

THE GREAT DELUSION:
CHAIM RUMKOWSKI'S ATTEMPT
TO SAVE THE JEWS OF LODZ
[6,529 words]

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This paper is dedicated to the members of my family who lived, perished and survived in the Lodz ghetto.

“**A**rbeit Macht Frei”—work sets you free. This Nazi slogan pervaded concentration camp and ghetto propaganda during the Holocaust, most infamously greeting those who faced the entrance gates of the Auschwitz death camp. The motto was also embraced in the Lodz ghetto during the four difficult years of its existence, through the policies of its Chairman, Chaim Rumkowski. The city of Lodz which, prior to WWII, was home to the second largest Jewish population in Poland, was the first ghetto to be enclosed and the last Polish ghetto to be liquidated. Chaim Rumkowski was deluded by the Nazis into believing that “arbeit macht frei”—that productivity and compliance with Gestapo orders would earn the Lodz Jews survival—a misconception that made the ghetto’s ultimate demise after its unique longevity all the more tragic.

A sizable Jewish community began to spring up in Lodz in 1820 as Lodz’s growing industry drew increasing numbers of Jews

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to the city. By the outbreak of the second World War, the Jews had grown to comprise about one-third of the city's population and owned an even greater proportion of factories in Lodz, mostly textile-producing.¹ But the interwar years brought economic devastation to the Jewish community. The loss of its vital Russian market with the creation of an independent Poland was compounded by the anti-Jewish fiscal policies of Polish Finance Minister W. Grabski and the international Depression of 1929. In the mid-1930s, as Hitler rose to power in Germany, the Nazi party disseminated anti-Semitic propaganda to the German minority in Lodz. By 1934, such sentiments had spread, allowing an anti-Semitic party to gain the majority in municipal elections with a platform of purging the town of Jews.²

The Nazi occupation of Lodz, which the Germans called Litzmannstadt, began on September 8, 1939. SS Brigadier General Friedrich Uebelhoer issued a top-secret report on December 10, 1939, concerning "the establishment of the ghetto in Lodz."³ The report made clear that the formation of a ghetto would be only a temporary measure, since the complete evacuation of the city's large Jewish population was not possible immediately. The report included plans for a Jewish autonomous administration consisting of several departments as well as an outline for the exchange of foodstuffs for manufactured products.⁴ This, according to Uebelhoer, was a suitable solution to "the Jewish question in the city of Lodz...for the time being."⁵ The report concluded with an emphasis on the transitory nature of the ghetto as an intermediate step towards the *final solution*:

The creation of the ghetto is, of course, only a temporary measure. I reserve to myself the decision concerning the times and the means by which the ghetto and with it the city of Lodz will be cleansed of Jews. The final aim must in any case bring about the total cauterization of this plague spot.⁶

The report made clear the ultimate goals of the Nazis in creating the Lodz ghetto; although Uebelhoer's provision regarding the exchange of foodstuffs for "materials, such as textiles, etc." suggested that the Nazis were willing to provide for the Jews for as long as they had something to offer in return, under no circumstances

would the Jews of Lodz be granted long-term survival. In January 1940, Jews were segregated into the Old City and Baluty quarters of Lodz, which were officially established as the parameters of the Lodz ghetto by a police order on February 8, 1940.⁷ When the ghetto was sealed on April 30, 1940, its population numbered 164,000, which excluded the 70,000 Jews who had previously left the city. Upon Lodz's occupation, the Nazis immediately disbanded the city's Jewish Community Council, of which Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski was vice-chairman. They replaced it with a formal *Judenrat*, a Council of Elders,⁸ to which the Nazis appointed Rumkowski as *Judenaeltester*, the "Elder of the Jews."⁹ Rumkowski was granted wide powers over the ghetto's inhabitants but was in turn accountable to orders received via Hans Biebow, the German head of the Lodz ghetto administration.¹⁰

From the beginning of his leadership, Rumkowski focused on the means by which Lodz could survive the war. His plan was threefold: to create a community that would operate as a fully-functioning society; to make the ghetto economically indispensable to the Nazis through high productivity; and to make intermittent concessions to Biebow's orders to avoid terror and mass deportations. All three goals were dependent on a highly-organized system of internal work, which would become an integral aspect of Lodz ghetto life. However, though Rumkowski's strategies may have prolonged the ghetto's existence, his plan proved inadequate for ensuring its long-term survival.

