, we noticed that armed Germans were stationed on the outside of the ghetto. The teacher decided to send the children off to their guardians, because they held that each mother or father would surely be able to better hide their children. This is indeed what occurred - the children managed to make it home and hide in the bunkers. But most of them were found by the Germans, with the assistance of a few Jewish policemen. Along with their mothers, they were sent away to Radomsko, from there they went to

** [TN: In the Diaspora, two Seders are celebrated, on the first and second days of Peisach, as opposed to just one in the Land of Israel.]

Treblinka. The school was liquidated. The teachers no longer wished to be those preparing a "plump" quarry for the savage German beasts. Anisfeld also relinquished his watch over the children. Only eighteen of the thirty-five legally remaining children came to the feeding point. These were the children of the doctors, who lived in the same building where the school was located. These children, too, were later murdered. That was on 20th March 1943, when Częstochowa's Jewish intelligentsia was liquidated.

The intensive preparatory work of the combat units and the meagre amount of cultural work continued being carried out and these were the only rays of light still shining in the doleful labour camp.

The *Schutzpolizei*, to whom the SS and Police Leader in Radom had given the exclusive rights over the Jews in the Częstochowa labour camp, incessantly "bestowed" one decree after another on the inmates. Already, in the second half of December 1942, Degenhardt notified the *Judenrat* that he was annulling all marriages that had taken place since the deportation from the "Big Ghetto" and any of those couples wishing to continue living together were required to make a special appeal regarding this, in order that a new *chuppah* ceremony be held in his presence. From then onwards, every couple, desiring to live together and hold a legal wedding ceremony, had to appeal to Degenhardt, through the mediation of the *Judenrat* by means of a written request, regarding the matter. Those, who were granted such a permit, were forced to hold the *chuppah* ceremony on the date which set by Degenhardt. Degenhardt would set multiple *chuppas* for the same day and same hour, [which he] personally attended and gave his "blessing".

During the same period, when Degenhardt issued this ordinance, he also ordered that unmarried women and men were not allowed to live on one and the same street. Ul. Kozia was designated for women, ul. Nadrzeczna for men and ul. Garncarska, which was between Kozia and Nadrzeczna, was designated for families. Degenhardt took the pleasure of bestowing his "blessing" even upon those who had already been husband and wife for a long time, but who had no marriage documents.

The *Schutzpolizei* conducted systematic extermination work in the "Small Ghetto". Each day brings its number of victims. Those, who do not go out to work, are shot. Those, caught on the "Aryan side" are brought to the ghetto to be shot, so that all the Jews should be aware of it. Mothers, who have lost their minds, are shot. Young children, guarding their crazed mothers from committing suicide, are shot. Men, caught in the "women's" street, are shot. Workers in the groups, marching to the *placówki*, are shot, because a *Werkschutz* or a gendarme guarding these groups, on the way to the *placówka*, suspects them in some manner. Those, whose cheeks blossom with the tuberculosis fever, are shot. Others, who are gravely ill, are shot - and so on. All these "small *akcje*" brought devastation into the already ruined camp life. The real destruction was brought on by the larger *akcje*, which would be prepared with true German precision. One such *akcja* took place at the beginning of January 1943.

It is ten o'clock in the morning, on 4th January 1943. Fully armed Ukrainians and gendarmes are densely positioned outside the ghetto. The ghetto is shaken. It is buzzing like a beehive. People run from place to place. One looks at the other with fear-filled eyes. People rush about

uneasily and it seems that each one wishes the guards on the outside not to notice this. People ask [one another], "What more will come now? What else do they want to do to us now?" At the same time, gendarmes, in helmets, stroll about unconcernedly, close by the barbed wire, and watch, with indifference, what is going on inside the ghetto.

All of a sudden, the ghetto is filled with Ukrainian fascists, *Schutzpolizei* and *Granatowe* policemen. They divide into groups and set out, across the ghetto, accompanied by Jewish policemen. Terrible cries and clamour spread forth from one edge of the ghetto to the other. Elderly folk, mothers with children and children on their own are dragged out of the houses, from the cellars and attics. Some let themselves be taken indifferently, others throw themselves on the ground and fight tooth and nail. One of the bunkers at ul. Nadrzeczna 88 is uncovered with the aid of the Jewish policeman Lesler, and the children, with their mothers and grandmothers, are taken out of there. Horrifying cries of desperation emerge from almost every house. The great wailing and tumult are accompanied by reports of gunfire.

All those in the ghetto, who are not working in any *placówki* outside the ghetto, are driven out onto the "Rynek Warszawski" [Warsaw (Street) Small Market Square], where a "selection" is carried out. The fighters are tested for the first time. Mendel Fiszlewicz, who escaped from Treblinka and, upon arrival in Częstochowa, put himself at the disposal of the "Nadrzeczna 66" combat unit, shoots at the gendarmes. His closest comrade, Icek [Izio] Fajner, also steps forth. Both fall. Twenty-six other Jews are dragged out of the lines. Twenty-five are shot and one, M. Galster, a member of the *Judenrat*, is freed. The chairman of the *Judenrat* had pleaded on his behalf.

At lunchtime, the *akcja* was interrupted, after which it began anew with an even more vigorous cruelty. The leader of the Jewish police, the *Granatowe* policeman Majznerowicz, with great zealotry, shows that he knows the "work" no worse than his German teachers. All the people, chased to the "selection" square, wrangle with their last strengths. Only Rywka Frajman, who in her youth had been active in the Bundist *bojówki* [militias] and had been wounded back in 1906, losing a breast, now, out of desperation, presented herself of her own account to the transport to be sent away, holding her grandson in her arms, because her husband was among the twenty-five who had been shot. Besides those who perished on the spot, more than 300 men, women, children and also young fighters were sent, under heavy guard, to Radomsko and, from there, to Treblinka.

