

Extract From a Report by the "Delegatura" To London on the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt

...The German units that penetrated into this area of the ghetto at dawn on April 19 were met with strong and effective fire by the defenders. A large number of Germans fell, dead or wounded. The resistance was so strong that the Germans brought up more and more additional units for the operation, including even field guns, flame-throwers and tanks. The situation was complicated by daring sallies on the part of the Jewish fighters, who spread out into sections outside the streets they were defending, also by the systematic fire of the German attackers that poured into the ghetto from neighboring streets on the other side. The Gendarmerie and SS units did not gain control of the situation, and as a result a Wehrmacht unit was brought into the battle against the ghetto. Throughout Monday, April 19, and Tuesday, April 20, attacks continued by the Gendarmerie, the SS units and Army units on the ghetto, which was defending itself stubbornly, and all these attacks failed. Heavy shelling continued near the ghetto walls night and day without stopping. German columns in battle formation moved out many times for the assault. Hundreds of Germans fell dead or wounded, and the ghetto continued to defend itself. This brought about a change in the German tactics. They stopped making direct attacks on the ghetto and began instead to lay siege to it. Movement was stopped in a number of streets close to the ghetto on the Aryan side and the Jewish stronghold surrounded by a great ring of armed German units. The drainage channels were sealed. German guns began to bombard the ghetto with fire- bombs. Many houses went up in flames. For the past several days, huge clouds of smoke have been rising up over the ghetto, and at night tremendous flames are seen over the northern part of the city. Special loudspeakers ceaselessly call on the inhabitants of the ghetto to surrender. Some of the Jews obeyed the substance of these appeals. Fewer than 10,000 persons lined up at the concentration points named by the Germans and were taken outside of Warsaw. But these were old people, including many women, the aged and weak among the men. All

the rest, mainly young men, numbering more than 20,000, are fighting stubbornly. It is quite clear that in this battle the Jewish side is also suffering heavy losses. But it is a fact that in the six days that have passed since the Germans began the *Aktion* against the Warsaw ghetto, the Jews have not suffered defeat, and they reveal absolute determination to continue their self-defense and the struggle, and it looks as though it may continue for a longer period.

This war between the Jews and the Germans has awakened feelings of sympathy and admiration on the Aryan side of Warsaw, and shame among the Germans, who feel rightly that the situation that has come about in Warsaw is an uncommon blow to German prestige. It now appears that the Gestapo, which knows all and can do all, did not succeed in preventing the excellent preparations made by the Jewish population for the struggle and for its defense, with the result that the combined forces of the Gendarmerie, the SS and the Army were unable up to now to overcome this resistance despite the assaults they have been mounting for the past six days....

Archiwum Zakladu Historii Partii (Archives of the Institute for the Party History), 202/I-33, pp. 343-344.

The reference is to the Polish Underground leadership, which operated under the Polish Government-in-Exile in London.

Source: *Documents on the Holocaust, Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1981, Document no. 146