

“Am I My Brother’s Keeper?”

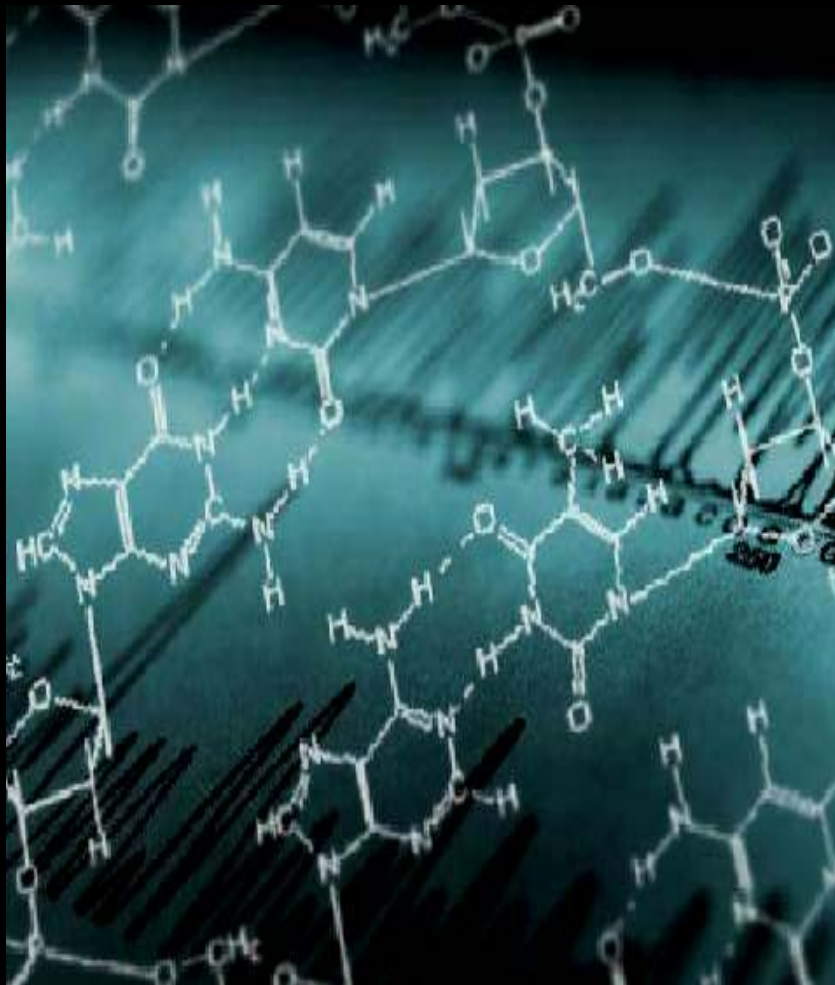
Slides taken
from

Self-Help in the
Ghettos of
Warsaw, Lodz,
and Kovno

By Geoffrey Brahmer



Cain & Abel by Tintoretto



Human Gene Map

*Everything can be taken
from a man but the last
of the human freedoms -
to choose one's attitude
in an given set of
circumstances, to
choose one's own way.*

--Auschwitz Survivor,
Victor E. Frankl



The time has come to gather all the rabble together in ghettos and then introduce some epidemics and let them all die. --Heinrich Himmler, Nov, 1939

“About the Jews of Europe, I have only one point of view - the Jews have to disappear.”

**-- Hans Frank, Dec. 16, 1941
Chief Administrator, General
Government**





“Life in the Ghetto amounts to a chapter in the history of cruelty; the depriving of the Ghetto residents of their human image.”

