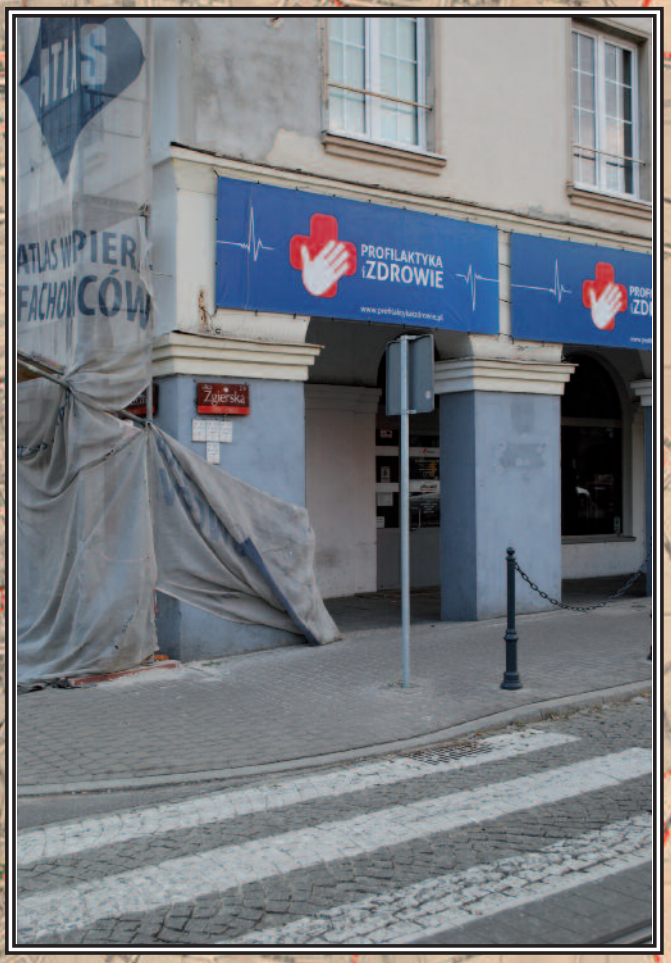
AFTER THE BATTLE



THE LODZ GHETTO

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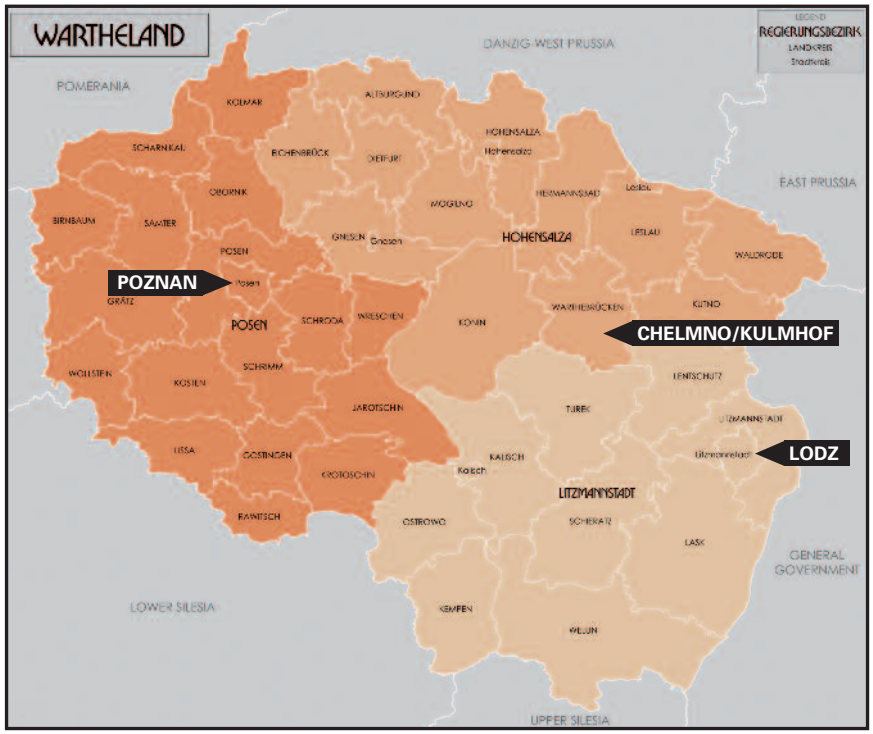
Front Cover: The Jewish ghetto in the city of Lodz (renamed Litzmannstadt by the Germans in 1940) in Poland was the first large ghetto set up by the Nazis and also the longest to survive. The signs at the entrances read 'Residential quarter of the Jews. Entry prohibited'. This is the one at Stary Rynek (Old Market) — then and now. (Karel Margry)

Back Cover: The memorial to HMAS *Assault*, the joint US and Royal Australian Navy amphibious training centre that existed in Port Stephens, New South Wales, from November 1942 to October 1943. The memorial strands in Fly Point Park in Nelson Bay. (David Mitchelhill-Green)

Photo Credit Abbreviations: AWM — Australian War Memorial; BA — Bundesarchiv; IWM — Imperial War Museum; USHMM — United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; USNA — US National Archives; ZIH — Zydovski Instytut Historyczny, Warsaw.



After the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939, the German-occupied part of the country was split up into four different Reichsgaue, which were annexed by Germany, and the Generalgouvernement area further east. Reichsgau Wartheland (as it was known from January 29, 1940) was governed by Gauleiter and Reichsstatthalter (Reich Governor) SS-Obergruppenführer Arthur Greiser, who had his seat in the city of Posen (the German name for Poznan). It was in his fief that the Nazi authorities in early 1940 set up a Jewish ghetto in the city of Lodz, one of the very first to be created in all of German-occupied Europe. (In total, the Nazis set up an estimated 1,100 to 1,200 ghettos, nearly all of them in Eastern Europe. There was in fact only one ghetto in the West, at Amsterdam in the Netherlands.) The killing centre set up by the Nazis in the Wartheland to liquidate Jews, gypsies and other 'undesirables' in their territory was at Kulmhof (Chelmno), 60 kilometres north-west of Lodz.

The city of Lodz (Łódź in Polish) lies in western Poland, 140 kilometres south-west of Warsaw. A centre of textile manufacture, in the 19th century it developed into the country's second-largest city after Warsaw and the principal centre of textile industry in Eastern Europe, with Jews preponderant as workers and manufacturers. By 1939 it had a population of nearly 700,000, of whom 233,000 (33.5 per cent) were Jewish.

Nazi Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, and in a Blitzkrieg campaign of five weeks the whole country was subjugated. Co-ordinated with the German attack and following a secret clause of the recently concluded German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, the Soviet Union invaded Poland on September 17, the Red Army quickly occupying the eastern half of the country. Warsaw fell to the Germans on September 28 and the last Polish bastions capitulated on October 6 (see *After the Battle* No. 158).

Following the German-Russian occupation, Poland was carved up into three parts: the eastern half was annexed by the Soviet Union; the western provinces were annexed by Germany and became part of the German Reich, forming four new Reichsgaue (administrative and party districts): Danzig-West Prussia, Wartheland and Upper and Lower Silesia, each governed by a Reichsstatthalter/Gauleiter; and the remaining middle part became the so-called Generalgouvernement, ruthlessly ruled by its Governor-General, Hans Frank.

Wehrmacht troops had entered and occupied Lodz on September 8. Tens of thousands of inhabitants, including over 70,000 Jews, had fled but 162,000 Jews still remained in the city. When Poland was torn up, the city ended up in the Wartheland, the middle one of the four new Gaue, ruled by its Reichsstatthalter and Gauleiter, SS-Obergruppenführer Arthur Greiser. No German city within the Reich (Germany and Austria), not even Berlin or Vienna, had such a large Jewish community so, at a stroke, Lodz became the largest centre of Jewish population within Greater Germany.

Immediately following the occupation, like everywhere in Poland, the local Jews became victims of anti-Semitic violence, not just from German soldiers and civilians but also from Poles. The first official anti-Jewish measures followed soon. They began on September 18 with the banning of religious services for Rosh Hoshanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), followed by the blocking of all Jewish bank accounts; the prohibition of all Jewish organisations and institutions; the introduction of a curfew from 7 p.m. to 8 a.m.; the prohibition to trade in leather or textile products (which to many Lodz Jews meant a professional ban); the 'Arianisation' (expropriation) of all Jewish businesses; the prohibition to own radios; and the prohibition to use horse-carriages or lorries or make use of public transport — all within the space of a few weeks.

In early October, the Nazis ordained that the Jewish community was to each day make available a workforce of 600 men for compulsory labour. Hoping to avoid random round-ups from streets and homes, the Jewish community proposed to themselves select and make available such a force. In connection with that, the German Stadtkommissar (temporary city governor), Albert Leister, on October 13 appointed Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski as 'Judenälteste' (Eldest of the Jews), ordering him to form a Judenrat (Council of Jews), charged with organising and supervising the mobilisation of the Jewish workforce.

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The Jewish ghetto in Lodz (named Litzmannstadt by the Germans) existed from May 1940 to August 1944. The very first to be set up in Poland, and the second-largest after Warsaw, it was also the longest surviving of all the ghettos created by the Nazi regime. Hermetically sealed from the outside world, the ghetto was left to govern itself, under strict Nazi supervision. Led by its Judenälteste (Eldest of the Jews) Chaim Rumkowski, the ghetto tried to survive by opening up a large number of workshops and factories and making itself indispensable for the German war economy. However, with a population of over 163,000 (at its highest point) cramped in a tiny area of just four square kilometres, it became a place of unbelievable overcrowding, hunger, misery and suffering. Over 43,000 people perished there and another 150,000 were sent away to be murdered by gas in the Nazi death camps.

THE LODZ GHETTO

By Karel Margry

Rumkowski, a 62-year-old insurance agent without much formal education, was not a prominent member of the established local Jewish leadership. A religious Zionist, before the war he was principally known for his work in organising a large orphanage for Jewish children. He first came to the fore on September 12, when the Kehillah, the Jewish communal council (many leaders of which had fled before the German invasion), voted for a new chairman. Abram Lajzor Plywacki, of the Agudath Israel religious party, was elected as new chairman with Rumkowski his deputy. However, the latter soon proved the chief driving force and before long assumed paramount position within the council.

For the first two weeks after his appointment, Rumkowski lived under the illusion that he would be able to deal with the German rulers on equal terms. However, he was soon confronted with the reality of the situation. On November 1, Jewish intellectuals were arrested; on the 11th, the newly-created Judenrat was arrested and most of its members tortured and shot or dragged away to concentration camps. The following day, Rumkowski, confirmed as leader of the Jews by the Nazis, formed a new Judenrat. However, many of the nominee members chose to flee the city, forcing him to look for new candidates.