Rumkowski aimed to make Lodz a permanent ghetto that embodied a community of Jewish culture and nationalism¹¹ and maintained various departments that would control the needs of the population. The "Rumkowski Manifesto" which was spread throughout the ghetto via posters and newspapers, declared the necessity of "work, bread, care, and welfare for the children, the aged, the sick; law and order."¹² The departments and other organizations which sprung up in Lodz to fulfill these necessities were far more extensive than the "Jewish autonomous administration" mandated by Uebelhoer.¹³ In addition to the departments of nutrition, finance, housing, and others which were responsible for

the most basic workings of the ghetto, Rumkowski established systems of education and recreation, a postal service, as well as a network of hospitals, and most importantly, of factories. Rumkowski described his goal of organizing all facets of the ghetto community: "I have made it my aim to regulate life in the ghetto at all costs. This aim can be achieved, first of all, by employment for all. Therefore, my main slogan has been 'to give work to the greatest number of people.'"¹⁴ Under Rumkowski, unemployment was practically non-existent among those over the age of ten,¹⁵ excluding the sick and very elderly, because work was used to regulate food rations; if one who was deemed able-bodied was not engaged in any kind of work, he simply did not eat. By instituting work as the means for obtaining all physiological needs, Rumkowski not only assured a greater regularity of life with little resistance, but also achieved his greater goal of maintaining ghetto productivity.

When the question first arose of how the ghetto was to be maintained and its population fed, Rumkowski responded that "he had in the ghetto a gold currency of the highest caliber—the labor of Jewish hands."¹⁶ This "currency" would be the ghetto's basis for exchange with the Nazis for foodstuffs and raw materials with which to produce textiles and German armaments,¹⁷ and in doing so, would make the ghetto valuable to the German war economy. Thus, according to Dobroszycki, editor of *The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto*,

The deciding factor in all aspects of ghetto life was whether or not a given person was employed. Even in 1943, a relatively peaceful year when mass deportations in and out of the ghetto had ceased, there were periods when people without working papers were grabbed on the streets and in their homes day and night and deported to a death camp.¹⁸

Rumkowski undoubtedly succeeded in making the ghetto a remarkably profitable enterprise for the Germans—toward the end of 1943 it contained more than 90 enterprises employing over 75,000 workers. In addition to the tons of munitions, equipment, uniforms, boots, and other goods the Germans extracted from the Jewish laborers, Berlin recorded a net profit of 46,211,485 Reichmarks from the ghetto as of its liquidation.¹⁹

The ghetto's productivity did not go unnoticed by certain prominent members of the Nazi party, most especially Hans Biebow, head of the German ghetto administration, as well as Albert Speer of the German Armament Ministry,²⁰ who weighed the affairs of the ghetto, as he recognized the benefits of the nature of its production. Although Speer may have been able to exert some influence on the ghetto's fate, "exploitation was in the foreground," he explained thirty-five years later.²¹ In his introduction to *The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto*, Lucjan Dobroszycki says:

Apart from Biebow, none of the Nazis realized so clearly how much the ghetto could benefit the Reich economically. Biebow was well acquainted with every workshop in the ghetto...and had a precise sense of what every factory was producing and at what low cost....The initiative to liquidate the ghetto certainly did not originate with him, although he rarely displayed even the slightest sign that the fate of its inhabitants was of any concern to him. His sole interest was the ghetto's productivity and the profit to be derived from it...He never forgot that he was a German, and he ruled the ghetto with a firm hand."²²

Perhaps Rumkowski's conviction that it was beyond the realm of logic for the Nazis to eliminate such a center of productivity stemmed from his contact with Biebow, whose interest in ghetto production was not representative of general German sentiment, which was far more concerned with the execution of the *final solution*. Unfortunately for Rumkowski and Lodz, Biebow was not responsible for the city's fate, being subordinate to Goering, the Plenipotentiary of the Four-Year Plan,²³ and Himmler, the SS-*Reichsfuhrer* and Chief of the German Police (*Gestapo*).²⁴ Himmler himself may have played a role in propagating Rumkowski's emphasis on work as a key to survival; Szmul Rozensztajn's daily notes recorded a conversation between Rumkowski and Himmler upon the latter's visit to the ghetto in June 1941:

When Herr Himmler arrived at Balut Market with his entourage, he had the following exchange with Chairman Rumkowski:

"How are you doing here?" asked Herr Himmler.