**– Diary of Avraham Tory,
Kovno Ghetto, July 25, 1943**



Diary of Ilya Gerber, Kovno Ghetto

Jewish Self-Help Could Have Different Sources



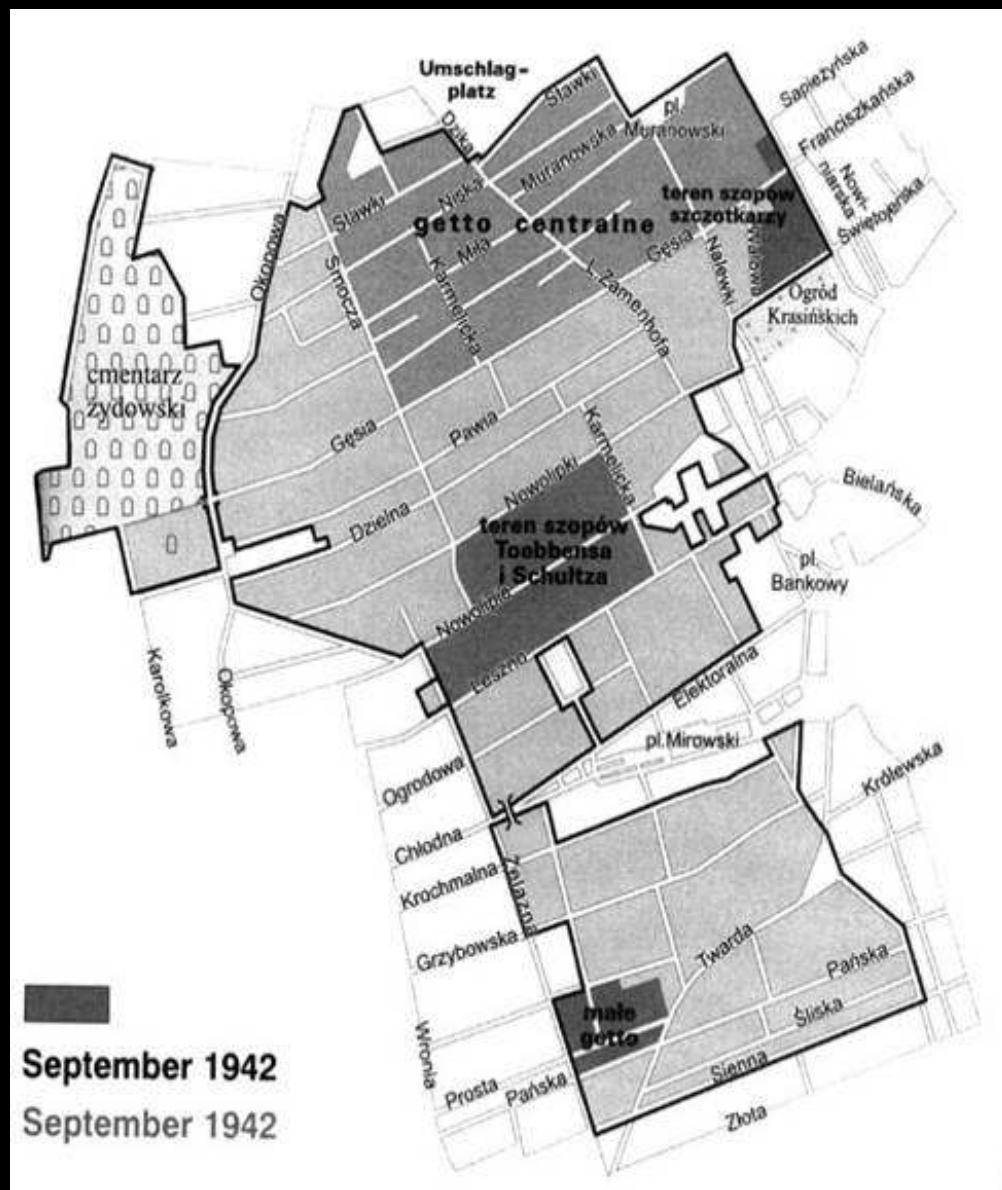
**Janusz Korczak
& Children**

Sources of Self-Help

- Jewish Councils
(Judenrats)
- Grassroots Groups
 - *(Political, Social, Religious)*
- Smugglers
- Armed Resistance