Immediately following this massacre, Überscher notified the chairman of the *Judenrat* that, already that very day, he and his comrades would come to visit him in honour of his - Kapiński's - silver wedding [anniversary]. At the start of the evening, gendarmes headed by Überscher appeared at Kapiński's house and demanded the long-promised banquet. Apart from Anisfeld, who declared that he was ill and would not attend, all the members of the *Judenrat* took part in this reception. It was in this manner that, on 4th January 1943, the German hangmen and the *Judenrat* plate-lickers concluded the bloody game in the "Small Ghetto".

The ghetto takes on a different appearance. Many make ready to flee into the bunkers, which they have prepared in advance. Grey-haired women and men get jet black hair overnight -

they make themselves young*. Young, charmingly dark girls and lads instantly turn blond - they become "Aryans". Men have "cosmetic surgery" to erase the "traces" of Jewishness which they received on the eighth day after their birth [viz. circumcision], in order to be able to smuggle themselves into Germany as "Aryans", or wriggle their way into a transport of Poles being sent to Germany for work. People escape to the Polish side with fake documents. Children are given over to Poles, put in monastic boarding schools and also hidden in bunkers outside the ghetto. Many of those, who have left the ghetto, are denounced or recognised by chance and perish. Nevertheless, the urge to flee becomes no lesser.

February 1943 - the news passes by word of mouth** that Jews, who have relatives in Palestine, will be able to be exchanged for Germans who are [being held prisoner] in England. No one knows where these rumours are taken from and no one makes the effort to verify how much truth is in them. People clutch onto the ray of hope, as a drowning man onto a straw. The hopes were invigorated even more, when the *Judenrat* actually began to register all those with relatives in the Land of Israel. People stood in queues in the hours free from work and registered themselves, giving the addresses of their relatives in Palestine. Those, who had no relatives there, "borrowed" some from their acquaintances and also enrolled. The registration went on for a fortnight and then was abruptly interrupted. Hundreds of slaves had lived through a new disappointment.

More days of small "selections" arrive. Degenhardt and his destroyers search the ghetto anew and decrease the number of workers, sending out those "unneeded" to Skarżysko. Among the deportees happened to be the two Bocian brothers - the sons of the publisher of the *Częstochower Zeitung*, Berl Bocian - and the lawyer Lajb Fogel, with his brother Abram, both sons of the Aguda activist Mendel Fogel. (Lajb Fogel had escaped, during the great deportation, from the transport to Treblinka and, for some time, stayed in Warsaw, where he was active in the PPS. He arrived in the "Small Ghetto" from Warsaw in January 1943. Abram Fogel was also active in the underground movement, both in the "Big Ghetto" and the "Small Ghetto". He was also one of the three, who took it upon himself to write down every event.)

Jewish intimates of Degenhardt attempted to plead with him for the release of the Fogel brothers and the Bocian brothers. Helenka Tenenbaum, the "Small Ghetto"'s "Queen Esther*" [also] requested it. None of the interventions were to any avail. Degenhardt was of the opinion that their diplomas were sin enough and that they had nothing more to do in Częstochowa. In Skarżysko, the vast majority of the deportees perished. The Bocian brothers also perished - one from typhus and the other while trying to escape. Abram Fogel also fell by a bullet. Lajb Fogel was killed, when he refused to work and hurled himself at the torturers with his bare fists. Horribly beaten by a foreman, already lying on the ground, he called out against the murderers with his last strength and was finally shot by the German camp leader there, [Fritz] Bartenschlager who, later at the end of 1944, became camp leader of the Częstochowa concentration camps, HASAG-Pelcery and HASAG-Warta.

* [TN: To be selected for work instead of being deported.]

** [TN: The expression used in the Yiddish original is "from ear to ear".]

* [TN: Like the biblical Esther, who was made King Ahasuerus' consort and used her position to annul evil decrees against her people, the Jews, so was Helenka Tenenbaum the mistress of Hauptmann Degenhardt.]

The news of the deaths of these four young men, who came from long-established, well-known Jewish families, arrived in the ghetto and made the already crushed mood, that reigned continuously in the "Small Ghetto", even harder.

It is 17th March 1943. The Gestapo apprehends a Jewish boy (a son of the Kongrecki family), who has been hiding, with his mother and little sister, in the *Möbellager* bunkers at ul. Wilsona 34. The bunkers are uncovered. Six Jewish fighters, who have their headquarters there, are unexpectedly attacked and taken away. On 19th March, they are shot in the wrangle against the armed foe at the Jewish cemetery. Mrs Kongrecki and her small daughter are shot that same day in their bunker, and the arrested boy, with his uncle, Jechaskiel Kongrecki, are killed in the cellars of the Gestapo.

20th March 1943, *Purim* - a sunny, beautiful day. The arrival of spring is felt. A kind of yearning gnaws at one and the urge to live becomes stronger. The people working in the ghetto show themselves more often outside and cast envious glances across the barbed wire in the direction of ul. Warszawska, where the "Aryan side" is now already. But, in the cellars of the Jewish Combat Organisation [ŻOB], the mood is heavy. They had continuously received so many fine reports from their six comrades-at-arms, who had their base at ul. Wilsona 34 - and now, they had already been murdered. The families of the six murdered do not yet know of their misfortune. They weep and run about, seeking salvation for their children, and people try to console them that a miracle might yet happen.

The doctors' families wish to bring their children a little holiday cheer and, today, celebrate the birthday of one of the most beautiful children in the ghetto - that of the little Lili Winer. The children play, sing and dance. Little Lili is particularly happy. The little, black velvet dress, the white stockings on her slender little legs [and] the large snow-white ribbon in the thick, blonde hair on her little head, give her a special charm. Lili is now completely glowing. After all, today is *her* holiday - after all, today her seventh birthday is being celebrated! The guests cannot tear their gaze away from the delicate and gorgeous child. The children play without a break and do not become tired at all. They are now discharging their hitherto pent-up children's energy. The guests - the doctors - are gathered in another room, discussing the fate of the Jews. Almost each of them paints everything in black colours, waiting for somebody else to brush his conclusions away with his hand, so that, at least in this manner, it should become a little lighter on the soul. The children's playing has also changed. They now stand in a circle and play "There was once a Sure'le, a little Sure'le..." All the children sing, while Lili and her little brother ramble about in the forest looking for their mother. The children sing more and more quietly, "...it is dark in the little wood, a cry is heard..."