"We work, and we are building a city of labor here...My motto is Work, Peace, and Order."

“Then go on working for the benefit of your brethren in the ghetto. It will do you good.” Herr Himmler finished the conversation.²⁵

Himmler’s support for the work of the ghetto epitomizes the great deception of Nazi policy. It was ultimately Rumkowski’s efforts to demonstrate the worth of the ghetto’s existence to the Nazis that turned Lodz into a center for war industry that worked faithfully to arm its enemy.

The third major element of Rumkowski’s policy—his compliance with orders from the German Ghetto Administration—defined his controversial position in the ghetto and exemplified his deluded beliefs. He believed that concessions to the Nazis would alleviate terror and avoid mass deportations; in this respect, Rumkowski succeeded for a time but only at great costs to the ghetto. Before a system of labor was formed in Lodz, the Nazi occupiers of the city would conduct forced roundups for manual laborers, yanking people off the streets and out of their homes. Adelson describes how “when the problem [of forced labor] had reached catastrophic proportions, the Chairman stepped in. A decision was made to voluntarily place a contingent of workers at the authorities’ disposal...”²⁶ From this point forward, Rumkowski sought young, able-bodied men to fulfill the Germans’ demands for labor outside the ghetto, which consisted of tasks such as building roads or straightening riverbanks, rather than await the use of force to achieve these ends. Rumkowski obeyed all such Nazi requests, as he would say, so that they would “not be executed by others,” who would employ terror and give less regard to particular choices of workers.²⁷

Rumkowski applied the same philosophy to the deportation quotas that he received from the Nazis; if it remained under his own jurisdiction to select who would be “resettled,” then he could assure that the most productive members of society would remain in the ghetto. Rumkowski was unaware that, beginning in the latter half of 1941, the Nazi’s *final solution* entered a new phase of direct genocide, during which the principal means of exterminating the Jews shifted from starvation to deportation to death camps²⁸—Chelmno, in the case of Lodz. In the beginning stages of the new phase, Rumkowski himself was probably not aware of the

true nature of the transports, so he reiterated Biebow's promise to him with no apparent skepticism: "The fate of the ghetto deportees would not be so tragic as generally anticipated in the ghetto. They won't be behind barbed wire, they will be doing agricultural work."²⁹ Convinced of this, Rumkowski followed the orders from the German authorities, supplying the requested numbers of people for the deportations. Rumkowski's decisions concerning who would be included in the resettlements reveal his determination to retain in Lodz those persons who contributed to the ghetto's productivity and vice-versa. The first transport out of Lodz in December 1941, necessitated by an influx of new residents, was comprised of 10,000 people who included, "in addition to criminals...those who received rations but ignored their work assignments."³⁰ On March 2, 1942, Rumkowski delivered a speech referred to as "Work Protects Us From Annihilation" to an invited audience of administrators, factory managers, and his advisors regarding further requests for deportations:

Thousands more [people] were requested [for resettlement]—this time, in accordance with the agreement that only people who can work can remain in the ghetto. The order must be carried out, or it will be carried out by others. After painful deliberation and inner struggle, I've decided to deport the people on relief: They too are at fault, if not fully, then partially, in that they stayed outside the ghetto workforce.³¹

The ghetto chronicle from Spring 1942 confirmed Rumkowski's decree, citing that the first thousand deportation cards were sent to families in which no one worked, while people who were employed were not receiving deportation cards.³²

In late May 1942, about 6,000 Jews from neighboring Pabianice and Brzeziny were sent to Lodz—not including any children under ten or the aged.³³ This observation instilled a mood of deep unrest among the Jews of Lodz, who began to distrust the principle upon which they had lived to this point. Bernard Ostrowski, one of the ghetto chroniclers, expressed this doubt in an entry from May 21 and 22, 1942:

Until now, people had thought that work would maintain the ghetto and the majority of its people without any breakup of families. Now

it is clear that even this was an illusion. There were plenty of orders [for new work] in Pabianice and Brzeziny, but that did not protect the Jews against wholesale deportation.³⁴

Ostrowski's insight foreshadows not only the deportation of children and elderly from Lodz later that year, but the eventual liquidation of the ghetto entirely, as by this point, the Nazis' drive to win the war was second to the priority of the *final solution*.