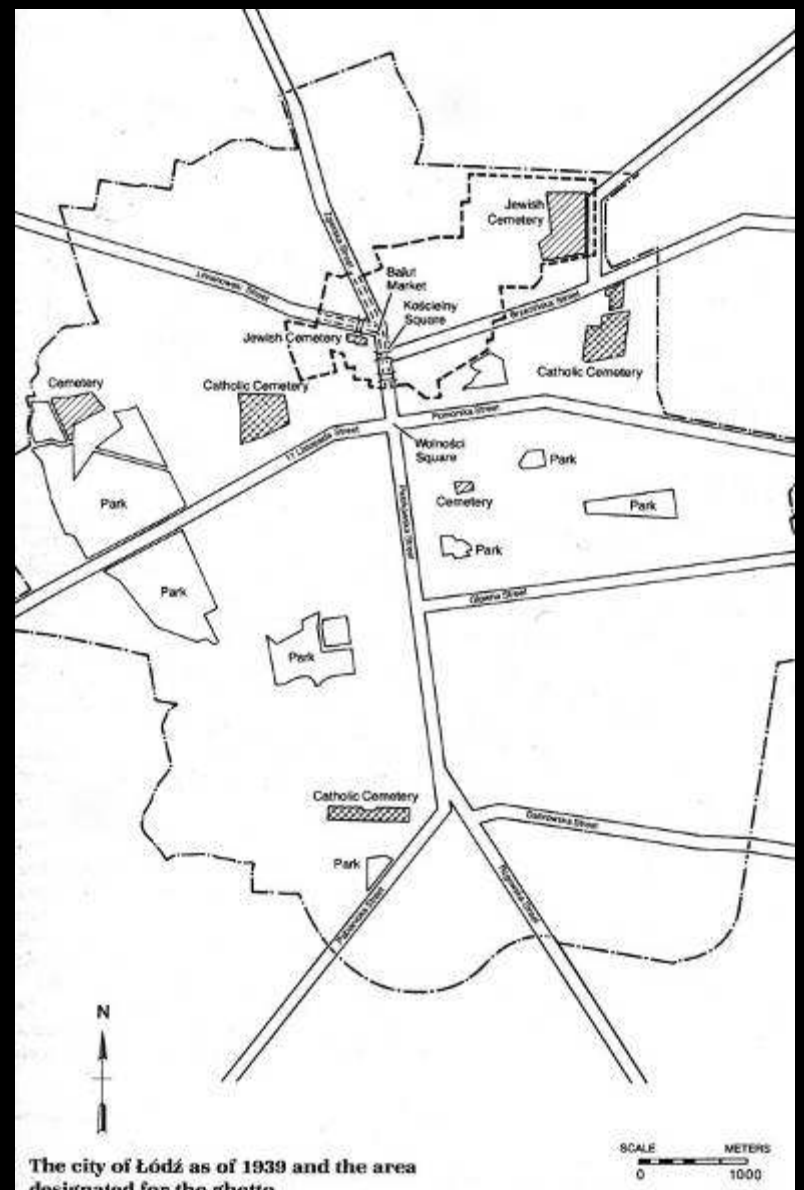
Image from Yad Vashem Photo Archives



Warsaw Ghetto

450,000 -- 500,000

November 16, 1940 – May 16, 1943



Lodz Ghetto

About 233,00

May 1, 1940 – August 31, 1944



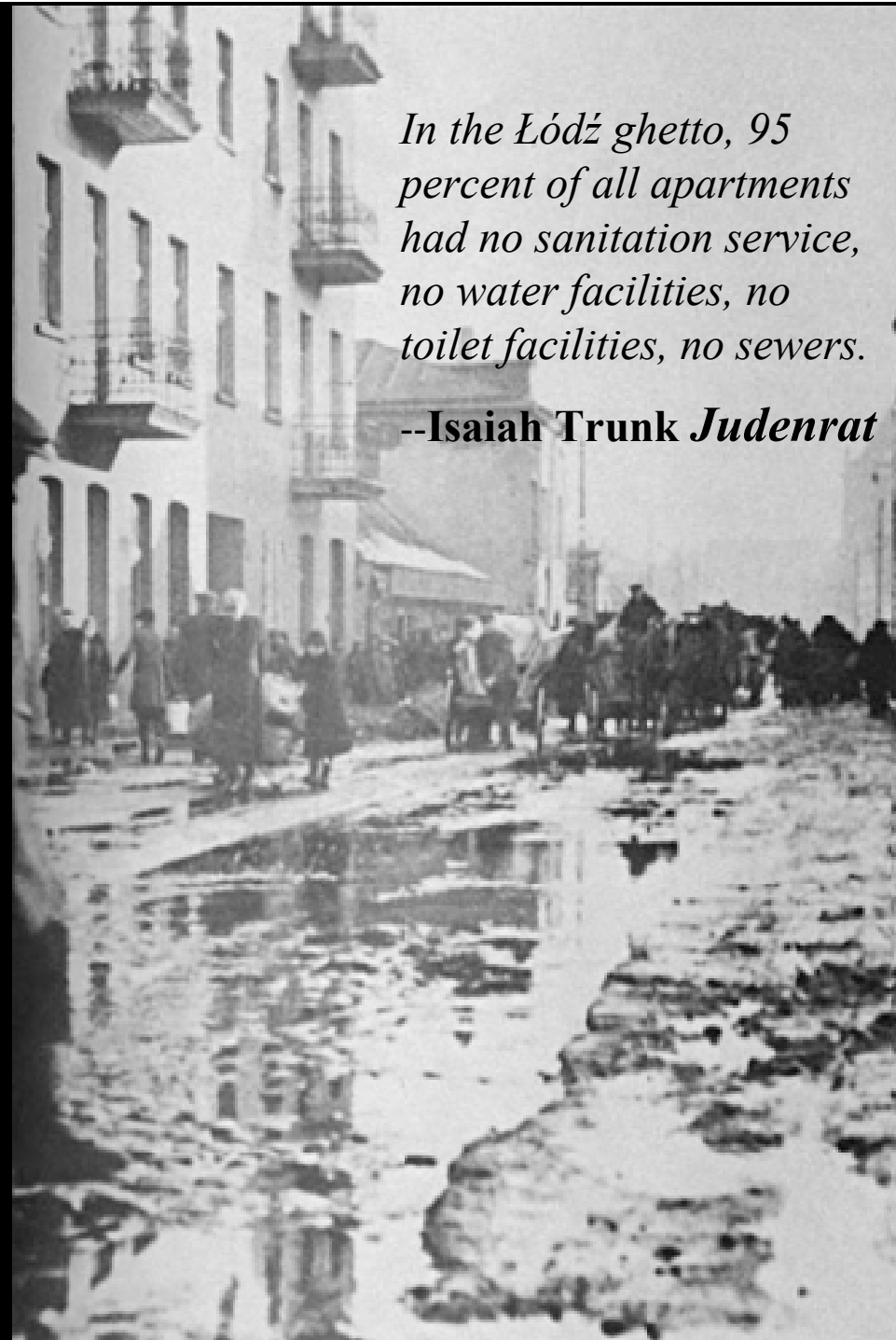
Warsaw had a wall



Lodz (Litzmannstadt) did not have a wall



Warsaw Ghetto had sewers



In the Łódź ghetto, 95 percent of all apartments had no sanitation service, no water facilities, no toilet facilities, no sewers.

--Isaiah Trunk *Judenrat*

Ghetto Leadership Differed



Lodz Ghetto

Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski



Warsaw Ghetto

Adam Czerniakow



Inequalities Existed in most Ghettos

Warsaw House / Tenant Committees





“There was a stubborn, unending, continuous battle to survive. In view of the unequal forces, it was a labor of Sisyphus. Jewish resistance was the resistance of a fish caught in a net, a mouse in a trap, an animal at bay.”

-- Alexander Donat, The Holocaust Kingdom.

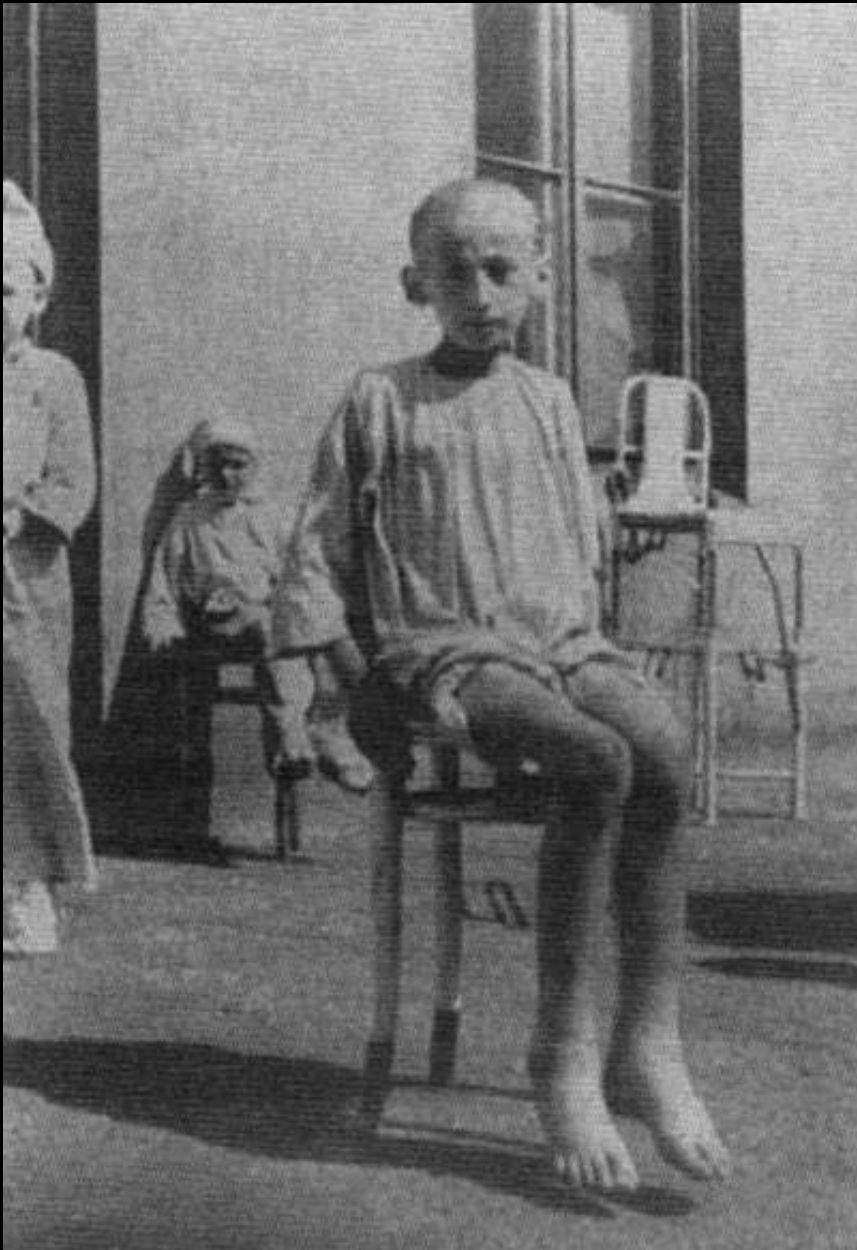
“The watchword of the organized groups of the Jewish community was, *“To live with honor and die with honor!”*”

**--Last letter of Emanuel
Ringleblum, March 1, 1944**



Lately we have seen an interesting phenomenon. In many house committees, women are replacing men who are leaving because they are burned out and tired. There are now house committees where women comprise the entire leadership.