Suddenly, a new order from Degenhardt spreads across the ghetto - all members of the Judenrat, all the doctors, engineers, and people with diplomas in general, must immediately report, with their families, to the by now already sorrowfully notorious Ryneček Warszawski, because, already today, they are to travel away to Palestine. The ghetto is, once again, in a terrible stir. People do not believe it and yet, nevertheless, a thought steals in - and *maybe..?* The members of the *Judenrat*, doctors and engineers, with their wives and children, rush to the designated location, filled with apprehension. Lili, with her parents and little brother, also rush [there]. After all, Lili's father is also considered part of the intelligentsia - indeed, he is a well-known physician.

At the Ryneček Warszawski square, hundreds of men, women and children go about in agitation. With their gaze, they seek a [means of] salvation in every little corner. At a distance, on ul. Warszawska, stand large freight trucks. The vehicles are not guarded and yet everyone starts to sense the peril threatening them. Some attempt, by various means, to wriggle their way out of the net of death into which they have fallen. Dr Falk tries his luck, as does also Dr Lewin. They attempt to hide in the gateway, where the Germans would hold executions of Jews, in order to leave town from there through the fields. They do not succeed. They are noticed and taken back. *Judenrat* members try to take advantage of their acquaintance with gendarmes, but to no avail. One member of the *Judenrat*, Zelig Rotbard, runs from one gendarme to another, begging to at least let his daughter, the twenty-year-old Fela, back into the ghetto. But they insult him and laugh at him. Everyone must board the vehicles.

Armed gendarmes emerge from various places of concealment. Other vehicles drive up with armed gendarmes and auxiliary policemen. The trucks move from the spot and proceed with great velocity in the direction of the Jewish cemetery. The victims see death clearly before their eyes. The twenty-year-old Władek Kopiński is the first to jump from the speeding truck. Many others jump after him, but only six people manage to escape death. Among those who fled, besides Władek, was also the manager of the Jewish Labour Deployment in the "Small Ghetto", Bernard Kurland. The other 127 people - the small remnants of the certified intelligentsia - were killed at the Jewish cemetery.

Werkschutz men and auxiliary Ukrainian police are positioned throughout the entire graveyard. All the victims are herded into the *Taharah-shtiebel**. Here, they are forced to shed their garments. The first to be led out is the twenty-year-old Fela. She stands before the large grave, face-to-face with two gendarmes. For some reason, the gendarmes dare not do anything. A brief [moment of] awkwardness... The hesitation is broken by a *Werkschutz* man. A crack from a rifle and Fela is already lying in her death throes, face down to the ground. The two gendarmes look at one another, turn over the body which is still writhing in its last agonies, contemplate it awhile, [once more] look at each other, and proceed to their "sacred duty".

The others are led out of the *Taharah-shtiebel** two-by-two. First, the parents are "finished off". The German hangmen still have time for the children. With the children, they feel like playing a little. After all, these here are children - and, after all, they themselves, the gendarmes, are fathers. They raise the children up high by their little arms, feet or hair with one hand and, with the other, they aim at their little hearts or heads. It does not matter that not all the children give up their souls immediately. That is not a problem - *Mother Earth* also covers up those who are still able to cry out their last "Ma..."

Little Lili is the last. They took everything from her. They only left her with the white ribbon on her head - a reminder of her holiday. The little one stands, in all her glory, with her huge, sky-blue eyes wandering from one murderer to the other. It is hard to describe what is mirrored in the eyes of the small, slender child. The gendarmes, already satiated enough with blood, somehow dare not raise a hand to shoot her. Each one wants another to put an end to today's bloody game. A long pause... The tall, broad-boned camp leader, Überscher, walks up

* [TN: "Purification room"; a room where members of the Chevra Kadisha ritually cleanse and purify the body before burial.]

briskly and cuts short his comrades' dilly-dallying. With a cry of "*For the Führer and the Fatherland!*", he aims at little Lili's breast. The report of a revolver, and Lili seals the chain of 127 victims, on the seventh anniversary of her birth.

One hundred and twenty-seven individuals filled a new mass grave, over which an unknown hand later raised part of a damaged tombstone, on which was engraved, "Częstochowa Jewish Intelligentsia. Purim, 20th March 1943".

The ghetto is crushed - no one is seen to show himself in the street. Only gendarmes run amok, looting in the houses of those who have just been killed. Each one races to take as much as possible out of these homes, before Degenhardt comes to seal them off.

Several days later, the Gestapo traces down the fugitives. Five people are captured in their hideouts. Bernard Kurland is granted an amnesty by Degenhardt and brought to the ghetto in order to continue running the Labour Deployment. The other four, already bound in chains, fought against the Gestapo murderers and perished near the grave of the 127.

After Bernard Kurland was brought into the ghetto, Überscher requested that he treat him to a dinner for the "benevolence" that they had let him live. His request was fulfilled. Überscher becomes intoxicated and boasts of his "humanity". He saw how people were jumping from the trucks and fleeing, he recounts. Other gendarmes shot after them. Adults fell on the spot, as did children - but he did not shoot. He saw Kurland springing from the vehicle and also did not shoot at him. He had been reminded then that he, too, had a family, that he was a father of children and was unable to raise his hand to shoot. He becomes more drunk and talks about the execution of the 127 which, later, took place at the graveyard, of the "game" with the children and of the death of little Lili Winer. It "pains his heart", he says, but what can he do? There is a war and anything is done for Führer and Fatherland. Überscher continues drinking and recounts that, at the orders of Dr Böttcher from Radom, similar *akcje* on the Jewish intelligentsia were also carried out that same day in Radom, Piotrków and Tomaszów-Mazowiecki.