On the nights of November 14/15 and 15/16 — a few days after the first anniversary of the 'Reichskristallnacht' (Reich Crystal Night, night of pogroms) in Germany — the two largest synagogues in Lodz were set alight and destroyed by fire. New anti-Jewish measures followed in quick succession. On November 14, on order from the Regierungspräsident (regional governor) Friedrich Uebelhoer, Jews in Lodz were obliged to wear yellow armbands, and Jewish shops were to be marked as such. From December 2 Jews were forbidden to steer or use any form of vehicle, and on December 11, Gauleiter Greiser ordained that all Jews were to wear a yellow star on the right-hand front and rear of their clothing.

Chaim Rumkowski consistently stuck to his motto 'Our only way is work'. However, his dictatorial leadership and disputable decisions made him the most-controversial figure in the ghetto's history.

Through the ghetto ran two main thoroughfares — the Hohensteiner Strasse (Zgierska) and the Alexanderhof-Strasse (Limanowskiego), which were considered indispensable for German traffic. They were therefore declared 'Arian' streets, which meant they were off-limit for Jews. This in effect cut the ghetto into three separate sections and considerably hampered traffic from one part to another. Initially, Jews could only cross these streets at specific points — two on Hohensteiner and one on Alexanderhof-Strasse — at specific times, so crowds would build up at these points waiting for the German guards to open the gates. This is the southern one on Hohensteiner. The sign reads 'Residential quarter of the Jews. Entry prohibited'.

FORMATION OF THE GHETTO

The population of the Wartheland in 1939 comprised about 4.6 million people, of whom 3.96 million (85 per cent) were Poles, 327,000 (seven per cent) Germans and 366,000 (eight per cent) Jews, the latter living in some 150 different communities. From the very beginning it was the Nazis' intention to remove all non-Germans from the new Gau and replace them with German settlers from elsewhere, either colonists from the Reich or ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe (Galicia and Volhynia in eastern Poland, the Baltic countries, Bessarabia and Bukovina in the Ukraine). At the same time all non-Germans — be they Poles or Jews — were to be moved out into the Generalgouvernement.

On November 12, 1939, the Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer (Higher SS and Police Leader) in the Wartheland, SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Koppe, acting on a directive from Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, ordered the start of deportation of Poles and Jews from the Wartheland. By February 1940 some 200,000 Poles and 100,000 Jews — including 30,000 Poles and 30,000 Jews from Lodz — were to be deported to areas south of Warsaw and Lublin in the Generalgouvernement. Later directives stipulated that over 680,000 persons, including all of Lodz's 233,000 Jews, were to be sent away.

By mid-December, over 87,000 persons had already been deported in 80 train transports. However, these initial deportations did not really affect Lodz. There were two reasons for this: firstly, the German authorities were not yet decided that Lodz would remain part of the Wartheland; secondly, and more importantly, the city's industry was of vital importance to the German war economy and the Germans simply needed the Polish and Jewish labourers to keep it going. In particular it was Hermann Göring, in his capacity as chief of the economic Four-Year Plan, who recognised that the Lodz workers could not be missed.

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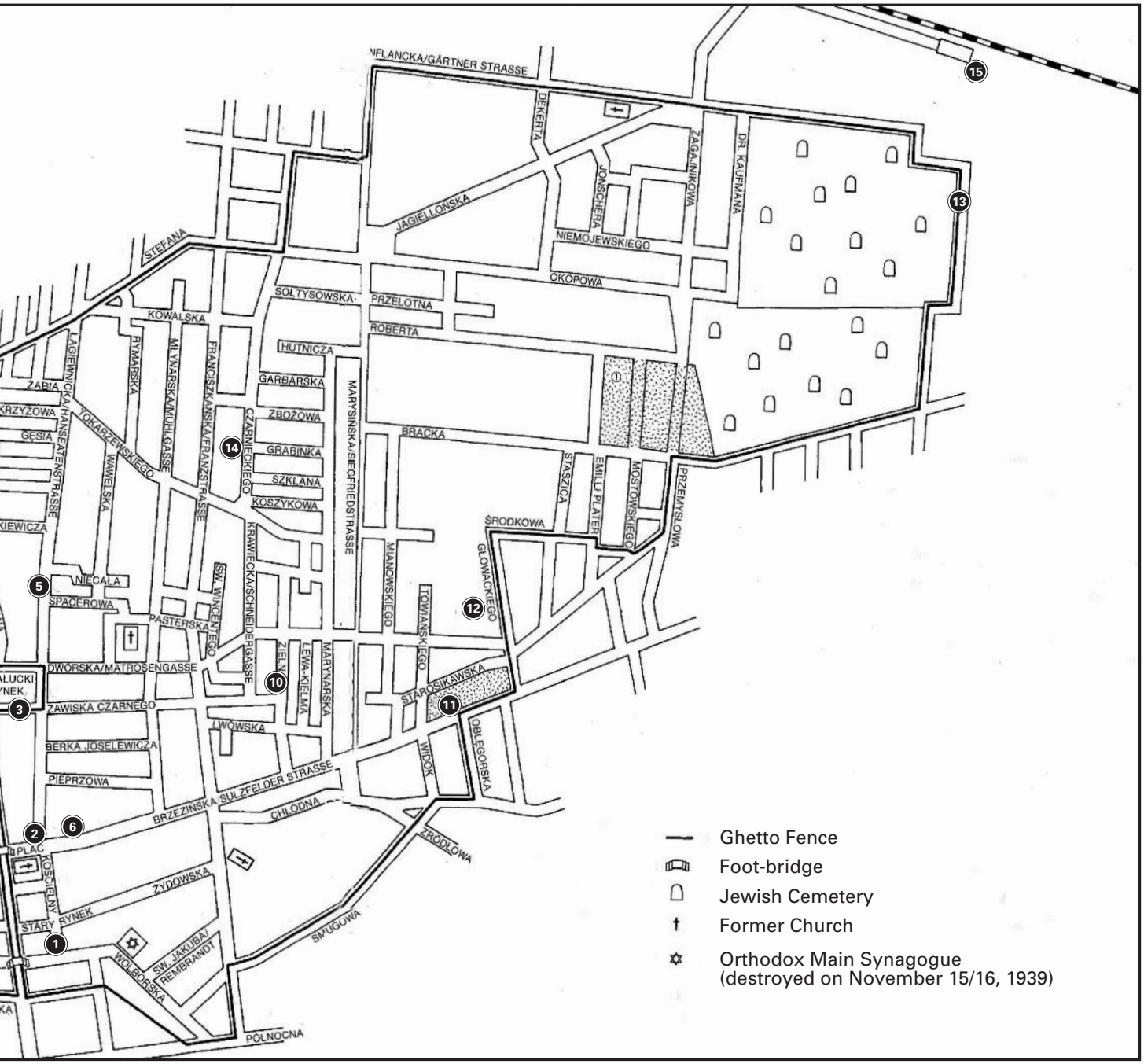
It was located at the south-western corner of Alt-Markt (Stary Rynek) — marked [1] on the ghetto plan. The view is westward, looking into Am Bach (Podrzeczna). The corner building has changed since the war.

All streets in Lodz/Litzmannstadt, including those in the ghetto, were given German names during the Nazi occupation. The ghetto inhabitants used both names interchangeably. [1] Alt-Markt (Stary Rynek) [2] Kirch-Platz (Plac Koscielny). [3] Baluter Ring (Balucki Rynek). [4] Gestapo/Schupo. [5] Hospital No. 1. [6] Gemüse-Markt (Rynek Jojne Pilcera). [7] Ordnungsdienst (Jewish Police). [8] Firemen's Square. [9] Bazar-Platz (Plac Bazarowy), today Plac Piastowski. [10] Kulturhaus (House of Culture). [11] Zigeuner-Lager (Gypsies Camp). [12] Faeces dumping ground. [13] Jewish Cemetery. [14] Central Prison. [15] Radegast (Radogoszcz) Railway Station.

A more general obstacle to the deportations from the Wartheland formed itself when Hans Frank, the ruler of the Generalgouvernement, showed himself decidedly unwilling to accept more Poles and Jews into his fief. Despite vehement protests from Gauleiter Greiser, Frank consistently refused to allow in more deportation transports, arguing it was impossible to absorb so many newcomers.



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Left: **Stary Rynek, the Old Market, had always been a centre of Jewish life in Lodz and a busy hub of commerce, as illustrated by this picture from 1915.** *Right:* **A colourful art installation covered the square when Karel Margry visited Lodz, obstructing much of the view. The square today has houses on three sides but all have changed their appearance since the time of the ghetto, having been given arcaded façades in a post-war redevelopment.**

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Three months after the creation of the ghetto, in July 1940, in an attempt to solve the pedestrian traffic problem, large wooden foot-bridges were built at each of the three crossing points. The Germans used the opportunity to extract more capital from the ghetto, charging the Jews a hefty 60,000 Reichsmark for them. This is the bridge at Stary Rynek, pictured by Wehrmacht photographer Zermin of Propaganda-Kompanie 689 in 1941. Jews could only move along Hohensteiner Strasse via the pavements on either side, which were separated from the roadway by a barbed-wire fence.

The end result of all this was that the Jews of Lodz were for the moment not to be deported. However, since in Nazi racist ideology they were regarded as 'alien' and 'venomous' to German society, they were to be concentrated and isolated in a special closed-off area. The creation of a Jewish ghetto in Lodz had been discussed in German circles for some time and its proposed shape and function was first formally laid down by Regierungspräsident Uebelhoer in a memorandum on December 10, 1939. Although he did not quite know or prescribe 'by which means the ghetto and with it the city of Lodz will be cleaned of Jews', Uebelhoer left no doubt that the whole set-up was just a provisional one, awaiting sterner measures: 'Final goal must in any case be that we utterly burn out this pestilent lump'.

The actual setting-up of the ghetto was ordered by SS-Brigadeführer Johannes Schäfer, the Polizeipräsident (Chief of Police) of Lodz, in instructions issued on February 3 and 8. The ghetto would be made up of the town districts of Stare Miasto (Old City), Baluty and Marysin, all located at the northern end of the city. These neighbourhoods, which included the large Jewish Cemetery and many factories, represented the poorer part of Lodz and contained a great many wooden houses with few amenities. Gas and electricity supply was limited and over 95 per cent of the 31,000 apartments had no toilets, running water or connection to a sewage system.

In this area of just 4.13 square kilometres all of the city's Jews were to be concentrated. Some 62,000 of them already lived there. All non-Jewish residents were given seven weeks, until April 30, to move out and all 100,000 Jews living in other parts or suburbs of the city were ordered to move into the prescribed area by that same date, the latter transfer taking place in several shifts, district per district, ordered and enforced by the German police. Any attempt to flee or delay the house-moving was forcibly suppressed, the German police on one night, March 6/7, shooting 200 Jews in their homes and on the streets in order to terrorise the Jewish population into complying. Those ordered into the ghetto in most cases had no time to sell their property and could take very little of their belongings with them — a tactic designed to rob the Jews of part of their assets. What they left behind was subsequently appropriated by the German state.