By September of 1942, the Nazis made it clear that all non-workers must be unconditionally removed from the Lodz ghetto. Rumkowski, of course, complied with their order for the deportation of more than 20,000 Jews, believing it to be a sacrifice necessary for upholding the productive interests of the greater population. In his infamous "Give Me Your Children" speech, delivered on September 4, 1942, Rumkowski regrettably accepted that there could be no other suitable course of action if the whole of the ghetto was to be saved:

I must perform this difficult and bloody operation—I must cut off limbs to save the body itself!—I must take children because, if not, others may be taken as well, God forbid....

There are, in the ghetto, many patients who can expect to live only a few days more, maybe a few weeks. I don't know if the idea is diabolical or not, but I must say it: "Give me the sick. In their place, we can save the healthy..."³⁵

Rumkowski cooperated with the Germans even on such extreme measures since he still clung to the belief that as long as productivity was sustained in the ghetto via a population capable of working, "the body itself" would be saved. However, Rumkowski was not aware of the much broader scheme that controlled the fate of the ghetto—Hitler's *final solution*.³⁶

The tragedy of Rumkowski's situation lay in the fact that the Germans would have deported Jews with or without his assistance. Dobroszycki points out that with each new demand from the authorities "he continued to delude himself that this was the last, that he would succeed in saving at least a part of the populace." In fact, by taking it upon himself to fill quotas, Rumkowski shifted the culpability of the Nazis to himself, so that

any bitterness regarding ghetto life and attempts at resistance arose principally against him and his administration.

Resistance of any kind could not succeed under Rumkowski's administration because of his control over all sources of force and power in the ghetto—namely, the police, food supply, and choice of deportees. As workers' strikes arose over the course of the ghetto's existence, Rumkowski simply closed those factories in which they originated and withheld food from those involved.³⁷ Socialists and other groups suspected of opposing Rumkowski's policies were infiltrated by the security police³⁸ and would absurdly be included in any upcoming deportations. Conversely, those closest to Rumkowski received privileged food rations; as food supplies decreased, corruption within the ghetto bureaucracy, especially among the police, increased.³⁹ Any attempts on Rumkowski's part to remedy the corruption within the ghetto leadership would most likely have been rendered ineffective by his complete dependency on just such dishonest people for support.⁴⁰ Leon Hurwitz, a resident of the Lodz ghetto, suggested that Rumkowski too, and perhaps most of all, was corrupted by the power he possessed as *Judenaeltester*, thinking of himself as "the Jewish King Lear."⁴¹ Hurwitz gives a description of Rumkowski's obsession with power in 1940:

Everybody in the clique Rumkowski has gathered around him sings paeans to his genius and his mission. Once, speaking to an associate about his mission, he declared, "What do you know about power? Power is sweet, power is everything, is life." And with a fanatical gleam in his half-crazed eyes, he finished, "But woe to him who makes the slightest attempt to wrest power from me."⁴²

Rumkowski had always envisioned himself as a father-like savior of his people,⁴³ but as his control over ghetto affairs and population increased, an almost dictator-like cult of personality sprung up around him. In physician Jakub Szulman's diary, he contends that "even before the ghetto was sealed, [Rumkowski] had an inner certainty that his name would be remembered."⁴⁴ Paintings of him, and poetry in his honor were published, albums were created to record his works, and a postage stamp with his face on it was prepared for circulation but banned by the Nazis.

Rumkowski's power, however, was only an illusion. Although he was firmly convinced that he was always in the right in his program of "work and peace,"⁴⁵ in reality, it was the Germans who made all decisions concerning ghetto affairs. If, on a rare occasion, Rumkowski refused to comply with an order, he was threatened with death, or Biebow would personally inflict physical punishment on him.⁴⁶ The scant news he received from outside the ghetto and especially his two trips to the Warsaw ghetto,⁴⁷ only further deluded him into thinking that his program was successful. A comparison of early mortality rates in the Warsaw and Lodz ghettos indicates that people were dying of hunger in nearly identical proportions in both places.⁴⁸ The difference, according to Dobroszycki, was that "while in Warsaw the dead lay on the streets for a long time before they were buried, in Lodz burial took place almost immediately."⁴⁹ In 1943, the liquidation of the Warsaw, Radom, Vilna, Cracow, and Lublin ghettos⁵⁰ made Lodz the last existing ghetto in Poland and seemed to affirm unequivocally the ghetto's success.