Twenty-third April. The youngest combat unit, "Nadrzeczna 66", sends out several youths to carry out diversionary operations. They leave the ghetto along with workers of the *Ostbahn*, are apprehended on the way and three of them are killed on the spot. Gestapo and the *Schutzpolizei* arrive, they take out every second worker at this "*placówka*" and shoot them.

It is six o'clock in the morning, on 1st May 1943. The groups gather according to workplace, lined up in rows like always and march to the gate of the ghetto. No one is let out. The rows wobble and draw back, but still remain standing, awaiting orders. An intense nervousness is felt amongst the crowd. An hour later, the official announcement comes that all were staying in the ghetto to await further orders. All the *placówki* are left without Jewish workers. Even the workers of the munitions factory remain in the ghetto. The *placówki*, where only Jewish labourers are employed, are completely inactive. The "Jewish problem" is above all [else]. This occurrence is interpreted in different manners. Some maintain that this is a prelude to the full-scale liquidation of the ghetto, while others brush this away with a hand [gesture],

reassuring themselves that this is no more than a means by which to prevent Jews and Poles from getting together at the workplaces on 1st and 3rd May*.

For the first time, all the combat groups are put on their feet and stationed at their designated points in an organised manner. The uneasiness rises from hour to hour. People cannot sit at home. No food is smuggled in, and we depend only on what the *Judenrat* kitchen gives out. But no one gets worked up about this, because everyone senses that a peril is approaching. Doctor Wolberg, who is outside the ghetto, informs us that he has accurate information to the effect that, this time, nothing will happen. Machel Birencwajg, who is [also] outside the ghetto, lets us know the same thing in writing. Nevertheless, spirits are still not calmed and individual people smuggle themselves out in rubbish bins that are taken outside the ghetto. Small quantities of potatoes and bread also begin to be smuggled in inside those same bins. On 4th May before daybreak, the trumpet calling us to work is heard once again. The moods calm down a little and the days, with their “normal” and tragic course of life, begin once more to drag on.

The regime in the ghetto becomes stricter. Those in charge of political affairs in the *Schutzpolizei*, Köstner and Laszynski, were appointed as camp leaders. Both knew Polish well and, in this manner, had better possibilities of hearing and orientating themselves as to what was happening in the ghetto. We knew that their task was to find all threads of the Combat Organisation. The Combat Organisation intensified its alertness, carried out more frequent rollcalls of the units and observed the conduct of the Jews, who were meeting with those two camp leaders.

The situation of the Jews on the ““Aryan side”” also became more difficult. The hunt for Jews maintaining themselves on the ““Aryan side”” and staying on the surface, as well as for Jews hiding in bunkers outside the ghetto, intensified by orders of magnitude. Many such Jews, who were captured, were shot outside the ghetto or were brought to the notorious “Ryneczek” and killed there. There were also cases when such Jews were let into the ghetto without any punishment. But such incidents [only] occurred in the last few weeks prior to the liquidation of the “Small Ghetto”.

Jews from the bunkers and from the “Aryan side” began smuggling themselves into the ghetto, along with workers marching from the *placówki*. The ground was burning under their feet and they did not wish to perish alone. In this manner, the number of Jews in the ghetto began to increase in a not [very] significant measure, but the mortal perils in the ghetto also increased.

Eighth June 1943. The *Schutzpolizei* make a raid on the Jewish workers at the *Möbellager*. Degenhardt, himself, leads this *akcja*. Machel Birencwajg senses the particular danger he is in, personally, and disappears at the last moment. A *Schutzpolizei* man finds his mother Bajla Birencwajg in the second courtyard, next to the lavatory, and shoots her on the spot. The carpentry worker Ferszter is also shot, as is another worker of the cabinetmaking workshop, whom we later found with a smashed skull among discarded boards in the first courtyard of

* [TN: International Workers Days and the 3rd May Constitution Day (*Święto Konstytucji 3 Maja*), respectively.]

the *Möbellager*. The camp leader Laszynski is the one who best shows the “art” of hitting his target with one shot.

In the second courtyard of the *Möbellager*, a *Schutzpolizei* officer recognises Machel’s wife, Hania Birencwajg (the daughter of the Zionist activist Abram-Luzer Szajnfeld), and detains her. A false *Kennkarte** is found at the cabinetmaking workshop. By way of the photograph, a young lady is found, to whom the *Kennkarte* belongs - Saba Rozenaft. She, too, is put aside separately. All of us stand, lined up in a long row, and shake everything out of our pockets into the basket that the *Schutzpolizei* has placed before us. The searches are finished. We continue to stand in a long file, uneasily awaiting events to come. A cart, in which Hania and Saba sit, surrounded by *Schutzpolizei* men, drives along the entire length of the row.

Machel is hiding in a bunker at the *Möbellager* and only a couple of his close friends know his whereabouts. They advise him to leave Częstochowa, for he has undergone a certain “cosmetic” operation, and in addition, he also has “Aryan papers”. Outside Częstochowa, he will, therefore, be able to pass himself off as a Pole. Machel does not wish to leave Częstochowa before rescuing his wife from murderous hands. Hania and Saba were held forty-eight hours in prison and then shot. Machel also later perished. Within just a few days, another misfortune ensues - a bunker, with Jews, is uncovered at the Horowicz & Partners factory. One group of them perishes and a second group is transferred to the ghetto.