The ghetto was officially declared closed on May 10, 1940. From that date onwards, Jews (including even Jewish Eldest Rumkowski) were forbidden to leave the ghetto, and Germans or Poles were forbidden to enter it. Entry permits could only be given out by the Police President. Within the ghetto a curfew from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. was in force. The number of people registered as inhabitants was 163,777.

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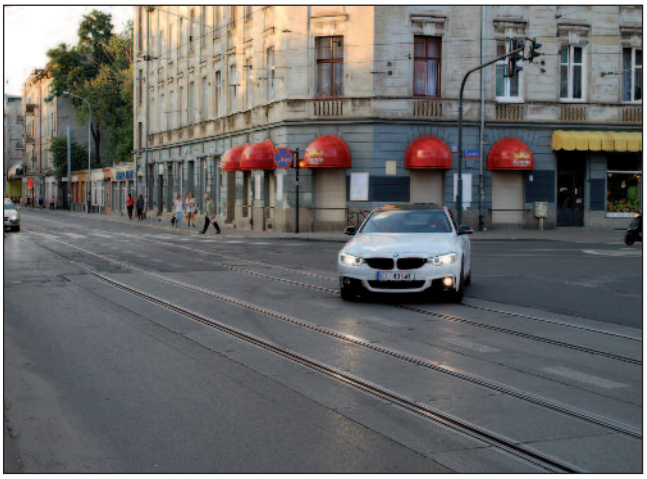
Looking north up Zgierska today. Zermin was standing at the extreme southern end of the ghetto. The church in the background is the Church of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.



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Left: **The second crossing point on Hohensteiner Strasse was 300 metres further north, at Kirch-Platz (Plac Koscielny), the square immediately next to the church. This picture was taken in the summer of 1940, before the pedestrian bridge was built. Note the sign on the corner, identical to the one seen at Stary Rynek, and marking the entrance to the Jewish quarter.** *Right:* **The building on the corner, No. 4 Plac Koscielny, housed several departments of the Jewish self-administration, among them the Statistics Department and one of its sections, the Ghetto Archives Office. Formed in November 1940, the task of the latter was to assemble documents and materials, not so much for present use but with the express purpose that future generations would be able to know about and understand the ghetto. It was here that, from January 12, 1941 to July 31, 1944, a team of collaborators, mostly journalists and writers, compiled an official Ghetto Chronicle, in which they kept a daily record of important data and events, originally in Polish and later in German. Its initial authors were Julian Cukier, Abraham Kamieniecki, Szmuel Hecht, Bernard Ostrowski and Jozef Zelkowicz; from September 1942 their work was taken over by Oskar Rosenfeld, Oskar Singer, Peter Wertheimer, Bernhard Heilig (all four deported to Lodz from Prague in October 1941) and Alice Chana de Buton (deported from Vienna). Each day of the Chronicle began with a listing of the weather conditions, number of people in the ghetto, births and deaths, food deliveries, reports from the factories and workshops, etc, and continued with a variety of stories and reportages about events and daily life in the ghetto, often embellished with a listing of current rumours and examples of ghetto humour. The Chronicle was a public effort, so the compilers could not always openly voice their opinion and sometimes had to shrewdly shroud their descriptions. All authors and editors of the Chronicle perished in the Holocaust, either in the ghetto itself or after deportation to Auschwitz, but a copy of their work was rescued and it remains a primary source of information on the ghetto to this day.**

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The same spot but now with the foot-bridge in place. These pictures by PK photographer Zermin show that the bridges solved the traffic problem only very partially. With the excessive overpopulation in the ghetto, there were always long queues waiting at either end for the two-way traffic over them. Note the barbed-wire fence along the pavements on both sides. Note also Zermin's colleague, a cine cameraman, filming into the ghetto on the right.

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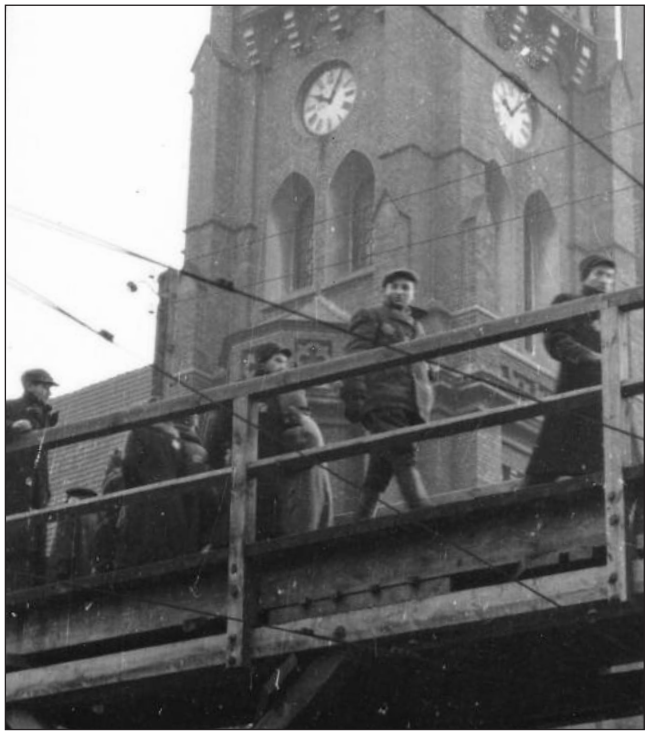
The same view today. A new building has been erected on the corner with Telegrafen-Strasse (Lutomierska) on the left.



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People crossing the foot-bridge, pictured by PK Zermin, with the tower of the Church of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary rising behind.

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Located inside the ghetto, the church was used as a storehouse for stolen Jewish property, and also later as workplace for the feather and down sorting unit, one of the ghetto workshops.

Right: One of the few 'droshkies' (open, horse-drawn wagons) available to the Jews in the ghetto has stopped outside No. 13 Telegrafen-Strasse (Lutomierska), one of two stations of the so-called Rettungsbereitschaft (First Aid Team). Comprising some 11 to 19 doctors and 15 to 28 medical orderlies they provided medical aid to the ghetto inhabitants, the horse-drawn wagons being used as ambulances. Between June 1940 and June 1942 alone, they attended to 38,817 cases. At No. 7, in mid-distance on the left, was one of the ghetto's many production sites, a gloves and hosiery workshop. Led by Dorian Radziejewski, a well-known manufacturer in Lodz before the war, it employed 400 people, including 200 home-workers, producing gloves, socks, sweaters and other knitwear. It later moved to No. 75 Holz-Strasse (Drewnowska). This colour image is one of a unique series of 393 colour transparencies taken by Walter Genewein, the chief of the financial department of the German Ghetto-Verwaltung, between 1941 and 1944. Stored in a simple wooden case, they surfaced in 1987 at an antiquarian shop in Salzburg, Austria. The shopkeeper did not want to disclose the original owner of the trannies but research by Austrian historians Florian Freund, Bertrand Perz and Karl Stuhlpfarrer soon ascertained that they must have been taken by Genewein, a fact later confirmed by his widow Helene. Born on May 4, 1901 in Saalfelden near Salzburg, Genewein had joined the Nazi party in 1938 and was on the Ghetto-Verwaltung staff from 1940 to 1944. His photos, taken with an Agfa 9 x 12 plate camera, were presumably intended to illustrate the agency's success in making the ghetto a vital factor in the German war economy. Note the car on the right: P-45091 was a staff vehicle of the Ghetto-Verwaltung with a special permit to enter the ghetto. Genewein died in Salzburg in 1974. *Right:* The cobblestones and all of the houses along the street have gone in the post-war development of Lodz but the church remains to pinpoint the spot.

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM FRANKFURT

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Right: **The Baluter Ring (Balucki Rynek), the market square located at the junction of the two 'Arian' streets, was the nerve centre of the ghetto. This was the Umschlagplatz, the place where all the foodstuff and other necessities supplied to the ghetto, and the raw materials for its industry, were brought in and where all the goods manufactured by the ghetto workshops went out. A neutral space, both the German Ghetto-Verwaltung and the Jewish self-administration had their offices in wooden barracks built on the square. Here three officials of the Ghetto-Verwaltung, including its chief Hans Biebow (with his back to the camera), are talking with Judenälteste Chaim Rumkowski (with white hair and glasses).**

A month before, on April 11, 1940, following a Führer decree, Gauleiter Greiser had officially renamed Lodz into Litzmannstadt — after a German general from the First World War, Karl Litzmann (1850-1936), who in 1914 had won a battle near the city and later became an NSDAP member and state politician — so it was under that name that the ghetto would be known: Gau-Ghetto Litzmannstadt. It was the very first large ghetto formed by the Nazi regime.

After it was closed, the Germans surrounded the entire 11-kilometre ghetto perimeter with a barbed-wire and wooden fence, guarded by a battalion of the Ordnungspolizei (Order Police, Orpo). Also known as the Wach-Bataillon Litzmannstadt, it fell under the commander of the local Schutzpolizei (Protection Police, Schupo), Oberst Walter Keuck. The guards, placed at 50- to 100-metre intervals, had orders to shoot on sight anyone caught trying to enter or leave the ghetto or smuggle goods in or out. They also were to challenge, and shoot if not complied with, anyone coming within 15 metres of the wire fence.

In order to further separate the ghetto from the rest of the city, entire streets were pulled down, creating a strip of no-man's land between the two. Two main streets — the Hohensteiner Strasse (Zgierska in Polish) and the Alexanderhof-Strasse (Limanowskiego) — designated for German use only, cut through the ghetto, in effect bisecting it into three parts. Jews were only allowed to cross over via certain gates and at designated times only. Later, in July 1940, big wooden foot-bridges were constructed over these 'Arian' streets to allow Jewish pedestrians to pass from one part of the ghetto to another.

Now that all Jews were concentrated in a single district, the question arose how to feed them and who was to pay for that. To manage that problem, the city of Lodz created a special office, the Ernährungs- und Wirtschafts-Stelle Ghetto (Ghetto Food Provisioning and Economic Bureau). The system of food supply to the ghetto was designed to further rob the Jews of their economic wealth. The foodstuff, delivered in bulk to the Judenrat, was to be paid for with what money and valuables the Jews had left. When that source dried up, the food was to be bought with what the ghetto inmates earned with their labour in the workshops and factories. In order to speed up extraction of money from the Jews, on May 21, 1940 the Germans announced the abolishment of all convertible currencies in the ghetto, replacing them with a new legal tender known as Mark-Quittungen or Ghetto-Geld. This forced the inhabitants to release all remaining Reichsmarks and foreign currencies before they became worthless. By August 1940, the inmates had surrendered over five million Reichsmark in money and valuables. Procuring food and other commodities with money earned through labour again worked to the disadvantage of the ghetto inhabitants. Although the Reich Labour Ministry paid

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Today, a huge indoor market hall sprawls over most of the square, but the tall building seen in the left background in the wartime picture survives. We are looking to the square's eastern side.

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Nos. 23-25 in this building housed the meeting room of the Judenrat (Jewish Council) and the administrative office of the Gesundheits-Abteilung (Health Department), the latter directed by Jozef Rumkowski, the brother of the Eldest of the Jews.