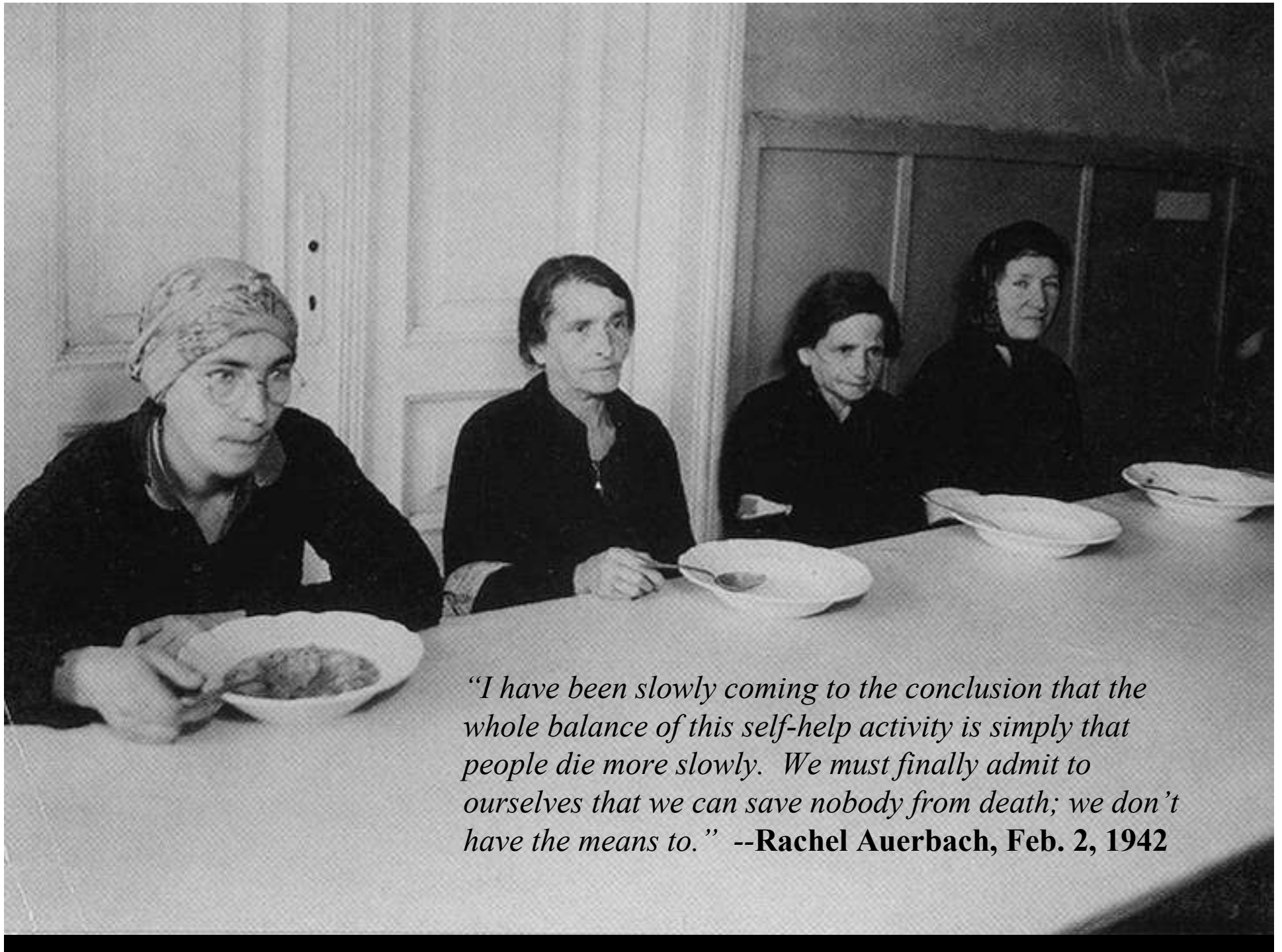
Emanuel Ringleblum, June 10, 1942



“As he trudges home, he looks into a window facing the street. It is a hospital and surgeons are operating to save a child’s life. “But why, why? Why save? Why, to whom, to what is the child being brought back?”

Each day the profiles of our children, of our wives, acquire the mourning look of foxes, dingoes, kangaroos. Our howls are like the cry of jackals But we are not animals. We operate on infants. It may be pointless or even criminal. But animals do not operate on their young.”

***From a Chronicle of a Single Day,
1941, from Oneg Shabbat
by Leyb Goldin***



“I have been slowly coming to the conclusion that the whole balance of this self-help activity is simply that people die more slowly. We must finally admit to ourselves that we can save nobody from death; we don't have the means to.” --Rachel Auerbach, Feb. 2, 1942