On 9th June, on the morning following the events at the *Möbellager*, *Stadthauptmann* Franke addresses the Governor of the Radom District, [Dr Ernst] Kundt, in a confidential letter**, requesting that the few remaining Jews be deported from Częstochowa. In this letter, Franke points out that, already on 4th and 5th June, he had made [the Governor] aware that the presence of several thousand Jews in Częstochowa is, in the opinion of all sections of the population, unwelcome. Franke bases himself in this letter on two reasons, due to which the further presence of the Jews in Częstochowa is impossible:

- 1.) “The Jews are an element that spreads dissatisfaction, in every respect, amongst the non-German population. Even should we isolate the Jews, according to all the regulations, we shall still not be able to prevent the Jews from coming into contact with the non-German population.” *** At the end of this argument, Franke stresses that he has a strong suspicion that the Jews are much to blame for the uneasy relations reigning lately in Częstochowa. “Through incitement and through actual activities, the Jews wish to destroy public peace.” Thus concludes Franke his first argument.
- 2.) “As regards the opinion that the Jews are needed as workers in the war economy”, writes the *Stadthauptmann*, “I affirm that the work output of the Jews is a minimal one, because, on average, the Jewish work output comes to a third of what a Polish worker normally produces. Naturally”, the *Stadthauptmann* writes on in his second argument, “for the managers, the Jewish work output is better than nothing, but I believe that our Employment Bureau will supply other non-German workers within a short time”¹⁰⁹.

* [TN: Basic identity document in use inside Germany during the Third Reich era.]

** [TN: Reproduced on the following page, followed by our translation thereof.]

*** [TN: As the reader may ascertain from our translation of the original letter, the author quotes said document loosely and not verbatim.]

¹⁰⁹ Two letters from the *Stadthauptmann* to the chief of the Radom District (Kundt) from 9th and 26th June 1943.

9. Juni 1943.

Amt für Innere Verwaltung
Sei/Schl.

Herrn
Gouverneur K u n d t

R a d o m

Einschreiben!
Vertraulich!

Sehr verehrter Herr Guverneur!

Wie ich Ihnen bereits anlässlich Ihres Besuches am 4. und 5. d.M. dargetan habe, wird die Anwesenheit von mehreren Tausend Juden in Tschenstochau von allen Bevölkerungskreisen als äusserst abträglich angesehen. Ich bitte darum, dass die Insassen des jüdischen Wohnbezirks raschest aus Tschenstochau ausgesiedelt werden. Die besonderen Gründe für meine Bitte sind ausser den sonstigen allgemeinen ungünstigen Wahrnehmungen noch zwei Dinge, die die Anwesenheit der Juden in Tschenstochau auf die weitere Dauer für unmöglich erscheinen lassen:

- 1.) Die Juden sind hier das Element, das die Unzufriedenheit an den gegenwärtigen Verhältnissen in jeder Hinsicht an die nichtdeutsche Bevölkerung heranzutragen versucht. Wenngleich die Absonderung der Juden den Vorschriften entsprechend durchgeführt wird, kann doch nicht vermieden werden, dass hier und da immer noch Berührungsmöglichkeiten mit der nichtdeutschen Bevölkerung gegeben sind.
- 2.) Ich habe den dringenden Verdacht, dass die Juden zu einem wesentlichen Teil an den unruhigen Verhältnissen der letzten Zeit in Tschenstochau ein überaus grosses Mass Schuld tragen. Diese Wahrnehmung ist mir von vielen Seiten der deutschen und polnischen Bevölkerung mitgeteilt worden. Es ist so, dass sowohl durch propagandistische Hetz- und auch durch aktive Tätigkeit die Juden die öffentliche Ruhe zu zerstören versuchen. Darüberhinaus versuchen sie durch Greuelpropaganda die Belange der Feindmächte in diesem Raume in jeder Weise zu fördern.
- 2.) Der Einwand, dass die Juden in der Kriegswirtschaft bzw. Krieksfertigung ein nicht zu verachtender Faktor sind, möchte ich dahingehend richtigstellen, dass der Arbeitseffekt der jüdischen Arbeiter von allen einschlägigen Kreisen als äusserst minimal bezeichnet wird. Durchschnittlich beträgt die tägliche Arbeitsleistung eines Juden nur etwa ein Drittel der Leistung eines normalen polnischen Arbeiters. Natürlich ist den Betriebsführern das Vorhandensein von wenig brauchbaren Kräften immer noch lieber als gar keine. Ich glaube jedoch, dass das Arbeitsamt bei entsprechender Weisung in der Lage ist, in sehr kurzer Zeit den Personalausfall durch Zuweisung nichtdeutscher Arbeitskräfte wettzumachen.

Heil Hitler!
Der Stadthauptmann
m. d. F. d. G. b.:
Stadtrat

9th June 1943

[To] the *Herr*
Governor Kundt

Bureau of Internal Administration
Sei/Schl. [?]

Radom

Registered mail!
Confidential!

Most esteemed *Herr* Governor!

As I have already explained to you during your visit on the 4th and 5th of this month, the presence of several thousand Jews in Częstochowa is viewed by all sections of the population as extremely harmful. I request that the internees of the Jewish residential area be expelled from Częstochowa as soon as possible. The special grounds for my request, apart from the other general unfavourable perceptions, are two more things that make the presence of the Jews in Częstochowa seem impossible in the long term:

1.) Here, the Jews are the element that endeavours in every respect to convey dissatisfaction with the present conditions to the non-German population. Although the isolation of the Jews is carried out in accordance with the regulations, it cannot be avoided that, here and there, there are still opportunities for contact with the non-German population.

2.) I have the strong suspicion that the Jews are to a great extent to blame for the recent unrest in Częstochowa. This perception has been communicated to me from many quarters of the German and Polish population. It is the case that the Jews are seeking to destroy public peace both through incitement and through actual activities. In addition, they endeavour to promote the interests of the enemy powers in this area in every way through scaremongering.

2.)* I would like to rectify the objection that the Jews are not a factor to be despised in the war economy or wartime production, to the effect that the labour effect of the Jewish workers is described by all relevant circles as extremely minimal. On average, the daily work output of a Jew is only about a third of that of a normal Polish worker. Naturally, managers still prefer the presence of staff of little use to none at all. I believe, however, that the Employment Bureau is able to make up for the loss of staff in a very short time by allocating non-German workers if instructed to do so.