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM FRANKFURT

This picture was taken on Baluty Market on June 7, 1941, on the occasion of an official visit to the ghetto by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler. He is seen sitting in his car talking to Chaim Rumkowski, who stands surrounded by German police and SS officers. Hans Biebow can just be seen behind his colleague in the brown Nazi party uniform. Himmler reputedly asked Rumkowski: 'What are you doing here?' Rumkowski: "We work and we are building a city of labour here'. Himmler: 'And how is the work here going?' Rumkowski: 'Not badly, I believe. Hopefully, it will get better. I am doing everything so that the ghetto will work more and work better. My motto is Work, Peace and Order.' Himmler: 'Then go on working for the benefit of your brethren in the ghetto. It will do you good.' After that, Himmler, accompanied by Rumkowski, visited the tailors' workshop at No. 16 Rembrandt-Strasse (Jakuba), the largest in the ghetto.

the German ghetto administration six Reichsmarks per day for every working Jew, the latter only paid out wages of 80 Pfennig per person per day.

The Ernährungs- und Wirtschafts-Stelle Ghetto soon developed into the main agency managing all the affairs connected with the ghetto: besides providing food to the ghetto, it handled all industrial contracts, managed the supply of raw materials, took charge of finished products, issued labour instructions and other orders to the Judenrat, etc. To better reflect its expanded function, the office was renamed Ghetto-Verwaltung (Ghetto Administration) in October 1940.

The man appointed to lead the Ernährungs- und Wirtschafts-Stelle and its successor the Ghetto-Verwaltung was Hans Biebow, a 37-year-old corn and coffee merchant from Bremen, who would remain in office for the duration of the ghetto's existence. His chief assistants were Friedrich Ribbe, deputy; Josef Hämmerle, head of the accountancy department, and Walter Genewein, head of the financial department. They headed a staff that would eventually grow to over 400 people.

To control and check on the ghetto inmates, the German Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police, Sipo) set up two offices alongside the Ghetto-Verwaltung. The Staatspolizei (State Police, Stapo), which had a bureau in the city, the Stapo-Stelle Litzmannstadt, set up a Gestapo station inside the ghetto tasked with watching out for any form of resistance or sabotage, and a special office within the Stapo-Stelle, the Referat für Judenangelegenheiten (Office for Jewish Affairs), led by SS-Hauptsturmführer Günter Fuchs, dealt with all questions regarding deportations into and out of the ghetto. The Kriminalpolizei (Criminal Police, Kripo), represented by the local Kripo-Stelle Litzmannstadt under Kriminaldirektor Dr Ernst Zirpins, set up a 20-men Kripo detachment in the ghetto under Kommissar Bruno Obersteiner. Officially charged with combating and investigating ordinary crimes, particularly smuggling, in practice they mostly engaged in seizing valuables.

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM FRANKFURT

ATB

Left: **Across the square, at its western end, stood the building that housed both the 6. Polizei-Revier (borough of the municipal Schutzpolizei) and the Gestapo station responsible for supervising the ghetto. Note the sentry guarding the entrance to the Umschlagplatz compound. Genewein took his picture from inside the enclosure.** *Right:* **The building stands virtually unchanged at the junction of Zgierska and Limanowskiego.**

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Right: **Furniture and other wooden products from the ghetto workshops are being unloaded on Baluty Market. This picture well illustrates how the square was closed off from the rest of the ghetto, being separated from it by a double fence, one of wire mesh, the other of barbed-wire. Ghetto inmates fill the pavement on the far side. Note that the Jews in the ghetto were obliged to wear a Star of David both on the back and front of their clothing.**

It is important to note that — unlike the concentration camps, which were governed by the SS — the ghettos set up by the Nazis were administered by German civilian authorities. In the case of Lodz, located as it was in the Reichsgau Wartheland, the chain of command ran from Gauleiter Greiser down through the Regierungspräsident of the Kalisch region (Friedrich Uebelhoer) through the Oberbürgermeister of Litzmannstadt — Franz Schiffer (until May 1940), Dr Karl Marder (until May 1941), Werner Ventzki (until August 1943) and Otto Bradfisch (until December 1944) respectively — to the chief of the Ghetto-Verwaltung (Hans Biebow). The SS was present only in so much as that of the four police branches involved in the ghetto — Gestapo, Kriminalpolizei, Ordnungspolizei and Schutzpolizei — the first two were part of the SS empire and all four fell within the jurisdiction of its chief, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler.

JEWISH SELF-ADMINISTRATION

With the creation of the ghetto, the role of the Judenrat, and its chairman Chaim Rumkowski, changed. On April 30, 1940, Oberbürgermeister Schiffer charged Rumkowski with the maintenance of law and order, especially in the economic sphere; the extraction of funds; the employment of labour; the provision of food, and the organisation of medical and social care in the ghetto, making him personally responsible for the upkeep of all these matters.

The directive gave Rumkowski far-reaching powers. In a short time he organised a ghetto self-administration comprising numerous organisations, including a police force (the Ordnungsdienst), a ghetto court of justice, a ghetto prison, a fire-brigade, departments for food, housing, labour, industry, finances (including a ghetto bank), statistics and archive, medical care, social care (for children, orphans, disabled and aged people), cultural activities, etc. As his department chiefs, Rumkowski selected friends and other people he knew and trusted. Jobs within the Judenrat were heavily sought after, as they meant higher food rations and, in later stages, could provide protection against deportation. Within a year, the personnel employed by the Judenrat exploded from a few hundred to over 7,000 persons. With its expansion came bureaucracy, corruption and nepotism.

ATB

The same row of houses still stands on the northern side of the square.

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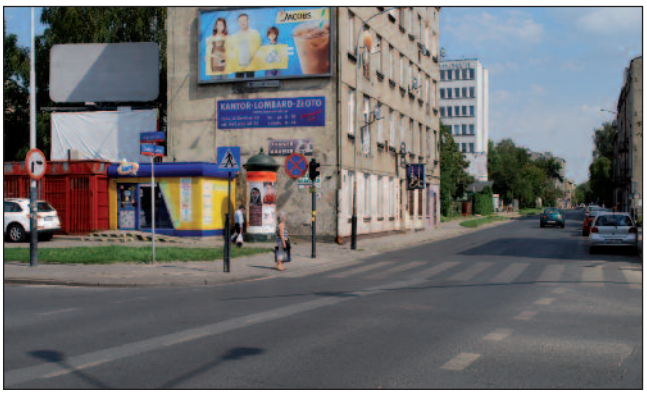

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Left: **Another view into the ghetto from the Baluty Market enclosure, this time looking eastward into Insel-Strasse (Zawiszy Czarnego). This picture was taken by yet another PK photographer, Schilf, in 1940. As with the Warsaw Ghetto, Lodz was much-frequented by official photographers, be they from the Propaganda-Kompanieen or from anti-Semitic publications like *Der Stürmer*, their photos always designed to portray Jews as inferior 'Untermenschen' (subhumans) living in overcrowded squalid slums.** *Right:* **The house on the corner has disappeared but the four-storey apartment block remains. An early inventory recorded that there were 450 four-storey buildings in the ghetto.**

Right: **With over 160,000 persons pressed into an area of just 4.13 square kilometres, the ghetto streets were always full of people. The fate of these children pictured by PK Schilf in 1940 would be determined by decisions taken by Judenälteste Rumkowski later on: if above the age of ten, they would be put to work in the ghetto workshops to increase productivity per capita (ordained in May 1942); if below, they would be cruelly torn away from their parents and sent to Chelmno to be gassed (September 1942).**

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Although formally Rumkowski was just the head of the Judenrat, in practice he ruled all by himself, establishing an autocratic, even dictatorial, rule over his fellow Jews. Every judicial power, high and low, was concentrated in his hands; he raised taxes, coined money (the notes, which featured Rumkowski's signature, were known as 'Rumkis' or 'Chaimkes' after his first name), issued an endless series of instructions and decrees (announced to the populace by means of wall posters, well over 400 between 1939 and 1944). A vainglorious man, he surrounded himself with a coterie of courtiers and flatterers. The ghetto newspaper sang his praise; court poets dedicated cantatas to his glory; the children in the ghetto schools inscribed New Year's greetings to him. For the Germans he was only a Jew, good enough to command other Jews, but one who also got a good beating on occasion. But in the ghetto he displayed all the pomp of a chief of state. He produced postage stamps with his own portrait on them and appeared in public in white cap and coat; he kept for himself the right to arrest or pardon his 'subjects'. He called the ghetto inhabitants 'my workers', 'my children' and even 'my Jews'.

Right: **The house in the left background is the same as the one seen in the previous picture, enabling us to identify this as Hanseaten-Strasse (Lagiewniecka), looking north to Baluty Market. Hanseaten-Strasse (its northern half was known as Sonnleite) was one of the main streets in the ghetto. Along it lay three of the principal tailors' workshops (at Nos. 45, 49 and 53), a brush workshop, later turned into a metal-working shop (at No. 63), another metal-working shop (at No. 73) and two of the five ghetto hospitals (at Nos. 34-36 and 37).**

ATB

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM FRANKFURT

SEAHUNTER

Left: **The hospital at No. 34-36 was the Kasa Choryz m Lodzi (Clinic of the Lodz Sickness Fund). Built in 1927-30, it was relatively modern, and served as Ghetto Hospital No. 1. Rumkowski had his private apartment on the first floor of one of the side buildings. After the ghetto hospitals were closed in September 1942, the building served as one of the assembly locations for deportations out of the ghetto, i.e. this is where people who had been put on a deportation list had to report and stay with their allowed load of luggage, usually for one or two days, before being escorted to the railway station as a group. In the final phase it served as the central office of the tailors' workshops division and, after dissolution of the ghetto in August 1944, it housed part of the Aufräumkommando (clean-up unit) until October 22. This is another of the transparencies taken by Walter Genewein.** *Right:* **After the war, the facility was renamed Helena Wolf Hospital and operated until the late 1980s as a maternity hospital. Entered in the monuments register in the 1970s, it is currently closed and in a rather sorry condition.**

Right: **Further south on Hanseaten-Strasse (Lagiewniecka), PK Schilf pictured the crowd of people passing Rynek Jojne Pilcera, the main marketplace in the ghetto.**

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ATB

The tramway still passes through Lagiewniecka today.

'OUR ONLY WAY IS WORK'

Rumkowski also believed he had a mission: to preserve the lives of the Lodz Jews through every peril. He was convinced that the only chance for the ghetto inhabitants to survive the Nazi persecution was to make the ghetto an indispensable factor in the German war economy, to faithfully carry out all the industrial contracts and in doing so employ as many labourers as possible. His motto, repeated again and again in his many speeches to the ghetto populace and to workers in the factories, was: 'Our only way is work'.

Already on May 13, 1940, Rumkowski notified Oberbürgermeister Marder that he had registered 14,850 trained labourers — textile workers, wood workers, metal workers and other craftsmen — and could provide a range of 70 different products.

