

seems that the latest air-strikes on Cologne, Duisberg, Essen, Bremen and elsewhere have opened the eyes of the Germans who are drunk with their own victories and they 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. May we only live to see it with our own eyes.

### 6 June – *The End of Shabbat*

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 Sabbath, a group of activists in the Jewish community, to discuss our diaries and writings.<sup>116</sup> 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 Sabbath, 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 was pressing down on me. This is how it was 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 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 shoot only the sinner's family. Thus there was a case where a girl lost her Jewish 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 happened in Lida. The elderly and distinguished surgeon Dr S.,<sup>117</sup> who arrived here from Lithuania and spent a month in Lida, was our informant.

In Pabianice the old people – those of 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' and then 'Tehezakna'. Then he taught them a nationalist Jewish song in German called 'Moses'. 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.<sup>118</sup>

Some of the Jews of Ciechanów have been transferred to the nearby village of Nowe Miasto, where the Jews are living in appalling conditions, as if in a camp in strict solitary confinement.<sup>119</sup> The Germans warned that if anyone tries to return to the town they would shoot five Jews for every one 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 martyrdom 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.' I have heard that in Zduńska Wola on the day before Shavuot 10 Jews were hanged, along with 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.<sup>120</sup>

The Jewish community in Kraków is indeed being liquidated. Many of the Jews have already been deported. I have heard that the members of the *Judenrat* have been shot and the number of murdered has reached 57. The remaining ghetto has been turned into a giant work-camp.<sup>121</sup>

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.<sup>122</sup>

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 18 Smocza Street who sent his family to a small town in the district of Lublin 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 work-camp in Zamość and is thus still alive for the time being. 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 zloty each - in total therefore 6,000 zloty.

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 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 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?

## Sunday, 7 June

Last night the German murderers in uniform claimed further victims, a Jewish man and a woman. At around one o'clock in the morning a car drew up at Karmelicka Street at the corner of Nowolipie Street, 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 22 Nowolipie Street and ordered the house-porter to take the body into the entrance-way. 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 24 Elektoralna Street.

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 Meisels 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.

The question frequently surfaces whether a thaw and an easing in the entrenched Polish anti-Semitism 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 beggar-children. I have heard many stories of Jews who fled Warsaw on that momentous day, 6 September 1939,<sup>123</sup> 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 their tens and hundreds in the

Christian streets are given generous amounts of bread and potatoes 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 anti-Semitism the Poles have received an instructive lesson from the Germans and that hatred of Jews in its active form – that is, the ghetto and the expropriation of property – has penetrated deeply into their bones.<sup>124</sup> These pessimists find support for their view in the different pronouncements of Poles on the Jewish question. In conversation many Poles 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 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 anti-Semitism, at least not for public, aggressive anti-Semitism. 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: 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 anti-Semitism. 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. None the less 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 'target' near to where I live operates a smuggler by the name of Artur. It is said of him that he is a former intellectual. Anyone who has been in the army knows that the ordinary people do not like intellectuals and the lot of intellectuals in the army was not a pleasant one. For all that, when this intellectual was arrested on the Aryan side the Polish smugglers raised 5,000 zloty 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 zloty and got her released. I believe that these small events are also of importance and that they encapsulate within them a deeper meaning.<sup>125</sup>

Today at one o'clock midday an 18-year-old Polish youth was shot at the entrance to the ghetto next to 9 Przejazd Street. 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 three 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

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 materialize or rather has not yet happened, and that for which we have been yearning and

150,000. Yesterday the Guzik family was seized. He was freed, his family not.<sup>262</sup>

It is reported that the community organization is to be dismantled<sup>263</sup> and a commissar appointed. I have heard that Gancwajch, whom they wanted to kill a few weeks ago, has climbed back to prominence.

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

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

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

## Tuesday, 11 August

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

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

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

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

## Wednesday, 12 August

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

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

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

### Thursday, 13 August

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

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

### Friday, 14 August

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

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

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

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

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

## Saturday, 15 August

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

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

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

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

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

## Sunday, 16 August

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now (four in the afternoon) I have heard that there are no Germans at all in the *Umschlagplatz*. There are only Jews there and they are carrying out the bloody and terrible operation. Today rumours are going round that an order has been issued that all wives and children of officials have to report at the *Umschlagplatz*. Josef Erlich and his family have been killed, so I have heard. According to certain reports, Czerniaków's place here with us - à la Rumkowski<sup>276</sup> - will be inherited by Gancwajch, the man they had been hunting and trying to kill. He is outside the ghetto at the moment.