Heil Hitler!
The Stadthauptmann
tasked with managing the administration [of the]
City Council

* [TN: Also numbered 2 in the original, as may be seen above.]

The fate of the remaining Jews in the "Small Ghetto" was hanging in the balance. There was an ongoing, silent, yet relentless quarrel between the *Stadthauptmann*, who since the great deportation had lost power over the Jews and, therefore, wished the full-scale liquidation of Jews to be conducted in its totality in Częstochowa, so that "his" city should be "*judenrein*", and the work managers and *Schutzpolizei*, who were interested in keeping the few Jews here, so they could show that they, themselves, were needed in Częstochowa, thus "covering" themselves and not going to the front.

(In September 1942, during the course of the deportation *akcja*, we witnessed a quarrel between a representative of the *Stadthauptmannschaft*, Lindermann, and Degenhardt, who emerged triumphant in that he now had the exclusive rights to give orders to the Jews. This time, too, everyone knew that the *Stadthauptmann* had wished to make Częstochowa "*judenrein*" and the manager of the HASAG-Pelcery munitions factory, [Ernst] Lüth, had intervened in Radom to be left the Jews, because the Jewish workforce was necessary here for the war economy.)

Meanwhile, the permanent annihilation of the Jews was taking place.

On 18th June, the Gestapo uncovers the bunker of the Sojka family. Those found in the bunker perish. The daughter of the tailor Burech Baum, the young Gita, who participated actively in the cultural arena of the TOZ in the "Big Ghetto", is also killed here. During this same period, the skilled [Dr] Adam Wolberg is dragged [out] and murdered. Nearly twenty workers, who were employed in the *Schutzpolizei* warehouses, were arrested and murdered. Doctor Wolberg was called out from the sanitation point in the ghetto, supposedly to administer emergency medical assistance to a Jewish worker in the police warehouses, who had fallen ill. On the way there, he was shot. The group of labourers was shot under the accusation that they were "stealing" from the police warehouses. They were buried, alongside Dr Wolberg, in a mass grave at the Jewish cemetery.

Death hovers day and night over the small remnant of Jews in the ghetto. Notwithstanding this, Jews smuggle themselves back into the ghetto from the "Aryan side". Fathers and mothers also bring their children back from the "Aryan side" and from bunkers outside the ghetto. The parents sense the impending doom and do not consider it right to leave their children as orphans, in surroundings unknown to the children. The *katorżnicy* [inmates] at the labour camp comprehend and sense that their final stage is approaching.

On 25th June 1943, in the evening, the "Small Ghetto" is encircled. The bunkers of the ŻOB, at ul. Nadrzeczna 86 and 88, are engulfed with grenades. Almost all the fighters there perish. The workers of the *placówki*, who return from work, are detained at the "Ryneczek". *Schutzpolizei* and Gestapo officers, as well as Germans and Ukrainians of other police formations murder anyone they find in the street and anyone they find in the houses, where the bunkers are located. People jump out windows from high floors, from balconies and they fall like birds shot in flight. From the bunkers, the Germans drag long and short weapons, grenades, different types of equipment and also German uniforms. Night falls. The Jews, detained at the "Ryneczek", are let inside the ghetto. The workers at the munitions factories were held there and it was explained to them that they would no longer be coming into the ghetto.

BEKANNTMACHUNG

Betrifft:

Beherbergung von geflüchteten Juden.

Es besteht Anlass zu folgendem Hinweis: Gemäss der 3. Verordnung über Aufenthaltsbeschränkungen im Generalgouvernement vom 15. 10. 1941 (VO. Bl. GG. S. 595) unterliegen Juden, die den jüdischen Wohnbezirk unbefugt verlassen, der Todesstrafe.

Gemäss der gleichen Vorschrift unterliegen Personen, die solchen Juden wissentlich Unterschlupf gewähren, Beköstigung verabfolgen oder Nahrungsmittel verkaufen, ebenfalls der Todesstrafe.

Die nichtjüdische Bevölkerung wird daher dringend gewarnt:

- 1) Juden Unterschlupf zu gewähren,
- 2) Juden Beköstigung zu verabfolgen,
- 3) Juden Nahrungsmittel zu verkaufen.

Tarnobrzeg, den 24. 9. 42.

Der Stadthauptmann
Dr. Franke

OGŁOSZENIE

Dotyczy:

przechowywania ukrywających się żydów.

Zachodzi potrzeba przypomnienia, że stosownie do § 3 Rozporządzenia o ograniczeniach pobytu w Gen. Gub. z dnia 15. X. 1941 roku (Dz. Rozp. dla GG. str. 595) żydzi, opuszczający dzielnicę żydowską bez zezwolenia, podlegają karze śmierci.

Według tego rozporządzenia, osobom, które takim żydom świadomie udzielają przytułku, dostarczają im jedzenia lub sprzedają artykuły żywnościowe, grozi również kara śmierci.

Niniejszym ostrzega się stanowczo ludność nieżydowską przed:

- 1) udzielaniem żydom przytułku,
- 2) dostarczaniem im jedzenia,
- 3) sprzedawaniem im artykułów żywnościowych.

Częstochowa, dnia 24. 9. 42.

40 razy na tydzień. Abonament miesięczny 3 zł. (prócz tego porto 22 gr.)
W przeliczeniu na 12 numerów miesięcznych.
Cena pojedynczego numeru 20 gr.

Rok VI.

Z Sędu Specjalnego

Kara śmierci za przechowywanie żydów

Przed Sądem Specjalnym w Częstochowie toczyła się rozprawa przeciwko małżonkom Tadeuszowi i Czesławie Bednarzom, zamieszkującym w Częstochowie, przy Alei Wolności.

Bednarzcy w okresie od lutego 1943 r. do czerwca przechowywali żydów. Solkę wraz z dwójkiem dzieci.

Oskarżeni pobrali od Solki jako wynagrodzenie 12 tysięcy złotych.