Beginning production with a single textile workshop with 300 workers, by July 1941 some 40,000 of the 160,000 ghetto residents were employed in production. The number of factories and workshops and diversity of products grew continuously and by 1942 there were over 73,000 persons employed in over 90 manufacturing sites. They worked almost exclusively for the German Wehrmacht, producing an ever-wider diversity of military products: uniforms, boots, gloves, belts, epaulettes, medal ribbons, straw winter shoes, ear-muffs, camouflage jackets, sleeping bags, ammunition crates and boxes, etc. Other orders came from civilian businesses, mostly department stores and clothing merchants, who ordered a wide range of textile products: coats, dresses, underwear, stockings, carpets, rugs, etc. The Deutsche Wohnungshilfswerk (German Housing Relief Organisation, DHW) placed orders for prefabricated emergency homes and wooden furniture for bombed-out civilians.

To increase output, many of the workshops introduced series-production and conveyor-belt techniques, allowing the employment of unskilled labour. Workers spent long hours, toiling six days a week, initially for nine hours per day, increased on April 29, 1941 to ten hours. In May 1942, to offset a drop in production caused by the workers' increasing weakness from hunger, Rumkowski ordained that all children above ten years of age were to be put to work as well, and introduced a three-shift schedule. Wages were held low because Gau authorities took 30 per cent off the top, the Ghetto-Verwaltung another 30 per cent, and the Jewish self-administration another ten. The most-skilled worker received at best four ghetto marks daily, non-skilled labour earned only one mark per day.

Rumkowski acted vigorously against any form of labour unrest or industrial sabotage. Throughout the existence of the ghetto there were outbursts of strikes and demonstrations,

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM FRANKFURT

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Left: **Rynek Jojne Pilcera was the main site for storing vegetables supplied to the ghetto, hence its German name Gemüse-Markt. The vegetables — mostly kohlrabi, white cabbage, black radish, carrots and the like — were always, and by intent, of inferior quality and large quantities were already rotting away when delivered. Nonetheless, forced by the starvation rations, most of the putrid stuff was still used by the ghetto kitchens to prepare the daily soup meals.** *Right:* **The open space of the square has now been divided up and is partly used as a car park. However, the buildings around it remain unchanged.**

MENDEL GROSMAN

In addition to the hundreds of official photos of the ghetto taken by the Germans and the unofficial snapshots taken by curious Wehrmacht soldiers, there also exists a large number of pictures taken by a team of Jewish photographers. Employed by the ghetto's Statistics Department, their main task was to take portraits for ID cards for the thousands of ghetto labourers but they also clandestinely documented every aspect of the ghetto. *Left:* **Mendel Grosman, born in Staszow on June 27, 1913, was already a professional photographer in Lodz before he came to the ghetto in 1940. Just before being sent on to Königs Wusterhausen camp in October 1944, he managed to hide his 10,000 negatives in the ghetto. He perished in late April 1945 during the subsequent death march from the camp but his sister recovered his negatives and brought them to Palestine where however they were lost in the 1948 Israeli war of independence. Fortunately, his friend Nachman Zonabend independently managed to rescue numerous prints, which are now preserved in two Israeli archives.** *Right*: **One of Grosman's photos: children scavenging for coal.**

the workers protesting variously against the low wages, the quantity or quality of their meals, or the lack of coal to heat up homes or work places. When the first strike occurred in August 1940, Rumkowski ordered the Ordnungsdienst to beat the strikers into submission, denouncing them as 'irresponsible elements'. Later he also resorted to banning strikers from work, which meant the culprits lost their extra rations; putting gang-leaders into prison, or the closing of entire workshops. Ghetto policemen saw to it that work discipline was maintained and that no sabotage occurred.

The productivity of the ghetto workshops depended directly on the food situation: the more the workers were fed, the better they could work. Nonetheless, the Germans never supplied the ghetto with enough food (spending only 30 Pfennig per person per day on provisions) and what was delivered — mainly potatoes, vegetables, flour, meat and Ersatz coffee — was always of inferior quality. As time went on, meat, fat and dairy produce were supplied in ever-diminishing quantities and marmalade and sugar disappeared altogether. Distribution had to be regulated too. In June 1940, Rumkowski introduced ration cards; food was henceforth sold by Judenrat personnel in special shops and on markets. In the autumn, with food expenses threatening to exceed income from the ghetto (and endangering profits), Biebow's Ghetto-Verwaltung rudely overrode Rumkowski's system, announcing a drastic reduction of food supply and ordered Rumkowski to introduce two kinds of food rations, one for working people and a lower one for non-workers. Communal kitchens were introduced; all foodstuffs now went to these facilities, which prepared and gave out meals — mainly a piece of bread, a bowl of watery cabbage or potato soup, and an evening snack of radish greens or potato peelings — to the population.

With rations being continuously curtailed further, the food situation grew ever more catastrophic. In the summer of 1942 a fully employed worker received only 1,100 calories daily, less than ordinary prison inmates, and a non-worker a mere 600 calories. Even the chief of the Ghetto-Verwaltung, Biebow, wanting to upkeep productivity of his lucrative enterprise, in 1942-43 repeatedly protested against claims — from the Gestapo, from the Oberbürgermeister — that the ghetto population was using up too much food.

GHETTO SOCIETY

The daily life of the ghetto inmates was determined by hunger, cold, exhaustion, work and the always-present fear of deportation. Everybody suffered from the lack of food, fuel and medical supplies, and death affected every family. The hard labour and the malnutrition, coupled with the unsanitary conditions in the poorly-ventilated and overcrowded factories and homes, had a catastrophic effect on the population. Sixty per cent of the ghetto inmates suffered from tuberculosis and there were outbreaks of typhus and dysentery. Between May 1940 and October 1941, i.e. in the first 18 months of the ghetto's existence, its population sank from 163,000 to 144,000. The decrease was partly caused by transfers out to forced-labour camps elsewhere, but most of it was the result of a rapidly-rising death rate. Between 1940 and 1944 over 43,000 people died in the ghetto. They were buried in closely packed graves in a huge open plot of the Jewish Cemetery.

In the congested conditions of the ghetto, staying clean and warm posed insoluble problems. Three or four families lived in space adequate for one. With barely any soap or hot water, keeping a household clean and clothes

HENRYK ROSS

Left: **Henryk Ross, born in Warsaw on May 1, 1910, worked as a press photographer in Lodz before the war. Having been assigned film stock to be used in taking the ID card portraits, he developed a clever technique — seen here — to make 12 such portraits in one shot, thus saving film material for his clandestine work. When the ghetto was dissolved in 1944, he was fortunate enough to become a member of the Aufräumkommando and was able to bury his 6,000 negatives in a wooden crate in the ghetto and himself survive until liberation. He recovered his negatives, about half of which proved irretrievably damaged by groundwater. He ran a photo shop in Lodz until 1956, when he emigrated to Israel, taking his photos with him. He died in Tel Aviv in 1991. His 3,000 negatives are since 2007 held by the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, Canada.** *Right:* **One of Ross's photos of life in the ghetto.**

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM FRANKFURT

At No. 17 Telegrafen-Strasse was the headquarters of the Ghetto Fire-Brigade and around the corner, along Lustige Gasse (Wesola), was the so-called Firemen's Square. Commanded by Henryk Kaufman, the fire-brigade possessed the only motorised vehicles in the ghetto: a six-cylinder Chevrolet ladder-lorry, a four-cylinder Chevrolet pump-wagon and a BSA motorcycle combination — all three of them found in scrap condition in the ghetto and reinstated by Jewish mechanics. Genewein pictured the firefighters proudly demonstrating their ladder-lorry on the square.

washed was an Herculean task. Toilets and latrines, running water and all plumbing and sewage facilities were taxed beyond capacity and beyond repair. Fuel for cooking or keeping warm was always scarce. Coal was delivered but never in sufficient quantities. In January 1941, the Judenrat undertook a systematic programme of dismantling uninhabited places — stores, shops, fences — to provide wood for fuel. Despite the best efforts, the ghetto degenerated into a filthy, impoverished, muddy place of misery.

In the coerced society of the ghetto, solidarity and egoism lived side by side. There was theft, corruption, betrayal, luxury and privileges for some, and political strife (ranging back to differences between the pre-war political factions, between religious and non-religious Jews, Zionists and non-Zionists, socialists and communists). At the same time, these factions, especially their youth organisations, worked to help the impoverished; established bread distribution points and communal kitchens; organised schools and nurseries for the children (at their peak, in 1941, there were 45 schools with about 10,000 pupils). They also set up kibbutzim (collective farms) for young Zionists in open patches of land in the Marysin district, and led strikes and demonstrations.

There also developed a many-sided cultural life involving a rich programme of theatre and musical performances, lectures and literary clubs, libraries, religious services and Jewish feasts, and cultural evenings. The Ghetto Archive, part of the Statistics Department, compiled a comprehensive ghetto chronicle, between January 1941 and July 1944 painstakingly recording statistics and daily events for future generations. Numerous inmates wrote personal diaries or turned to visual arts, making paintings or drawing sketches. Many of these activities were allowed and could be organised openly but some were forbidden and hence were done in secret.

Opportunities for more-active, let alone armed resistance were completely non-existent. Located inside Reich territory, surrounded by a hostile German population, out of contact with the rest of the world, the ghetto inmates had no way of acquiring any weapons or other ordnance needed for an armed revolt. Moreover, even if an uprising and break-out from the ghetto succeeded, they had nowhere to go, no partisan groups they could join, no organised resistance groups that could help to hide them. A few inmates were able to secure or build wireless receivers, enabling them to illegally listen to radio broadcasts and so follow the course of the war. On June 7, 1944 (the day after the Allied landings in Normandy), six men — Jakob, Henoch and David Weksler (three brothers), Mojzesz and Aron Altzuler (father and son) and Mosze Tafel — were arrested by the German Kriminalpolizei for possession of radios and distribution of an illegal news bulletin. A seventh man, Chaim Widawski, could not be found and he committed suicide by poison two days later.

Another aspect, fed by the ghetto's complete segregation from outside news, was the never-ending stream of rumours — some true, the majority fantastic — that daily went the rounds.

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Chaim Rumkowski, the Eldest of the Jews, used the same square to address the ghetto population on several occasions. This particular photo was taken on June 15, 1940, but his most infamous and controversial speech here was held in the afternoon of September 4, 1942, when — having been ordered by the Nazis to provide 20,000 persons for deportation (and almost certain death) — he pleaded with the inhabitants to 'give me your children'. In the following week, over 15,000 persons, the majority of them children below ten years of age and elderly people, were deported to the Chelmno killing centre, where they were murdered in mobile gas-vans.

ATB

Ulica Wesola is today named Ulica Zachodnia and the former fire-brigade building at No. 14 remains.