### Monday, 17 August

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Tuesday, 18 August

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

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

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

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

### Wednesday, 19 August

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

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

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

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

### Thursday, 20 August

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

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

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

### Friday, 21 August

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



drove out the occupants by force, broke into locked flats, robbed and looted and smashed whatever they found and at the same time seized women, especially those who had no papers (*Meldekarten* – population registration coupons). Where did the Jews get this brutality from? The Germans' spirit has passed into them. They also entered our workshop at eight and caused panic among the women. They were bribed and left. I was worried about Ora and walked with her late to Frume's.

At eleven in the evening the air-raid on Warsaw began. 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.<sup>288</sup> 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 four or five 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.<sup>289</sup> He was wounded in the cheek. According to rumours he was wounded by a Pole from the Polish Socialist Party disguised as a Jewish policeman. 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.<sup>290</sup>

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 caretakers will not admit strangers. There are those who go to the *Umschlagplatz* and hand themselves over to the butchers to die a martyr's death.

### Saturday, 22 August

Yesterday there was no 'action', but the squad is active in the Warsaw area. Yesterday, it is said, it was in Mińsk Mazowiecki.<sup>291</sup> The heavy and gloomy scene that I had at Nacia's because of mother. The Tombecks will not let her sleep there.<sup>292</sup> 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 worried and frightened.

### Sunday, 23 August

Yesterday was the 33rd day of the bloody 'action' in Warsaw, which has not been discontinued; on the contrary, it is still continuing. Yesterday the Germans rounded up mainly women and children with rampant viciousness and savagery. I was told that a prettily dressed 10-year-old girl was seized. 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 *Umschlagplatz*. Yesterday the two Ostrowiec girls from Hashomer Hatsair 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 'action' in Piotrków.<sup>293</sup> The group (from Hashomer Hatsair) that works at the Jewish cemetery, and the 'business' that is carried on with the Christians. The Germans are looting Jewish property. Yesterday they came to the Tepicyn factory and took away the best suitcases and everything of value. They even pillage from the wagons in the street. 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.

R. told me something he had heard from some German woman that in the area around the station at Kosow you can hear the screams of them being tortured to death 3 km away.<sup>294</sup> 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 has raised these bitter fruits among us?

I have heard that in Falenica 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. Apparently they massacred everyone in Otwock and didn't deport people. In Falenica the Jews tried to resist the Germans and they were slaughtered.<sup>295</sup> 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 *Umschlagplatz* 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 10-12. Asch's brother-in-law has died - Alberg.<sup>296</sup> Yesterday he was still walking around, and today he died because his strength gave out.

Today the Jewish police carried out the 'action' with savage brutality. They simply ran riot. There is a dread of tomorrow, of an 'action' with the participation of the Germans. The firm [Ostdeutsche Bautischlerei Werkstätte] has set up a confiscation-team, which drives around carts with beds, couches and other valuable 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?

## Monday, 24 August

A meeting of *Oneg Shabbes* at the Hashomer Hatsair with the participation of R-m, G-n, G-k, B-ch, L-n, G-ski, W-r, Szmul, Josef, B-au. Rabbi H. was missing, he was seized at the broom factory.<sup>297</sup> The place, the time, and the appearance of the participants underline the special tragedy of the meeting.

The 'action', as I have already mentioned, was carried out yesterday without the Germans, and is continuing today as well. The centre where bread and soup is distributed has been reopened and orders have been issued for 1,100 portions to be prepared. An indication that they are expecting to round up that number. Rumours are going around that the Germans 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. 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 'action' will be extended for another week. Today is now the 34th day. Rumours have arrived that A. I. Einhorn, one of the editors of

*Haynt*, has been murdered or died on the way from Otwock to Warsaw.<sup>298</sup> 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.<sup>299</sup> It is said that Szeryński, the head of the police, a convert, who was wounded a few days ago, died from his wounds yesterday.<sup>300</sup> This piece of news has still to be confirmed.

Ora is ill again. The 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. refuses to carry it out.<sup>301</sup> 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 have heard that today they have taken out of the Pawiak the foreign citizens who were put in there six days before the events began and the members of the *Judenrat* who were imprisoned as hostages. If these stories are true, then they herald the cessation of the 'action'.