W czerwcu 1943 roku, władze wykryły żydów u Bednarzów, po czym żydzi zostali skazani przez Sąd Specjalny na karę śmierci.

Małżonkowie Bednarzcy, wraz z ich żoną, świadkami przed Sądem Specjalnym, również zostali skazani na śmierć za świadome udzielenie żydom schronienia.

Galapagos

Notification

Subject:

Harbouring escaped Jews.

There is cause to point out the following:
According to the Regulation 3 on residence restrictions in the *Generalgouvernement* of 15th October 1941 (VO.BI.GG.S.595), Jews who leave the Jewish residential area without authorization are subject to the death penalty.

Persons who knowingly harbour such Jews are subject to the same regulation. Giving or selling food, is also punishable by death.

The non-Jewish population is therefore strongly cautioned [against]:

1.) Providing Jews with shelter

2.) Supplying Jews with food

3.) Selling Jews food products

Częstochowa, 24.9.42

The Stadthauptmann
Dr Franke

From the Special Court

The Death Penalty for Hiding Jews

The trial of couple Tadeusz and Czesława Bednarski, living on Aleja Wolności in Częstochowa, continued in the Special Court in Częstochowa.

From February 1943 to June, the Bednarski couple hid the Jew Sojka and two children.

The accused took 12,000 złoty from Sojka as payment.

In June 1943, the authorities discovered the Jews in the Bednarski home, after which the Special Court sentenced the Jews to death.

The Bednarski couple appeared before the Special Court and were also sentenced to death for knowingly providing shelter to Jews.

[Newspaper clipping]

Werkschutz from these factories come to take new groups from the ghetto for nightshift at HASAG. People scramble willingly to go to this work - some, because their close ones have been left there, while others, because they already perceive the terrible peril that has arrived and seek a means to stay alive.

This *akcja* is managed, under Degenhardt's supervision, by the two recently nominated camp leaders, Laszynski and Köstner. They are familiar with every little corner in the ghetto. They are aware of every hiding place and every bunker. They know the entrances and exits of each tunnel and each bunker that our Combat Organisation has built. Their confidante, the Jewish policeman Jakub Rozenberg*, has already "seen to it" that they should know this. This scoundrel and traitor was not a native of Częstochowa. As soon as he appeared in the "Big Ghetto", we already saw that his role was a suspicious one. At first, he played the part of a deaf-mute and wore a special yellow mark on his arm. Later, he wore an armband as a "useful Jew" and had the right to transit outside the ghetto without a Star of David. Then, before the great deportation, he became a policeman. In the "Small Ghetto", he made the impression of being an innocent, little man, while he concurrently served in the police force and was the informer of Laszynski and Köstner. Our Combat Organisation passed a death sentence on him - the verdict was carried out, but too late. The German police already had all the threads of the Combat Organisation in its hands.

It is ten o'clock in the morning, on 26th June 1943. All the men are driven out to the "Ryneczek". The whole square is surrounded by "*Schupowces* **", *Gestapowces*, *Granatowe* policemen, *Luftschutz* [Aerial Defence] troops, Ukrainian fascist and *Werkschutz* from the munitions factories in Częstochowa. The Germans, with their helmets on their heads, stand fully armed. All the other formations stand around the "Ryneczek" and hold their rifles with the barrels pointed at the encircled Jews. Carts filled with corpses, which are partially covered with sacks, drive up to the square. Old men and fathers with children are pulled out of the lines and are placed separately under a special watch of *Schutzpolizei*. The fathers stand mutely, broken, and the children weep. Among the children's little voices is heard that of Uszer Szmulewicz's eight-year-old son, Rafałek, "*Don't go with me! You can still stay – why should you also die?*"

Many of those who lived in the buildings at Nadrzeczna 86 and 88, where the bunkers of the Combat Organisation had been located, are pulled out of the lines. Under blows from rifle butts, they are loaded, in groups, onto freight trucks. Entreaties, wails, curses and threats proceed from the vehicles - and fists raised up high also show themselves. Already on the lorries, the Germans "work" with their rifle butts. The terrifying clamour coming from the vehicles mixes with the laments from the multitudes of women, who are still standing in the ghetto by the barbed wire. The packed lorries set off in the direction of the Jewish cemetery and, spattered with blood, return for new groups.

Meanwhile, the Germans demand of everyone, under threat of being shot, to surrender anything in their possession. Money, jewellery, gold and watches are trampled underfoot and also thrown into the baskets purposely placed here by the *Schutzpolizei*.

* [TN: See a detailed account regarding this traitor, his deeds and eventual death in Benjamin Orenstein's book "*Churban Czenstochow*", in the chapter "*Rozenberg*" (pp.179-180).]

** [TN: "*Schupo*", or *Schutzpolizei*, officers.]

The *akcja* against the men has finished. The lives of a group of boys aged 12-15, whom Degenhardt wishes to send to their deaths, still hang in the balance. At the request of Bernard Kurland, Lüth, the director of the munitions factory, declares that such boys can already be of use to him. Degenhardt fulfils Lüth's request and puts the boys at his disposal.

The men, who have still been left alive, are sent over to the HASAG-Apparatebau and HASAG-Eisenhütte munitions factories.

Now comes the women's turn. Old women and mothers with children, under the lamentations of all the women standing lined up at the "Rynekczek", are loaded onto the same bloodied lorries and taken away to annihilation. Mothers lose their children. Children run about in the square and, losing themselves in tears, call for their mothers, who have already been taken away to be killed and have left their children here, thinking that, even if they themselves died, some miracle could still happen at the last moment for the child.

In the interval until the vehicles return, women are dragged into the "butcher shop", where, just like the men who were imprisoned there earlier, they scratch their last thoughts on the walls: "I am curious as to whether I shall live to tomorrow. Mietek Goldsztajn," or "My star has been put out. I feel very bad," or "*Bunkerowces* most bold - a time of reckoning will come." Children are also thrown in there.