Break up of House Committees

German Labor Quotas & Body Snatching





FLECKFIEBER

BETRETEN und VERLASSEN
IST STRENGSTENS VERBOTEN

DUR PLAMISTY

WSTĘP I WYJŚCIE
SUROWO WZBRONIONE

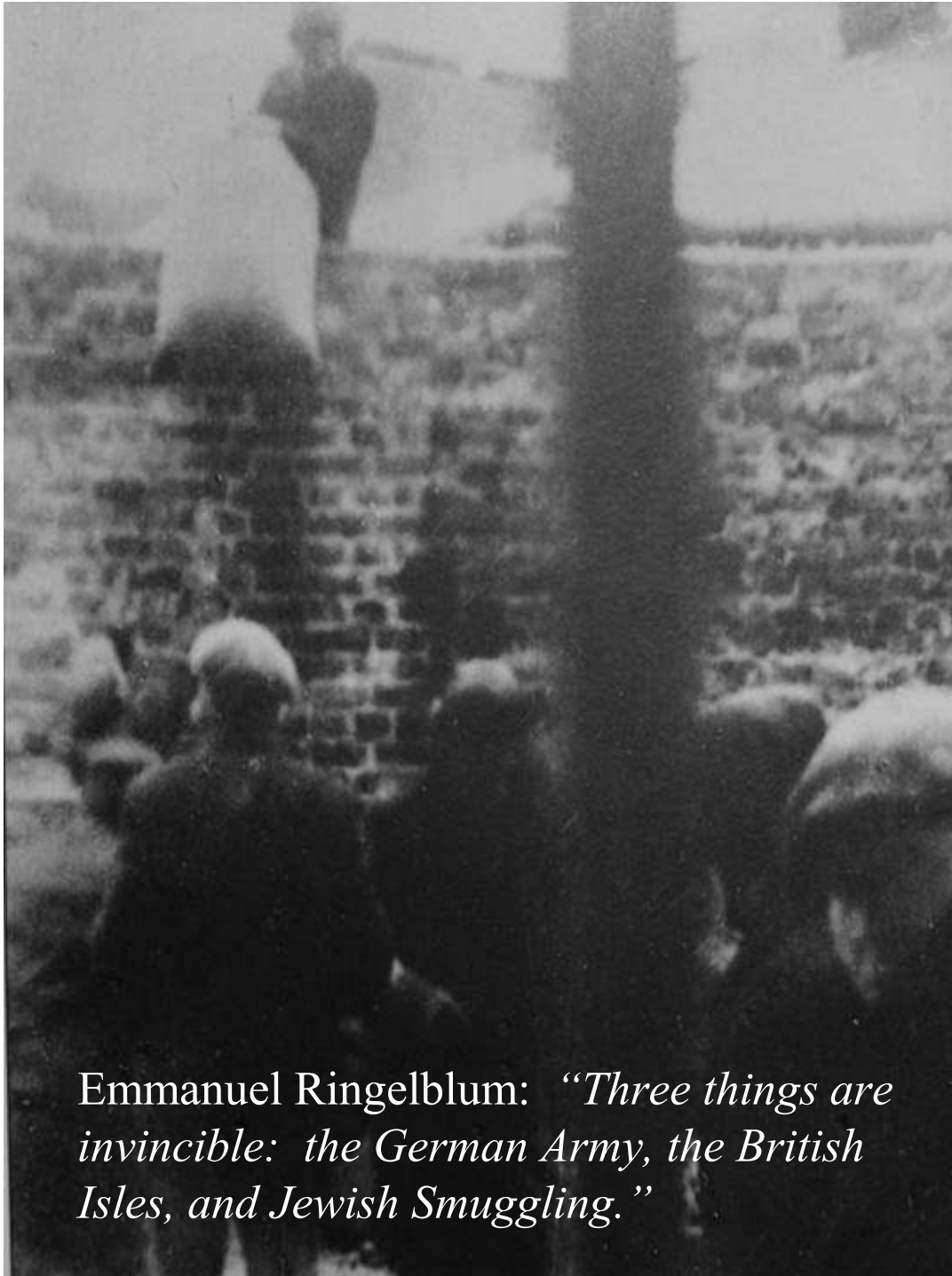
Typhus & Parówki

Disinfection Showers





Smuggling in Warsaw Ghetto
Kohn & Hellers



Emmanuel Ringelblum: *“Three things are invincible: the German Army, the British Isles, and Jewish Smuggling.”*



Abraham Ganzweich
*The 13, Control Office to Combat
Black Market and Profiteering*











“Each piece of bread that we buy on the open market is soaked with Jewish blood.” --Abraham Lewin, Warsaw Diary, Tuesday, June 2, 1942



Child Smugglers in Prison, Warsaw Ghetto

The lives of the smugglers are filled with danger. Not a day passed when one of them was not cut down by machine-gun fire . . . But the smuggling did not stop. . .

-- Study on Smuggling, Oneg Shabbat Archive, Mojzesz Passenstein



**With Deportations to
Treblinka, Self-Help in
Warsaw Ghetto Moves to
Hiding, Escape and
Ultimately Resistance**





Łódź: “Manchester of Poland”



No House Committees; Virtually No Smuggling

Ghetto Money in Lodz – “Rumkies”



Rumkowski Versus the Unions

Breaking the Unions (1940/1941)





Community Flyer:

Hospital Workers Strike

*Terror tactics used against us
will not break the action . . .*

*They are even arresting
strikers' family members.*

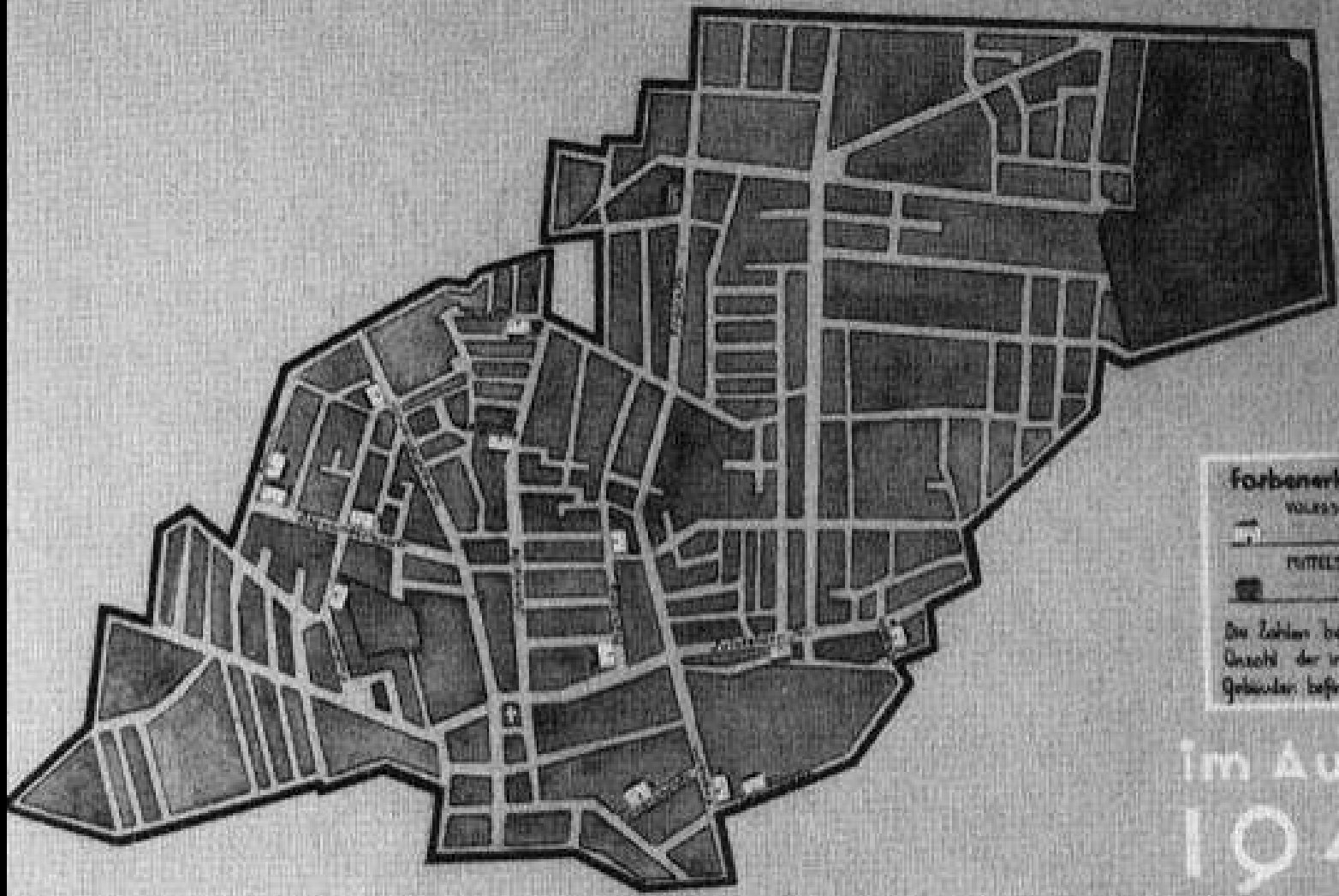
*Within the last 24 hours, 35
people have been arrested. . .*

