

Announcement by the Resistance Movement in the Warsaw Ghetto (2)

The famed Uprising, in April and May, 1943 in the Warsaw Ghetto, is universally regarded as a turning point, an absolutely new departure, not only in the chronicles of Jewish resistance to the German oppressor, but also in the history of the general struggle for the liberation of Warsaw. This was the first time when Jews took part in a major, indeed large-scale battle of that struggle. For the first time, after the defeat in 1939, the thunder of cannon and the echoing clutter of machine-guns were heard again in the capital city of Poland. The Jewish Uprising induced changes in the struggle of the Polish underground movement, which until then had concentrated its efforts mainly on acts of sabotage, and on acquiring arms and ammunition by disarming German soldiers and police. April 19, 1943, became a symbol of the Jewish public's contribution to the fight for freedom from the Nazi regime, and a motivating factor in the war of the Polish underground.

Number 1 Warsaw Ghetto January 1943

TO THE JEWISH MASSES IN THE GHETTO

On January 22, 1943 it will be six months since the deportation from Warsaw began. All of us remember well the terrible days in which 300,000 of our brothers and sisters were deported and brutally murdered in the death-camp of Treblinka. During the past six months we have been living in constant, mortal fear, never knowing what the coming day would bring. News has reached us from all sides about the extermination of Jews in the *General Gouvernement*, in Germany and in the occupied countries. Having heard the sad news, we have been waiting for our turn, every day, every hour. Today, we must understand that the Hitlerite murderers have allowed us to live only because they want to exploit our labor to the last drop of blood and sweat, to the last breath. We are slaves and when slaves no longer bring profit, they are

killed. Each one of us must realize this and each one of us must remember this constantly.

During the last few weeks, certain persons have spread information about letters alleged to have come from Jews deported from Warsaw who are supposedly in labor-camps near Pinsk or in Bobrujsk.

JEWISH MASSES, DO NOT BELIEVE THOSE STORIES. *They are spread by Jews who are in the service of the Gestapo.* The bloody murderers are thereby pursuing a certain objective: to calm the Jewish population, so that the coming deportation will be carried out without difficulties, with minimal forces and without loss of German lives. They do not want the Jews to prepare hiding places or offer resistance. Jews, do not repeat these lies. Do not help the agents. The criminal Gestapo men will receive their punishment.

JEWISH MASSES! The hour is drawing near. You must be prepared to offer resistance and not let yourselves be slaughtered like sheep. *No Jew must enter a boxcarⁱ. People unable to resist actively, should offer passive resistance, that means, hide themselves.*

We have received information from Lemberg (Lvov) that Jewish police – unassisted – carried out a deportation of 3000 Jews there. In Warsaw this will not take place anymore.

The attempt on Lejkin proves it.

Our motto must be:

EVERYBODY SHOULD BE PREPARED TO DIE LIKE A HUMAN BEING.

ARII/333.

Source: Kermish, Joseph (Edited and annotated by), *To Live With Honor And Die With Honor!...Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S" ["Oneg Shabbath"]*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1986, p. 589

ⁱ Sealed freight-cars in which Jews were sent to Treblinka