ZIH WARSAW

One block west of the firemen's square lay Bazar-Platz (Plac Bazarowy). Besides being the venue for more of Rumkowski's public speeches, this square was the site of several public hangings in the ghetto. The first of these — the execution of a single man — occurred on February 20, 1942, and the entire population was ordered to attend. Later there were several multiple hangings. The largest was on September 7, 1942, when 18 men were hanged, their crime being an attempt to escape from the labour camp at nearby Pabianice in order to evade 'resettlement' (i.e. deportation to Chelmno).

DEPORTATIONS INTO THE GHETTO

When it became clear that not all Jews within the Wartheland would be shoved off into the neighbouring Generalgouvernement within the foreseeable future, the local German authorities pleaded with Gauleiter Greiser to concentrate these Jews in the Lodz ghetto. As a first step, in late September 1941, 2,900 Jews from the Kujawy region, including the towns of Leslau (Wloclawek), Brest (Brzesc Kujawski), Godetz (Chodecz), Kowal and Lubranitz (Lubraniec) were brought into the ghetto.

The overpopulation reached truly catastrophic proportions in the late autumn of 1941 when, between October 16 and November 4, 20 train transports brought in nearly 20,000 Jews from Berlin (4,210 in four trains), Cologne (2,023 in two trains), Düsseldorf (1,003 in one train), Frankfurt-am-Main (1,180 in one train), Hamburg (1,034 in one train), Vienna (4,999 in five trains), Prague (5,002 in five trains) and Luxembourg (514 in one train).

These transports to Lodz — the first mass deportations of Jews from the Reich to the east — came about following a decision taken by Hitler on September 17 and represented a turning point, a crucial change in policy, in Hitler's war against the Jews. Whereas it had always been the intention to make the Altreich (Germany), the Ostmark (Austria) and the Protektorat (the former Czech lands Bohemia and Moravia) 'free of Jews', Hitler's original plan had been to wait with this until the war with the Soviet Union was won so that all the Jews could be deported to conquered territory in the east — to the 'Russian swamps' or behind the Ural Mountains. (For a few months in 1940-41, the Nazi's played with the alternative to deport all the Jews of Europe to the conquered French island of Madagascar but this scheme soon proved unrealistic). However, with the campaign in Russia taking longer than expected, this was clearly not going to happen in the near future, so Hitler decided to start the 'final solution' by moving the Jews to intermediate stations. With Generalgouverneur Frank still refusing to allow more Jews into his territory, Lodz Ghetto was an obvious choice.

Besides ideological reasons, Hitler's decision was based on two practical considerations: there was an acute shortage of housing in Germany and the removal of thousands of Jews would make their dwellings available for other Germans; also, the damage wrought by the mounting Allied air offensive against the Reich was markedly exacerbating the scarcity of housing, especially in cities in western Germany, making the evacuation of Jewish homes there even more urgent. This is reflected in the choice of cities: Berlin, Vienna and Prague were selected because they were the cities with the largest Jewish communities (73,000, 52,000 and 48,000 respectively, in October 1941) but all the others were chosen because they lay within range of the Allied bombers. (Moreover, the transports from the cities in West Germany incorporated Jews from other bombed cities in that same area, notably Emden, Duisburg, Essen, Krefeld, Mönchengladbach, Oberhausen, Wuppertal, Rheydt and Trier).

The massive influx — over 163,000 people now populated the ghetto — confronted the Jewish administration with many problems. To house the 20,000 newcomers, all schools had to be closed (they were never reopened) and several factory buildings to be given up. Even then, each person in the ghetto now only had three square metres of living space. Food became even more scarce (in early November 1941 the bread ration was further reduced) and the black market and inflation soared.

ZIH WARSAW

Bazar-Platz was named after the enclosed marketplace, known as the Tanfani Bazaar, which stood at its eastern end.

ATB

The square is today called Plac Piastowski. Trees now obstruct an open view, this comparison being taken from the south-west corner.

Right: **Standing on top of the foot-bridge at the church, Genewein took this shot looking eastwards across Kirch-Platz (Plac Koscielny) and into Sulzfelder Strasse (Brzezinska). This was one of Lodz's main thoroughfares, leading out of the city to Brzeziny (named Löwenstadt during the Nazi occupation) and on to Warsaw. However, because an alternative route was available around the ghetto, there was no need for it to be kept open or declared 'Arian' so it was simply blocked off at the ghetto's eastern end. Rynek Jojne Pilcera, the vegetable market seen on page 13, lies immediately behind the houses on the left. Note the Ghetto-Verwaltung's staff car on the left.**

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM FRANKFURT

The 20,000 'Westjuden' (Jews from the West) fell upon hard times: they were mostly older people; did not speak Polish or Yiddish; had no connections; were not used to living in slum-type mass quarters; had difficulty finding a job in the factories, hence received lesser food rations — in short their chances of survival were slim from the beginning. By the end of April 1942, so within six months, 3,186 (16 per cent) of them had died from disease, hunger or exhaustion.

Between November 5 and 9, 1941 — i.e. immediately after the arrival of the 20,000 Jews — five trains brought in 5,007 Sinti and Roma (gypsies) from the Burgenland and Steiermark regions in Austria. Over half of them were children. With Nazi ideology branding gypsies as criminal, disease-infected and rebellious, they were locked up in a tiny special section of the ghetto, a few housing blocks surrounded by barbed wire known as the Zigeuner-Lager, and put under quarantine. Billeted in utterly dismal conditions, in quarters without beds or furniture, and already weakened by their earlier stay in internments camps in Austria, the gypsies languished away. A typhus epidemic soon riddled their camp, killing numerous persons, including several Jewish doctors trying to give medical aid. Within two months 613 had died from typhus and starvation.

The German authorities in charge of the ghetto — Regierungspräsident Uebelhoer, Oberbürgermeister Werner Ventzki and ghetto administrator Hans Biebow — had filed repeated objections against the transfer of 20,000 Jews and 5,000 gypsies to the ghetto. They argued that it would only endanger the productivity of the ghetto; increase the number of non-working persons, who still had to be fed and housed; and enlarge the risk of epidemics and unrest. Their reasoning was strictly economic and

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Ulica Brzezinska is today called Ulica Wolska Polskiego (Street of the Polish Army), one of the few streets that has been given a different Polish name since the time of the ghetto.

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM FRANKFURT

ATB

Left: **Another picture by Genewein, taken further up Sulzfelder Strasse/Brzezinska. The wooden houses on the left are typical of the 19th-Century abodes that comprised large parts of the Old Town district. Of a total of 3,361 residential buildings in the ghetto, 1,406 (42 per cent) were wooden constructions, with few amenities and no toilets, running water or sewage connection. These particular houses stood at the intersection of Sulzfelder Strasse with Franz-Strasse/Knüpfer-Strasse (Franciszkanska). They were pulled down in November 1942 on order of the Ghetto-Verwaltung in order to gain fuel for heating purposes (the Ghetto Chronicle recorded that each house yielded 70,000 kilogram of firewood) and to create space.** *Right:* **The houses may have gone but the tram track curving right into Franciszkanska and the buildings in the far distance confirm the spot.**

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coldly bureaucratic, focussed only on cost-efficiency and the maintenance of the industrial output of the ghetto. Their plea was supported by General der Infanterie Georg Thomas, chief of the Wehrwirtschafts- und Rüstungs-Amt (War Economy and Armaments Bureau) at the OKW (Armed Forces High Command), who equally feared that the extra influx would endanger the ghetto's war production. However, all their protests were overruled by Himmler, who simply denied their objections and repeated that it was 'the Führer's wish to expel the Jews in stages from west to east'.

Faced with the dilemma of having to absorb ever more Jews and gypsies into their territory and the impossibility to transfer them out to destinations further east, the Nazi authorities in the Wartheland had already begun thinking of other means to dispose of these unwanted people. Starting in the summer of 1941 the option of mass murder was being discussed at Gauleiter Greiser's headquarters in Posen (Poznan). On July 16, 1941, the chief of the Umwanderer-Zentralstelle (Gestapo Emigration Office) there, SS-Sturmbannführer Rolf-Heinz Höppner, in a memorandum to his superior SS-Sturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann in Berlin, described one of the options that was being discussed: to concentrate all the Jews in the Wartheland in one large hutted camp, put to work those who could work, and let the unproductive ones either starve to death or 'be disposed of with some quick-working expedient. In any case this would be more agreeable than letting them starve to death.' He added that Uebelhoer did not want the Lodz ghetto to disappear as apparently good money was being made with it.

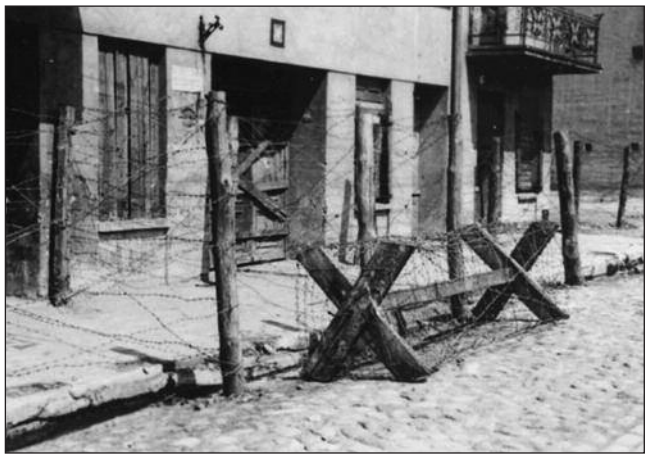
Left: **Disposing of excrement was an eternal problem in the ghetto and special teams hauling wagons full of human waste through the streets were a common sight. The faeces were dumped in a huge open pit on wasteland north of Matrosen-Gasse (Dworska) on the eastern edge of the ghetto. In all, there were hundreds of workers engaged in this unpopular and smelly task. Such an assignment was usually a death sentence, the workers soon contracting typhus. This team was pictured on Sulzfelder Strasse, just short of its intersection with Blech-Gasse (Towianskiego), the latter leading straight to the dumping ground.** *Right:* **Same as Brzezinska has been renamed Ulica Wolska Polskiego (Street of the Polish Army), so Towianskiego is today Obroncow Westerplatte (Street of the Defenders of Westerplatte).**

FIRST DEPORTATIONS TO CHELMNO

Rather than invest more money in feeding unproductive mouths, Himmler and Greiser opted for mass murder. In late October, a special unit, the so-called Sonderkommando Lange, was ordered to prepare a killing centre at the little village of Kulmhof (Chelmno), 60 kilometres north-west of Lodz. Led by SS-Hauptsturmführer Herbert Lange, the Sonderkommando had since October 1939 been engaged in murdering mentally defective patients from lunatic asylums, first in the Wartheland and then in May-June 1940 also in East Prussia, by means of mobile gas-chambers. Now this same Sonderkommando was to set up a murder facility to dispose of all the Jews and gypsies in the Wartheland. Using three gas-vans, the Chelmno facility began operations on December 8, their first victims being Jews from the surrounding communities (see *The Nazi Death Camps Then and Now*).