December, 1940



Fekalists in Lodz



SCHULNETZ im GETTO



Legende

-  VOLKSSCHULEN
-  MITTELSCHULEN

Die Zahlen bedeuten die Anzahl der in den betreffenden Gebäuden befindlichen Schulen

im August
1940

Stella Rein - Teacher



Elementary School in Lodz



Lodz Gymnasium Class, 1941



Lodz Schools End with Influx of Jewish Refugees, Autumn, 1941





*Lodz Gypsy Camp
Nov/Dec 1941*

Physician Lottery

Dr. Dubski, Prague

Dr. Karol Boehm, Prague

Dr. Kraus, Prague

Dr. Vogel, Prague

Dr. Fiszal Altman, Lodz

Dr. Aron Nikelburg, Warsaw



**Story of Dr.
Daniel Weiskopf**
*Hiding & Resistance
in Lodz Ghetto*



*Dr. Daniel
Weiskopt*



Hans Biebow



**Story of Rachel
Herschenberg**
Midwife of Lodz



Anna Toronczyk, Rachel's Twin





Salomea
Herschenberg
Kape

The Midwife from Lodz


New Birth is Symbol for Rebirth of Nation



Rachel Herschenberg

- *“In a filthy, well camouflaged cellar my mother examined the heavily bleeding woman, removed the retained placenta by an ungloved and not too clean hand. She waited till the bleeding stopped, checked the baby, and then returned to the camp alone.*
- *“Sally,it’s a healthy and beautiful baby boy. I am concerned about the sterility....I must see her (the mother again.)*
- *The Nazis took away from us the rights to be pregnant and to bear children. I’m fully trained to deliver babies, and babies are the promise of life. . . . They are the symbol of the rebirth of our nation.”*

**From *The Midwife from Lodz*, essay/memoir by
Dr. Salomea Kape**



Lodz Cemetery, Murder Pits Prepared for Jewish Clean Up Crew, but saved by Russian Army who liberates Lodz on January 19, 1945 .