It is not certain at what point, if ever, Rumkowski was made aware of the fates of the resettled persons from Lodz. During the summer of 1942, a Jew relocated to the Lodz ghetto brought with him a letter written by Rabbi Jakub Szulman of Grabow,⁵¹ a town northwest of Lodz, which contained the following information:⁵²

...An eyewitness who by chance was able to escape from hell has been to see me...I learned everything from him. The place where everyone is being put to death is called Chelmno...People are killed in one of two ways: either they are shot or gassed... This is what happened to the towns of Dabie, Izbica Kujawska, Klodo Wawa and others...And for the past few days, they have been bringing thousands of Jews from Lodz there, and doing the same to them.⁵³

Sources do not agree on whether Rumkowski ever actually saw this letter; however, most concede that he was well aware of the fates of the ghetto deportees. However, it is not clear when Rumkowski recognized that such a fate inevitably awaited *all* residents of the ghetto, even the most productive. In August of 1944, when Biebow issued the order to dissolve the Lodz ghetto completely, it was accompanied by the promise that all would survive; Rumkowski

repeated this promise to the population whom he strongly encouraged to report for resettlement.⁵⁴ The entire population was in fact taken to the Auschwitz death camp, where the vast majority, including Rumkowski, were gassed.

Although Rumkowski did not achieve his goal of earning the ghetto survival through its productivity, his agenda undoubtedly bought the Lodz Jews extra time. Lodz became the last Polish ghetto in existence in 1943, maintaining a population of nearly 100,000 when the others had been completely liquidated. On September 18, 1944, the War Refugee Board in Washington cabled the American Ambassador in Moscow, W. Averell Harriman, regarding the large number of Jews still living in Lodz to that point:

It is reported that many Jews, perhaps 60,000 persons, survive in Lodz, Poland. The Soviet authorities are undoubtedly aware of the danger that the Germans may attempt to exterminate these people before evacuating the city...⁵⁵

At the time this message was sent, the Russians were only one-hundred-some miles from Lodz but the ghetto was not liberated until January 19, 1945, when the population had been reduced to a mere 877 people.⁵⁶ Perhaps the legitimacy of Rumkowski's policies would have been proven had the Russians arrived just months sooner. Even so, according to Adelson, survivors commonly assert that more Jews are alive today from the Lodz Ghetto than from any other concentration of Jews under Nazi rule.

Rumkowski's deluded impression of the ghetto's ability to earn its survival through work was a product of an extensive scheme of Nazi deception designed to utilize every ounce of the Jews' productive capabilities before exterminating them. The goals of the Germans' evil *final solution*—to destroy the Jews even at the cost of losing a productive and profitable element of a war economy—were so illogical as to be quite unfathomable to Rumkowski and his peers. The plight of Rumkowski and the Jews of Lodz was representative of the plight of other Jewish communities under Nazi rule in using rational tactics to try to appease the irrational masters of their fates during the Second World War.

¹ "Lodz," Encyclopaedia Judaica Volume 11 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971) p. 426

² *Ibid.*, p. 432

³ Friedrich Uebelhoer, "Report by Uebelhoer on the Establishment of the Ghetto in Lodz," 10 December 1939, rpt. in Documents on the Holocaust Yitzchak Arad, Israel Gutman, Abraham Margalio, eds. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999) p. 192

⁴ "The principle must be that foodstuffs and fuel can be paid for only by means of an exchange of materials, such as textiles, etc. In this way we should succeed in getting from the Jews all their hoarded and hidden items of value." Uebelhoer, in Documents, Arad, et al., eds., p. 194

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 194

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 194

⁷ "Lodz," Encyclopaedia Judaica, p. 433. The entire area was less than two square miles, consisting of houses fit for demolition, and generally lacking a system of sewage disposal.