In early December, SS-Hauptsturmführer Fuchs, the chief of the Lodz Gestapo Jewish Office, ordered Jewish Elder Rumkowski to select 20,000 ghetto inmates for 'resettlement'. It is unknown to what extent Rumkowski knew or realised the fate that awaited these people. Forced to personally make the selection for these deportations, he decided on certain categories: he chose the 'criminals' from the ghetto prison and their families; families that had come in from other towns; and so-called 'supported families' i.e. whose working members had been assigned to work places outside the ghetto. To his discredit, he also included a number of those he saw as his personal enemies. To help him with compiling transport lists and organising the departures, on January 5 he set up a special Resettlement Commission, made up of various heads of department.

Many of the ghetto populace still naïvely believed Rumkowski's promise that the deportees would merely be sent to camps for forced agricultural labour and initially there was little protest. Those selected for deportation were allowed to take 12.5 kilograms of luggage. Once assembled (in the ghetto prison or in some school building), usually in batches of 1,000 per transport, they were marched or moved by wagons to the Radegast (Radogoszcz) railway station, just half a kilometre outside the ghetto on the north-eastern edge of Lodz, and put on trains to Warthbrücken (Kolo), from where trucks and a narrow-gauge railway took them the remaining five kilometres to Chelmno.



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Left: **From November 1941 to January 1942, there existed in the ghetto the so-called Zigeuner-Lager (Gypsies Camp). A special section, heavily guarded and surrounded by an extra barbed-wire fence, it comprised just a few housing blocks in a confined space delineated by Sulzfelder Strasse — Blech-Gasse — Krimhild-Strasse (Starosikawska) and Konrad-Strasse (Glowackiego). Here, 5,007 Sinti and Roma gypsies deported from Austria, half of them children, were incarcerated under utterly miserable conditions, causing over 600 of them to die from typhus within two months. The rest was then shipped off to Chelmno to be murdered by gas.** *Right:* **Known photos of the Gypsies Camp appear to show only the outer façades with the barbed-wire fence, not the unfortunate inmates. This one is of the south-western corner, the building today being No. 82 Ulica Wolska Polskiego.**

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM FRANKFURT

The eastern half of the former Gypsies Camp later accommodated the ghetto's first straw-shoe factory. Opened on May 19, 1942 — four months after the dissolution of the Gypsies Camp — it exclusively manufactured winter boots made out of straw for the Wehrmacht. Starting with 3,000 workers, by October 1942, 8,000 people were employed there. The workshop's location at the outskirts of the ghetto presented a serious problem to its workers, mostly women and elderly people, many of them in none too good a physical condition, because of the long walk to get there. The Strohschuh-Abteilung (straw-shoe section), led by Salomon Lewin, formed a separate Arbeits-Ressort (labour division) within the main Economic Department of the Jewish self-administration. In addition to the workshop at No. 87 Sulzfelder Strasse, there were others at No. 7 Runge-Strasse (Widok) and No. 15 Fisch-Gasse (Rybna).

The first inmates of Lodz to be sent away and murdered at Chelmno were however not the Jews but the gypsies. Between January 5 and 12, 1942 — just two months after they had arrived in the ghetto — the 4,400 wretched creatures still alive in the Zigeuner-Lager were put on trucks to the killing centre and gassed there.

The deportations of the Jews unrolled in three waves. Between January 16 and 29, in freezing cold weather, the first 10,003 were despatched to Chelmno in 14 trains and murdered there. Between February 22 and April 2, another 34,073 were sent away in 40 trains and killed. Between May 4 and 15, 10,993 were shipped away in 12 trains: 10,161 of the 'Westjuden' — over half of the 20,000 that had arrived seven months before — plus another 753 'criminals' and 80 persons who voluntarily joined the transports. By now, opposition had grown considerably: many of those included in the transport lists made frantic appeals with the Judenrat, applying to be made exempt; the Schutzpolizei came into the ghetto to violently search out and round up those that had to go. In all, between January and May 1942, more than 59,000 Jews and gypsies from Lodz were murdered at Chelmno.

In their place came thousands of able-bodied skilled workers — tailors, furriers and shoemakers; men and women — from Jewish communities elsewhere in the Wartheland, in all some 15,000 between May and August 1942. Brought in with them were the sowing-machines and other equipment and machinery from their workshops, which were integrated into the ghetto industry. The non-employable, unproductive inhabitants of these communities — women, children, sick and aged people — had been sent to Chelmno and been gassed there.

All clothing, goods and valuables taken from the victims by Sonderkommando Lange were put at the disposal of the German Ghetto-Verwaltung as 'reimbursement for the expenditures involved' in the murder process. In late May, as large quantities of clothing, shoes, watches, etc, arrived back in the ghetto (to be sorted, despatched to the Reich and sold via the Nazi winter assistance fund), rumours began to spread about the fate of the deported.

NEW DEPORTATIONS TO CHELMNO

In early September 1942, after a pause of three and a half months, the deportations were suddenly resumed. On September 1 and 2, the Germans, with the help of the Jewish police, in a surprise raid brutally emptied the ghetto hospitals, despatching all the patients to Chelmno in two trains. Patients who protested were shot dead on the spot. In all, 1,253 people, including 400 children, were sent to their death.

The following day, Fuchs's deputy, SS-Sturmbannführer Herbert Weygandt, gave Rumkowski an order that 20,000 more were to leave. Forced to make up the lists, Rumkowski and the Resettlement Commission decided that all children under ten years of age (except those from members of the Judenrat, ghetto police and fire-brigade) and adults over 65 were to go. This made up some 17,000 persons to which were added 3,000 non-workers or persons unfit to work.

That following afternoon, September 4, Rumkowski delivered a speech to a crowd of 1,500 assembled on the fire brigade's square on Lustige Gasse (Wesola) — certainly the most dramatic and infamous of all his speeches — in which he pleaded with them to 'give me your children' — an appeal that naturally caused great consternation and abhorrence with all present. Against dreadful wailing and shouts from the crowd, he attempted to explain his coldly-pragmatic reasoning, saying that by surrendering the young, sick and old in favour of those who could work at least a part of the people could be saved.

The next day, September 5, the Germans declared an Allgemeine Gehsperre (round-the-clock curfew), forcing the people to stay at home so that those on the deportation list had no way to escape being rounded up. Instead of leaving it to the Jewish police, the German Schutzpolizei now took matters in their own hands, brutally hunting down the victims. The curfew lasted for seven harrowing days, until the 12th during which time 15,685 persons — babies, toddlers, young children, the unfit and ill, and elderly people — were deported and 164 to 570 shot on the spot.

The deportations between January and September 1942 — involving over 75,000 people — had emptied the ghetto of nearly all its non-working inhabitants and turned it into a pure production centre for the German war economy. By late 1942, there were some 89,500 people left, of whom the majority were workers or employed in the Jewish self-government. All orphanages, old-age homes and hospitals were closed.

Meanwhile, the mass killing at Chelmno continued. By March 1943, Lodz was the only remaining Jewish community left in the Wartheland; all the others in the Reichsgau had by now been annihilated. Completely isolated and hermetically shut off from the rest of society, the ghetto survived as a lone island in a deadly-hostile world.

Between September 1942 and June 1944, there were no major deportations from Lodz. However, the food and health conditions remained abysmal, keeping up a high death rate, which caused a steady reduction of the population and fluctuations in the workforce. Particularly bad hunger periods occurred in April, August and September 1943 when the ghetto food department ran out of its chief foodstuff — potatoes — and the Germans failed to deliver new stocks. Forced to work without food for days on end, people collapsed and died at their workplace. If anything, the ghetto now resembled a forced-

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The building at what is today No. 86 Wolska Polskiego survives virtually unchanged.

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM FRANKFURT

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Left: **In the north-east corner of the ghetto lay the Jewish Cemetery. Founded in 1892 as the second necropolis for Jews in the Lodz area, this is where the more than 43,000 Jews who died in the ghetto between 1940 and 1944 were buried. (The first, smaller Old Jewish Cemetery lay on Wesola, close to the Fireman's Square). Genewein pictured its ornamental gate.** *Right:* **The gate is normally reached via Zmienna Street but this was not possible during the Nazi occupation as the cemetery wall there also served as ghetto boundary and Zmienna therefore lay outside the Jewish quarter.**

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM FRANKFURT

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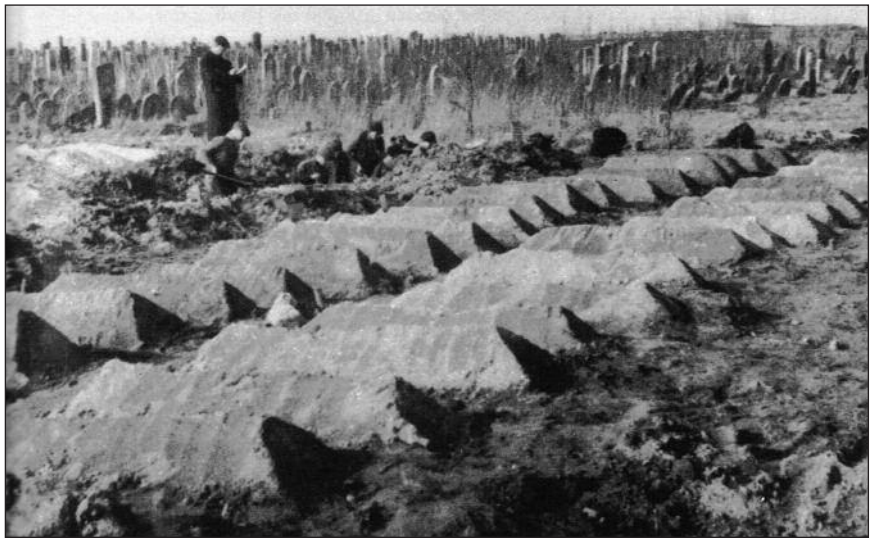
Left: **Four bearers bringing a corpse into the cemetery. Most bodies of deceased were transported to the cemetery by means of specially-constructed wagons featuring a sheet-metal removable coffin with a hinged cover. Ritual washing of the corpse was forbidden.** *Right:* **The cemetery wall stands as silent witness to the grief of yesteryear.**

labour camp. By the end of 1943, there were some 83,000 people there, of whom 75,000 (90 per cent) were workers in 117 different manufacturing sites, producing an annual turnover of 27 million Reichsmark. Another 7,000 (8.4 per cent) were employed in the self-administration. Of the remaining 1,000 persons, 600 were in sick bays and 400 were non-working children of the administration employees (exempted from the September deportations). In 1944, the proportion of workers would rise even higher. Hunger remained paramount and in the spring of 1944 a wave of soup strikes went through the ghetto.