In the middle of the "Rynekczek" square, on the ground, lies an infant, thrashing its little arms and legs about, losing itself in tears and calling unceasingly for its mother, who has already been taken away. A tall, slender woman approaches the weeping child - this is Dr Horowicz, whom everyone knows well, and she is holding her own child by the hand. She picks up the weeping child from the ground, calms it and, taking both children by their hands, proceeds with composed steps and her head up high towards the bloodied trucks. Degenhardt stops her and advises her to give up the children and go herself to HASAG. The doctor - now the mother of two children - does not react at all to his "benevolence". Without letting go of the children, she continues walking. The murderers pay no further attention to her actions. Only the multitude of Jewish women at the *akcja* square accompany, with lamentations, the tall, proud woman with the two small children, who are walking their last road. The *akcja* against the women has finished. The women, who have still been left alive, like the men before them, are sent over to the HASAG-Apparatebau and HASAG-Eisenhütte munitions factories.

Following these *akcje*, the Germans applied themselves to the liquidation of the patients in the hospitals operating in the "Small Ghetto". Besides the patients, children were also hidden in the hospitals. The doctor Mrs Wajsberg and Dr Szperling had hidden a few children there. Alas, even there, death did not pass them over. *Schutzpolizei* men surrounded the hospital for infectious diseases and two of them went inside. With blows from their rifle butts and *spitzruten* [pointed rods], they "quietened" the entreaties and wailing of the sick women and drove them out, in their undergarments, into the courtyard. A volley of shots from machine-guns brought the lives of the hapless women to an end.

The men were led out one by one. As soon as a sick man crossed the threshold of the hospital, the report of a revolver rang out, putting an end to his life. The last one was a tall, young lad,

who proudly shouted at the murderers, *“Our innocent blood will give you no repose and will always demand revenge! You, yourselves, will also perish in disgrace!”*

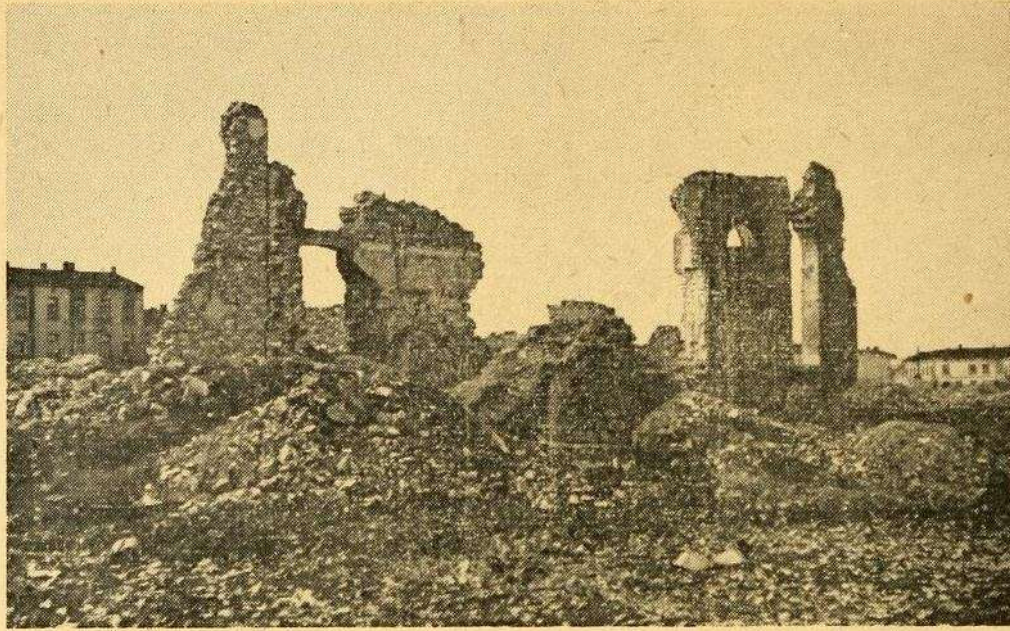
At the hospital for internal [medicine], the *Schutzpolizei* did not find all the patients. The deputy chief of the *Werkschutz* at the HASAG-Eisenhütte munitions factory, [Fritz] Mühlhof*, who throughout the duration of his service always displayed a humane attitude towards the tortured Jewish workers there, got [to the hospital] in advance and, there, rescued a certain number of patients.

On the following day, Degenhardt declared an “amnesty” for all those still lying hidden in the ghetto, should they emerge from the bunkers of their own accord. Jewish policemen carried the “tidings” of amnesty across the deadened ghetto. Eighty-four mothers, sixty fathers and about one hundred children crawl out of their hideouts and present themselves. They are admitted into the cleared-out hospital building. Here, they are guarded. They are allowed to console themselves with the “amnesty” for the whole of forty-eight hours. On the third day, the “amnestied” were killed. Thus, the Jews had, once again, been tricked.

Building after building was blown up with dynamite. Hundreds of those hidden perish under the rubble. Dozens, who now emerge from the ruins, are shot on the spot and burned. The Jews, who had jumped from the speeding vehicles back on the 26th and had not fallen by the bullets shot after them at the time, meet the same fate. These people, who had been saved, did not know of the fate of the remainder of the Jews in the ghetto. [After] wandering about for a few days, they found no other option but to make their way back into the ghetto and be there with the Jews who had been left alive. Torn from [the hands] of death, they stole into the ghetto and found death here at the stake, along with all those caught after the “amnesty”.

The horrific life in the “Small Ghetto” had ended, and the gruesome life in the camps of the HASAG munitions factories had begun.

* [TN: In 1978, Fritz Mühlhof was recognised by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Among Nations. (Source: *Lexikon der Gerechten unter den Völkern: Deutsche und Österreicher*, Volume 1.)]



The "Small Ghetto" following the liquidation



*Köstner – the liquidator of the "Small Ghetto" – before the Polish People's Court;
Zajnwel Weksztajn is testifying*