Lodz Cemetery Pits, Photo taken July, 2011



Grave of Daniel Weiskopt, Lodz Cemetery
Photo taken July, 2011

Kovno Ghetto

*August 18, 1941 –
August 1, 1944*

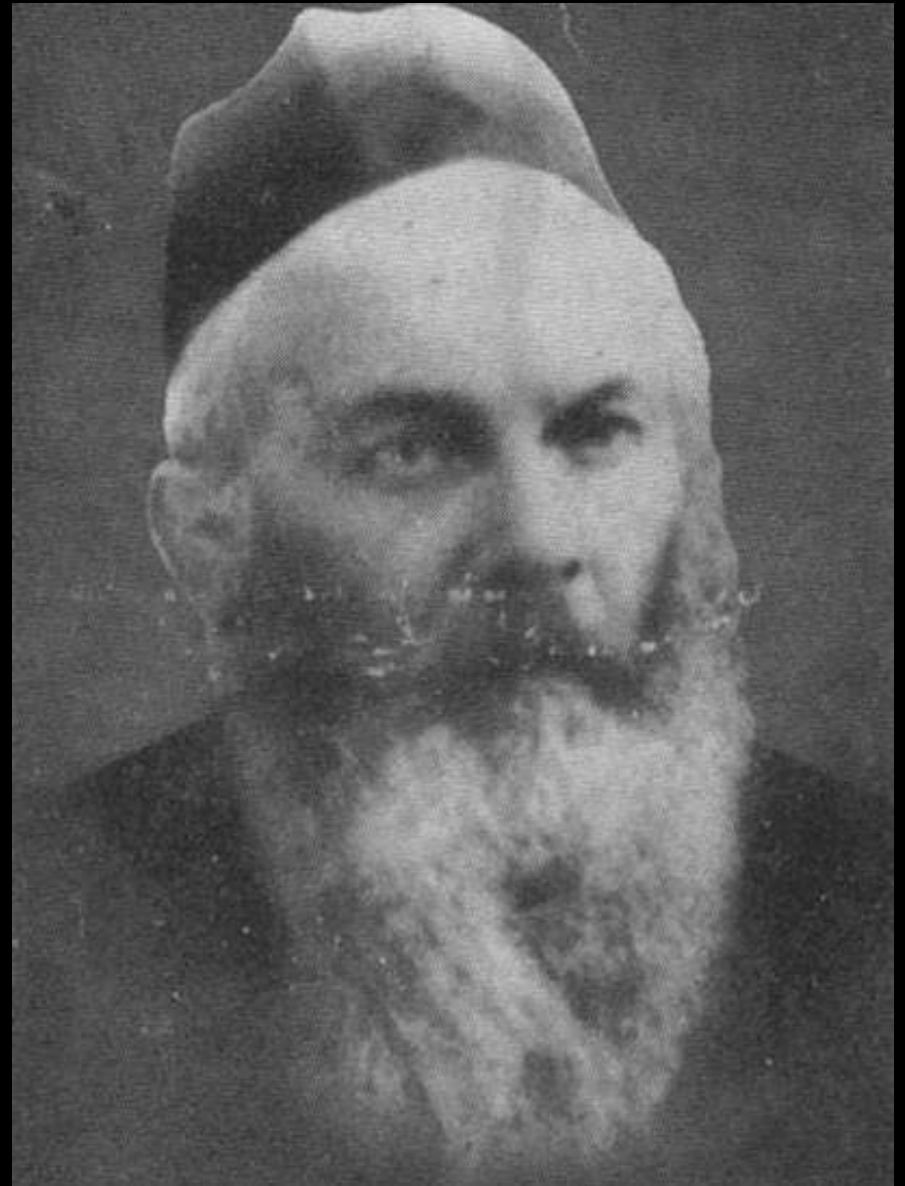




Martyrdom

Let us walk with heads held high. Let no one think a thought that would disqualify his sacrifice. . . The fire that consumes our bodies is the fire that will rebuild the Jewish people.”

-- Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman



Rav Elchonon Wasserman

Leadership of Kovno Jewish Council

(Established August 4, 1941)



*Avraham
Golub (Tory)
Secretary*

*Leib
Garfunkel
Deputy
Chairman*

*Dr. Elkhanan
Elkes,
Chairman*

*Yakov
Goldberg
Head of Labor
Office*

*Zvi Levin
Council
Advisor*



Ghetto Workshops

“Work for Life”

- Pharmacy
- Pottery shop
- Metal Shops
- Carpentry
- Laundry
- Tailoring
- Saddlery
- Toy factory





Pharmacy Department: Smuggling Medicine, Links with Jewish Underground / Partisans



Rabbits and Razor Blades



Resistance in Song

The Jewish Brigades

*Jewish brigades
In patches we parade.
Our troubles we bear,
We never despair!*

*Just because we do not whimper
When you beat us black and blue,
Do not think that broken bodies,
Mean a broken spirit, too.*

--Avron Akselrod, Sept. 1941

From the Diary of Ilya Gerber

*Sixty years later, it seems to me that
among my memories, the most
audible (and visible) form of
resistance in the ghetto was music.*

**--from *Courage was My Only Option: The
Autobiography of Roman Kent***



Ezrah Charitable Society

Founded by 2 women

Miriam Shor

Mrs Krumer

“Jews, donate for the poor and for the naked the old winter clothing and shoes you no longer need! Do not stint! Give generously!”



Nazi Decree: May 7, 1942

*Any Jewish woman found to be pregnant
will be put to death immediately.*

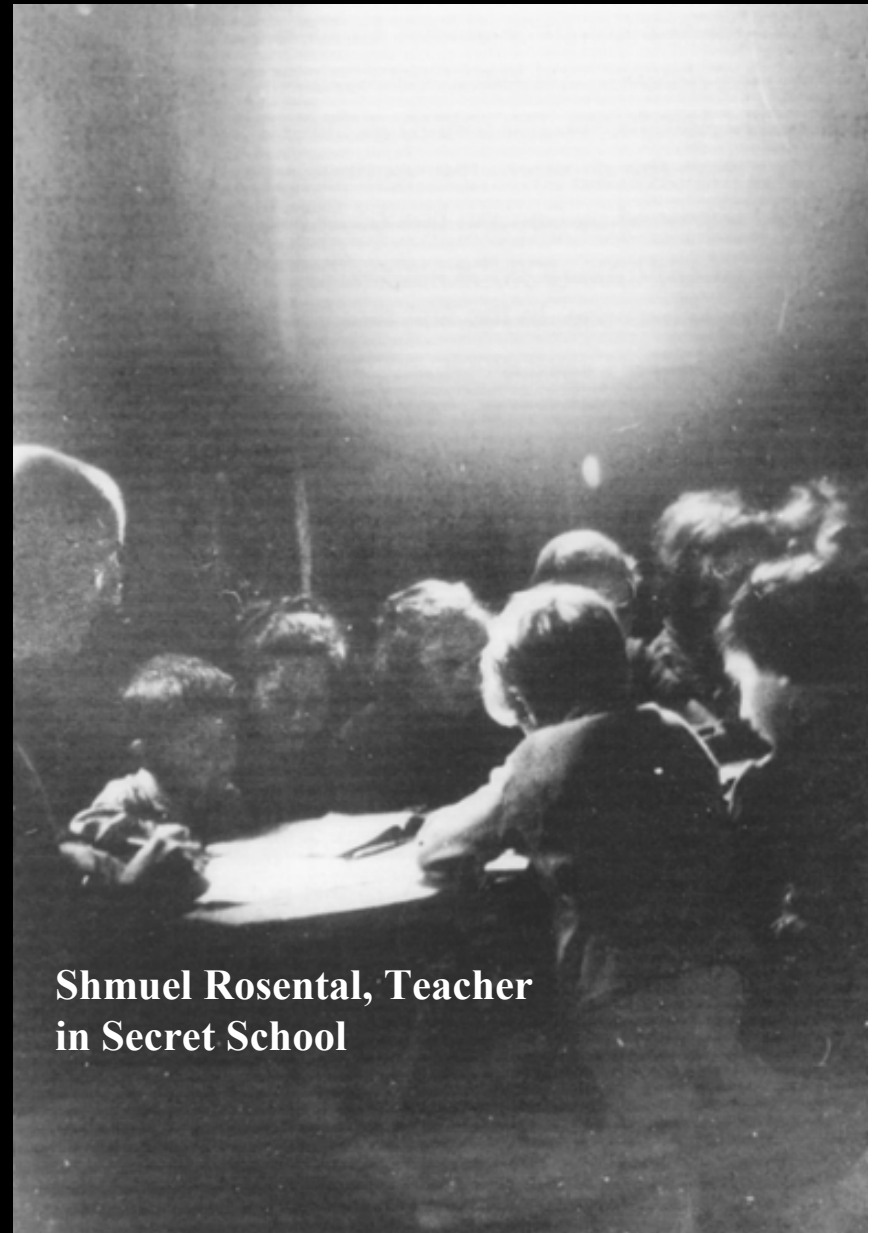
Kovno Medical Department

- Perform births when pregnancies are illegal
- Hide Typhus cases
- Will not give out names of dentists in ghetto
- Establish Secret Asylum for Mentally Disabled
- Establish Secret Orphanage in Hospital
- Hospital used for secret prayer meetings and holiday celebrations



Dr. Moses Brauns
Director of Jewish Hospital
By Josef Schlesinger

Prohibitions Against Education & Schools (Aug / 1942)



**Shmuel Rosental, Teacher
in Secret School**



The Courageous Teacher, Mrs. Segal

Hitler has promised that there will be no more Purim Festivals . . . Mrs. Segal (teacher) pays no heed to bans and prohibitions. Although the Jewish School has been officially closed on orders from the Germans, this order has yet to reach this courageous and distinguished educator.