MENDEL GROSMAN

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Left: **The 43,000 who perished in the ghetto were buried in the southern part of the cemetery, which came to be referred to as the 'ghetto field'. The dead were buried close together in narrow graves without coffin, packed in sheets or old scraps of paper. The graves were left unmarked. Visible in the background are the tombstones of the graves from pre-ghetto times. The picture was taken by Mendel Grosman.** *Right:* **Since the war, numerous Jewish families have left plaques on the cemetery wall to commemorate relatives who perished in the ghetto and have no known grave. There are also plaques from towns and cities from where Jews were deported to Lodz and plaques commemorating the gypsies that died here.**

Right: **Deportations out of the ghetto began in January 1942 and would continue in several waves until the final liquidation of the ghetto in August 1944. Initially the inhabitants may have naïvely believed that the deportees were being 'resettled' to labour camps elsewhere but the realisation that deportation meant death grew ever stronger as time went on, especially as weak and elderly, sick and ill, and even young children were sent away. Deportations usually went in groups of 1,000. Those called up had to report to an assembly place — the Central Prison at Schneider-Gasse (Czarnieckiego), later also the former ghetto hospitals and other buildings, such as the Kulturhaus on Schneider-Gasse, the orphanage on Buchdrucker-Gasse (Okopowa), etc. This picture of a transport assembling at the Zentralgefängnis (Central Prison) was taken by Mendel Grosman in 1942.**

MENDEL GROSMAN

THE FATE OF THE GHETTO IS DECIDED

Between June 1943 and February 1944, a struggle was fought out between the SS, who wanted to turn the ghetto into a proper concentration camp under SS rule on the one hand and those who for various reason wanted to maintain the status quo on the other.

The SS wished for the ghetto to become a regular concentration camp, supervised by the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps, its economic activities overseen by the SS-Wirtschaft-Verwaltungs-Hauptamt (WVHA), its production sites becoming part of the Ost-Industrie GmbH (the economic concern founded by the WVHA), its population reduced to just slave workers, and these slave workers overseen on site by Kapos (prisoner foremen).

Opposing this idea were the ones directly involved and profiting from the existing ghetto: the staff of the German Ghetto-Verwaltung under Hans Biebow, who feared they might lose their comfy positions and be sent to the front; the civil authorities in the Wartheland (particularly the Kalisch region under Regierungspräsident Uebelhoer and the municipality of Litzmannstadt/Lodz under its Oberbürgermeister) who stood to lose a lucrative business; and the Wehrmacht armaments bureau who wanted to maintain direct control over the production sites working for the armed forces and who were in dire competition with the SS anyway, objecting to its growing power in all war matters.

The struggle began on June 11, 1943, when Himmler — probably prompted by the recent uprising in the Warsaw ghetto, which had been violently quenched by the SS troops after a month of fighting on May 16 — issued an order to turn the Lodz ghetto into a concentration camp. When this idea was challenged by the local Rüstungs-Inspektion (Armaments Inspectorate) in Lodz, who intervened with Gauleiter Greiser, Himmler proposed instead to move the ghetto workshops to the Majdanek concentration camp at Lublin. When Majdanek however became threatened by the advancing Red Army in November, Himmler reverted to his original idea of making Lodz a concentration camp.

Discussions and correspondence between the various parties involved continued for weeks until finally Gauleiter Greiser, taking the opportunity of Himmler's stay at Posen on February 12-13, 1944, intervened personally. In a direct meeting with the Reichsführer-SS (with whom he got on well), he secured an agreement that the ghetto would not become an SS concentration camp but would remain under Reichsgau administration; it would however be gradually reduced in size, getting rid of all its non-working residents and leaving only the Jews producing for the war effort; and eventually be closed down and eliminated altogether.

MENDEL GROSMAN

From there, they were then marched, under guard from the Jewish ghetto police and the German Schutzpolizei, to the Radegast (Radogoszcz) railway station. Another picture by Grosman from the same day.

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The north-eastern quarter of the former ghetto has been considerably redeveloped since the war and many of the old streets have been re-aligned or have partly disappeared. This picture was taken in Berthold-Strasse (Jagiellonska), fortunately in a stretch that has survived. Today named Ulica Jozefa Kolinskiego, it leads out of the town towards the railway station. The church seen on the left in Grosman's picture is the Divine Providence Church, unfortunately masked by trees in our comparison.

HENRYK ROSS

Henryk Ross photographed Grosman taking pictures of the leaving transport. On the left stands a member of the Ordnungsdienst (Jewish police), recognisable by the cap and the armband.

LIQUIDATION OF THE GHETTO

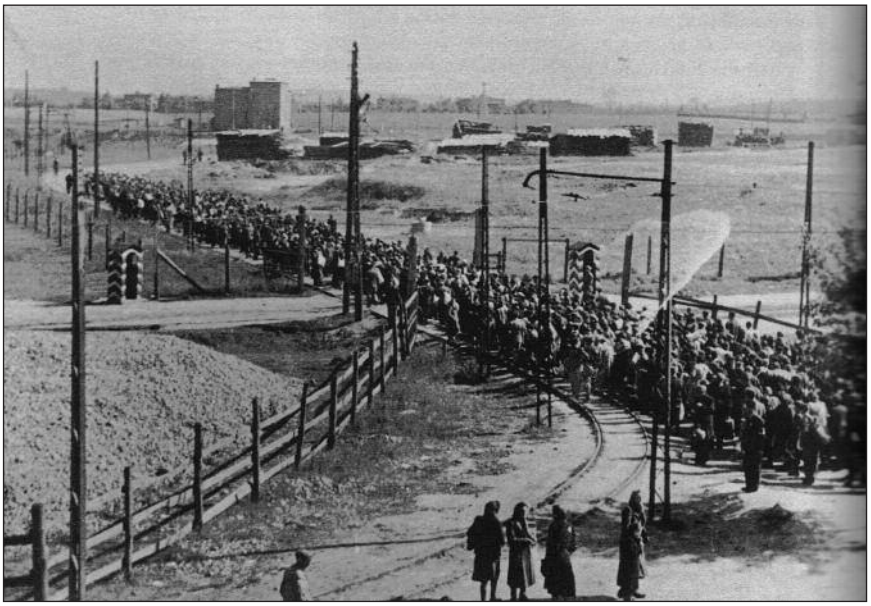
Reduction of the ghetto meant new mass murder. In order to dispose of the non-productive inmates, the Chelmno killing centre (which had been closed down in late March 1943) was resurrected. The 85 men of Sonderkommando Lange, who had been transferred as a Feldgendarmerie unit to the 7. SS-Gebirgs-Division 'Prinz Eugen' and were currently engaged in anti-partisan operations in Yugoslavia, were recalled to the Wartheland. Still under command of SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Bothmann (who had succeeded Lange in April 1942), the unit soon had the mobile gas-chambers back in operation.

The deportations began on June 23 and continued until July 14. During those three weeks, 7,196 Jews were brought to Chelmno in ten train transports and murdered there. Before they were killed, the victims were told to write postcards with greetings to the ghetto, designed to fool those left behind about their fate.

The final liquidation came two weeks later. Between August 3 and 30, about 67,000 Jews were deported from the ghetto to Auschwitz-Birkenau (see *After the Battle* No. 157), where most of them perished in the gas chambers, only some 2,000 being assigned to forced-labour in the camp or sent on to other work camps. These final deportations did not go smoothly. Every train leaving from the ghetto was supposed to contain 5,000 people but many refused to report at the assembly points. To contain the rising panic, Biebow, leader of the German Ghetto-Verwaltung, personally addressed the workers in several main workshops, deceivingly telling them that they would be sent to labour camps deeper in Germany, and Rumkowski went around giving more reassuring speeches. Still, the people refused to show up and the Jewish and German police made daily round-ups in order to get the prescribed number for each transport. Rumkowski and his family joined one of the last trains on August 28 and, on arrival at Auschwitz, he was reputedly beaten to death by a member of the Jewish Sonderkommando (the men forced to worked in the gas chambers) as revenge for his role in the genocide of his own people.

All that was left in the ghetto now was a so-called Aufräumkommando (clean-up unit), whose task it was to dismantle the workshops and factories, clear and sort the possessions of the vanished inhabitants, and despatch everything back into the Reich. Initially it comprised two groups, one of 500 men and women (mostly members of the Jewish administration) concentrated in the hospital building at No. 36 Sonnleite (Lagiewnicka) and another of some 750 in the tailors' workshop at No. 16 Rembrandt-Strasse (Jakuba). When the former group was sent away to Königs Wusterhausen, a satellite of Sachsenhausen concentration camp, on October 22, only the 750 at Rembrandt-Strasse remained. Some 120 others, including 30 children, had managed to evade the deportations and remained behind in hiding. Whenever an individual or group of these was caught, they were sent to join the band at Rembrandt-Strasse.

When the final liquidation came in August 1944, the Lodz ghetto had been in existence for well over four years; it was the last and



HENRYK ROSS

Passing through the ghetto gates on the road to Radegast Station, seen in the background. Note the sentry boxes and the narrow-gauge railway running between the station and the ghetto. This is another photo by Ross from 1942.

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Right: **Taken just a short distance from where the previous picture was made, this is the same view today, taken from Ulica Zagajnikowa, known as Bernard-Strasse in ghetto times.**

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Radegast Station was both arrival point for deportations into the ghetto and departure point for deportations out. It also served as freight station and depot for deliveries of food, fuel and raw materials for industrial production and for shipping out goods manufactured in the ghetto. The building since 2004 houses the Lodz Ghetto Museum, a branch of the municipal Traditions of Independence Museum.

longest-surviving of all the ghettos set up by the Nazi regime. Though it had lost a dramatic 150,000 of its populace, there were still nearly 70,000 people surviving there and the dream of holding out until liberation was becoming more realistic by the day. The western Allies had landed in Normandy and were about to break out from the bridgehead to start the liberation of Western Europe. On the Eastern Front, the Soviet Red Army had surged westward, liberated half of Poland and reached the east bank of the River Vistula. They now stood less than 120 kilometres from Lodz. Liberation seemed tantalisingly near.

Whatever criticism one could level against Chaim Rumkowski, however despicable his despotic rule, lust for power, self-importance and favouritism, it is undeniable that his strict adherence to his grand scheme — that the ghetto inmates' only salvation lay in work for the German war industry — nearly paid off. Had not Stalin decided to halt his armies on the Vistula, leaving the Polish underground army to fight to its death in the Warsaw Uprising (see *After the Battle* No. 143), the Lodz ghetto might well have been liberated in August and tens of thousands of its inhabitants been saved from annihilation in the gas chambers.

As it was, Lodz was entered by the Red Army on January 19, 1945. The only Jews left to greet the Russians were the members of the Aufräumkommando and the evaders — a mere 870 persons in all.

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Centre: **Deportations into the ghetto included 20,000 Jews from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Luxembourg in October-November 1941; 5,000 gypsies from Austria in November 1941, and 20,000 Jews from liquidated ghettos in the region in 1941-42. Deported from Lodz ghetto and murdered in the Nazi killing centres were nearly 150,000 persons: over 83,000 of them (including 4,400 gypsies) at Chelmno between January 1942 and July 1944 and 65,000 at Auschwitz-Birkenau in August-September 1944.** *Right:* **A train of the type used by the Reichsbahn in the deportations stands preserved at the platform.**