⁸ Judenrate were first instituted in occupied Poland in September 1939, and subsequently in other countries conquered by Germany, to be responsible for the implementation of German policy regarding the Jews. The Judenrate were composed of prominent men from their respective communities in order to ensure that orders were carried out to the fullest possible extent and to discredit Jewish leadership in the eyes of the Jewish population. Beginning in 1940, the Judenrate were given the responsibility for providing the Germans with forced labor for the camps being set up, where no contact with the community was possible. In most instances, the Judenrate chose to comply with such demands, but those who didn't faced death. When Nazi policy shifted and the question of obedience turned to sending Jews to extermination camps, far fewer agreed to cooperate, no longer seeing their role as a contribution to the community's struggle to survive. Figures from Isaiah Trunk's 1972 study on the Judenrate indicates that close to 80 percent of Judenrate members in Eastern Europe died before or during deportations to extermination camps from their communities. "Judenrat," Encyclopedia of the Holocaust Vol. 2, Israel Gutman, et al., eds. (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1990) pp. 762-766

⁹ It is not certain as to why the Nazis selected Rumkowski for this position; prior to the war, he had been only a

peripheral politician, focusing his efforts primarily on the welfare of orphans in Lodz. Alan Adelson, author of Lodz Ghetto, cites several reasons for the choice, including Rumkowski's energy, ability to speak German, or even his striking white hair. The possibility that Rumkowski's early proposals to appease the Nazis by delivering daily quotas of Jews rather than see them seized off the streets in acts of Nazi terror, may have signaled that he could, and possibly wanted to, be counted on to continue to deliver Jews on command. Alan Adelson and Robert Lapides, Lodz Ghetto (New York: Viking Penguin, 1989) p. xvi

¹⁰ Biebow enjoyed wide powers in administering the Lodz ghetto, from which he was able to extract great profits by exploiting the manpower in its factories and confiscating Jews' property. Biebow did not want the ghetto administration to pass to other hands, so in order to maintain high profits from the ghetto factories, he worked to ensure the ghetto's continued existence until the summer of 1944. Biebow excelled in deception tactics, convincing the Jews that transports from Lodz to Chelmno and Auschwitz would merely take them to work camps connected to German factories. "Biebow, Hans," Encyclopedia of the Holocaust Vol. 1, pp. 214-215

¹¹ "The Story of Chaim Rumkowski and the Jews of Lodz," videocassette. Produced by Peter Cohen and Bo Kuritzen. Lucjan Dobroszycki, historical consultant. Produced in association with Yad Vashem Remembrance Authority, Israel and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York. Poj Filmproduction AB, Switzerland.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Uebelhoer, in Documents, Arad, et al., eds., p. 194

¹⁴ Chaim Rumkowski, "Address by Rumkowski to the Officials of the Judenrat in Lodz," 1 February 1941, rpt. in Documents on the Holocaust D. Dabrowska and L. Dobroszycki, eds., p.237

¹⁵ Bernard Ostrowski, "The Drive to Employ Children Over the Age of Ten," 2 July 1942, rpt. in Lucian Dobroszycki, ed., The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto 1941-1944 (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1984) p. 218

¹⁶ Adelson and Lapides, p. 45

¹⁷ "The Story" videocassette

¹⁸ Dobroszycki, p. lx

¹⁹ Adelson and Lapides, p. xix

²⁰ Albert Speer was named minister of armaments and war production in September 1943. As such, he was able to raise armaments production significantly, using millions of forced laborers. He received assignments from Hitler personally and developed a close friendship through working with him. "Speer, Albert," Encyclopedia of the Holocaust Vol. 4, pp. 1395-1396

²¹ Dobroszycki, p. lx

²² *Ibid.*, p. xiii

²³ The Four-Year Plan was the Nazi economic plan to make the German army operational and the German economy fit for war within four years. "Four-Year Plan," Encyclopedia of the Holocaust Vol. 2

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Szmul Rozensztajn, "Daily Notes," 6 June 1941, rpt. in Adelson and Lapides, p. 152

²⁶ Adelson and Lapides, p. 23

²⁷ Dobroszycki, Chronicle, p. li

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. li

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. li

³⁰ Chaim Rumkowski, "Only Undesirable Elements Will Leave," 20 December 1941, rpt. in Adelson and Lapides, p. 191