**--Diary of Avraham Tory,
March 21, 1943**



Book Aktions: Hiding Books in Kovno Ghetto



Attempting to “Remove” People from History
and the Importance of Jewish Cemeteries

RESPONSA FROM THE HOLOCAUST



Rabbi Ephraim Oshry



Rabbi Ephraim Oshry



Rabbi Ephraim Oshry

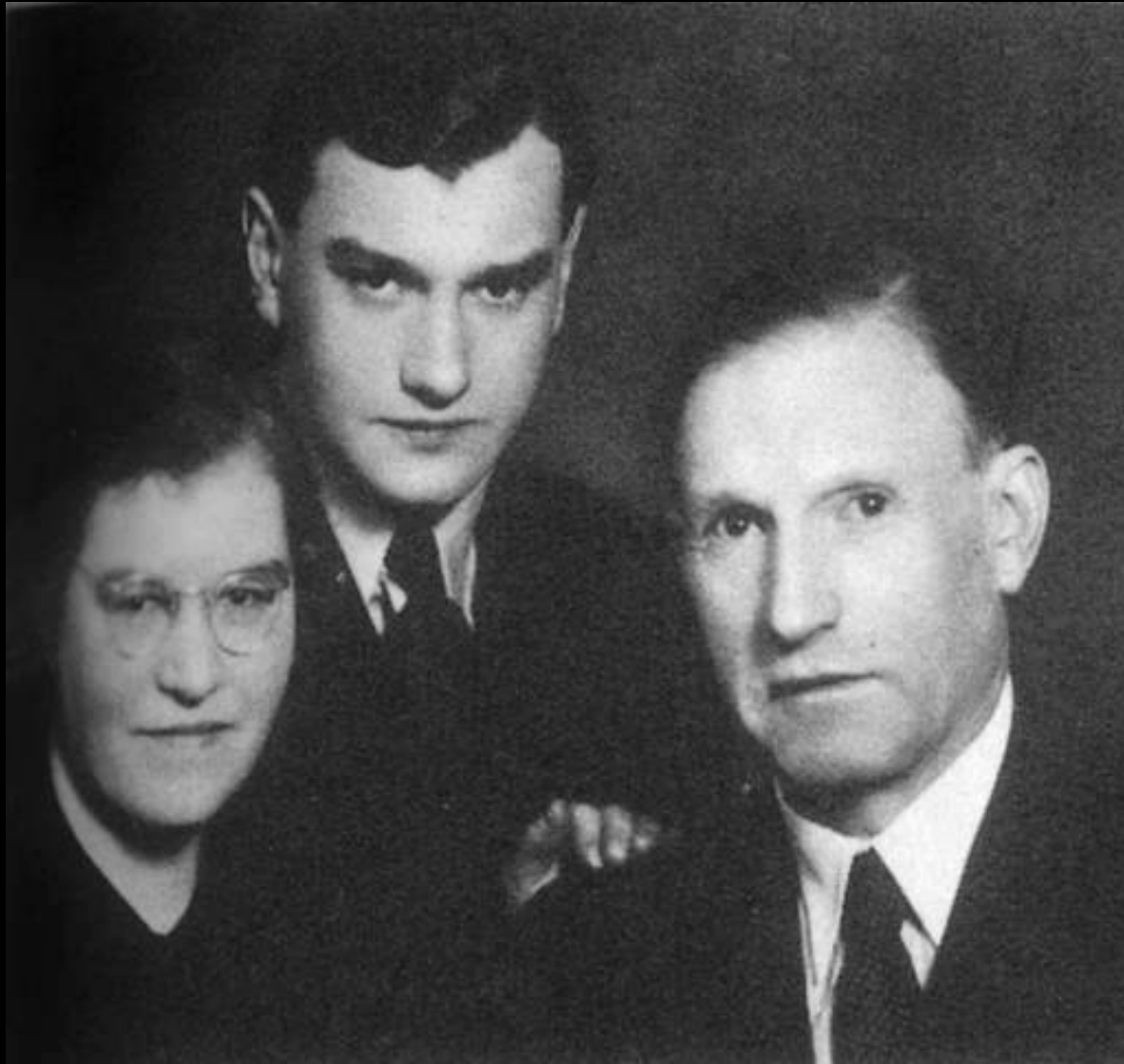
- Can one cook on the sabbath?
- Should the critically ill fast on Yom Kippur?
- Are marriages of convenience sanctified?
- Can one entrust a Jewish child to non-Jews?
- Can one risk life to join partisans?
- Can one risk life for prayer & sabbath?

Jewish Self-Help at Liberation and Beyond





Rescuing Hidden Children in Lithuania



Miriam, Dr. Joel and Dr. Elkhanan Elkes

“Apart from seeing her husband and children, two objects sustained her in captivity. One was a piece of bread, which she always hid about her person; the other was a broken piece of comb. She kept the bread in case someone needed it more than she; and no matter what, morning and night, she would comb her hair to affirm her person.”

**-- From Dr. Elkhanan Elkhanan
Elkes in the Kovno Ghetto: A
Son's Holocaust Memoir**





What we were unable to cry and shriek out to the world, we buried in the ground . . . I would love to see the moment in which the great treasure will be dug up and scream the truth at the world . . . May the treasure fall into good hands, may it last into better times, may it alarm and alert the world to what happened . . . We may now die in peace.

-- David Graber, Age 19, Oneg Shabbat Archives, Last Will and Testament



Tension and anxiety among us have increased to an indescribable level . . . Will we be liberated, will we be human again?

*. . . If we survive . . . We will remember the holy ones, the pure ones, the guiltless heroes. We will remember our fathers, our relatives, acquaintances who were murdered, who starved to death and suffered indescribable torment. . . . **We will remember. . .***

--Diary of Unknown Boy, In Hebrew, Lodz Ghetto, July 31, 1944