The young man Shmuel, passing by 101 Żelazna Street, saw with his own eyes how the squad was packing up its booty in separate boxes and loading it up into lorries.<sup>302</sup> It is possible to conclude that they are preparing to take their leave. But even cessation of the 'action' 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 their loved ones from the depths of their soul. In any case the survivors 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 is going around that Brazil had joined the war against the Axis powers. Does this not show the terrible duration of this war?<sup>303</sup> Has Brazil come in at the end? There is also pressure on Chile and Argentina for them to join the war. It is possible that the main thrust of these nations will be turned against Japan, and the war over here could even be over 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.<sup>304</sup> Apparently he has had no precise and authentic reports, since he passes over all this in silence.<sup>305</sup>

Six in the evening, Jewish policemen have returned from the town and said that the action is continuing. So, all our hopes that the bloody action 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? Of the rumours from this morning only one has been confirmed, namely that the members of the *Judenrat*, Ekerman, Zundelewicz and others, who were in prison as hostages, have been released.<sup>306</sup> It might have been possible to conclude from this that the 'action' was over. But we are none the less 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?

## 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 'action' itself is continuing. Germans and Ukrainians carried out a round-up today in the block where the community offices are. This means Zamenhof, Pawia, Gęsia and Lubiccka

Streets. I am terrified for Ora, for mother, and for all the relations I left at 14 Pawia Street. I have heard that they took community 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 factory 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 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 Lubiccka Street written with a typewriter (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 will be carried out with the full severity of the judgement.'<sup>307</sup>

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.

Six in the evening. Once again a difficult and terrible day that freezes the blood in our veins. The whole day the Ukrainians and the Germans run riot in the blocks, 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 exterminate us entirely. My own position is even more difficult now. It is very dangerous to go from here, 30 Gęsia Street, to 14 Pawia Street. 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.<sup>308</sup> The first: after eight, rickshaws may not be in the streets, and after nine, Jews are not permitted in the streets, except for police. Signed the Jewish community-council (*Judenrat*). The second announcement

with machine-guns. Later they stopped killing the old people here in Warsaw, and allocated them the last two cars in the trains that were going to Treblinka. On the fourth day of the expulsion, 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 dying. A typical illustration of the character of this evil and brutal people. New Amalekites.

Tuesday, 29 December

The woman who was wounded last Friday sometime before midnight died from her wounds. Her name is Kadiszewicz, the wife of the doctor of the same name. It turns out that Biberstajn, who was also killed, was accompanying her from one lobby to another on the same courtyard. It was half past ten. One of the German owners of the workshop – Brenner – went up to them and shot five times at them. Four bullets hit the woman, and one struck Biberstajn. He died on the spot and she a day or two later. Yesterday I learnt that about a month ago in mid-November, or a few days after, 40 Jews were shot in the Pawiak. Among those killed was a Jew by the name of Osnus, the husband of a woman who works in the OBW workshop, and a close relative of one of the owners of the factory, Al. Landau. 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 Commissar Hensel, the man who later caused the deaths of hundreds of us, and he telephoned the SS. The butchers came immediately, arrested Osnus 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, *Schutzverhaltung*. Among

them was one of the leaders of the ‘Joint’ in Warsaw, Neustadt, and the well-known lawyer A. Margolis,<sup>425</sup> 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 Eckheiser, a pupil of mine from Yehudia – as Palestinian citizens (he took out citizenship there). Who knows if they are still alive?<sup>426</sup>

The main ways of making a living, on which depends the greater part of the Jewish community in Warsaw, are described by two newly created expressions or words:

- 1 *shabreven*, in Polish *szabrować*
- 2 *tshukhes*, or *ciuchy*.

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 there. 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 (in the so-called *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* and *bar*: (‘Vayerdu bney yaakov mitsrayma lishbor bar’ [‘The children of Jacob went down to Egypt to buy grain’]).

The second means of earning a living, from which even more Jews support themselves, is the selling of *tshukhes*. This word refers to all kinds of old clothes, and above all to 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 into his bag anything that comes into his hand. Those who do not sell their own things buy *tshukhes* and sell them to others who sell them to the Poles outside the ghetto, and from this a large percentage of the surviving inhabitants supports itself. The etymology of this word is Yiddish: from the word *tsikhlekh* [covers, such as for pillows and duvets]. The word

*tsikhn* was altered by the Poles to *ciuchy* 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.<sup>427</sup> 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 classroom until recently, none survive.<sup>428</sup> 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 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 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 a few dark, melancholy and very, very gloomy days have gone by. The few who have survived continue to live their lives, which are filled with baseness and 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.

In 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 'action' 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. There are also those who 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. 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*'.<sup>429</sup> 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.

The campaign of incitement against Jews in the German press is still continuing and has become even more intense. Much is written