³¹ Chaim Rumkowski, "Work Protects Us From Annihilation," 20 March 1942, rpt. in Adelson and Lapides, p. 231

³² Unspecified chronicler, "Resettlement," 1-3 May 1942, rpt. in Dobroszycki, p. 159

³³ Bernard Ostrowski, "The Mood of the Ghetto," 20 and 21 May 1942, rpt. in Dobroszycki, p. 182

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 182

³⁵ Chaim Rumkowski, "Give Me Your Children," rpt. in Dobroszycki, p. 328

³⁶ In January of 1942, the Wannsee Conference was called as a general clarification of Nazi policy and direction, specifically with the purpose of creating "a draft plan concerning the organizational, practical, and economic aspects of the *final solution* of the European Jewish question." The plan called for the extermination of 2,284,000 Jews from the Government-General (Poland) to be carried out "as quickly as possible." It was proposed that those Jews employed in essential war industries not be evacuated, but Secretary of State Buhler emphasized the urgency of executing the *final solution* and that "consideration of labor supply would not hinder the course of

[the current evacuation] *Aktion*." "Protocol of the Wannsee Conference," 20 January 1942, rpt. in Documents on the Holocaust V. Dabrowska and L. Dobroszycki, eds. p. 250

³⁷ "The Story" videocassette

³⁸ A system of Jewish ghetto police was set up with the establishment of the ghetto to maintain general order within the ghetto. A special unit within the force took orders from the Gestapo while the police generally took part in roundups and in protecting Rumkowski and his position. "Lodz,"

Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. 3

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Leon Hurwitz, "Leon Hurwitz, Life in the Lodz Ghetto," rpt. in Adelson, Lodz Ghetto p. 94

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 94

⁴³ "The Story" videocassette

⁴⁴ Jakub Szulman, "Jakub Szulman's Notebook 21.3.41," 21 March 1941. rpt. in Adelson and Lapidés, p. 87

⁴⁵ Dobroszycki, p. 1

⁴⁶ "The Story" videocassette

⁴⁷ Dobroszycki, p. 1. As Chairman, Rumkowski was permitted limited contact with neighboring ghettos. Dobroszycki does not name, however, the specific purposes of his two visits to Warsaw.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1

⁴⁹ The burial system in Lodz was much more efficient than that in Warsaw because Rumkowski organized teams of workers to collect bodies, transport them to grave sites, and dig graves at a pace that nearly kept up with the death rate in the ghetto. Adelson and Lapidés.

⁵⁰ "The Story" videocassette

⁵¹ This letter writer is not to be confused with the physician of the same name whose diary was previously cited.

⁵² Martin Gilbert, The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe During the Second World War (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1985) p. 279

⁵³ Jakub Szulman, "Letter to Relations in Lodz Regarding the Chelmno Death Camp," 19 January 1942, rpt. in Adelson and Lapidés, pp. 490-491

⁵⁴ "The Story" videocassette

⁵⁵ "Cable to Ambassador Harriman, Moscow, U.S.S.R.," 18 September 1944, Washington, D.C., National Archives, Record Group 59, Box 47, 095-101502/7-1844, rpt. in Fifty

Years Ago: Darkness Before Dawn, 1994 Days of Remembrance (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1994) p. 129

⁵⁶ Dobroszycki, pp. lxx-lxxvi

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18 September 1944, Washington, DC: National Archives, Record Group 59, Box 47, 095-101502/7-1844, rpt. in Fifty Years Ago: Darkness Before Dawn, 1994 Days of Remembrance United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Washington, DC., 1994, p. 129

Provides an insight into the outside world’s conception of the situation in Lodz a short time before the ghetto’s liquidation. It is interesting to note the War Refugee Board’s accuracy in their estimation of the number of surviving Jews in Lodz and its sense of the impending threat of liquidation.

Hurwitz, Leon, “Leon Hurwitz, Life in the Lodz Ghetto,” rpt. in Alan Adelson and Robert Lapides, Lodz Ghetto New York: Viking Penguin, 1989, p. 94

Provides a unique portrayal of Rumkowski as a man obsessed with his own power but is blatantly biased against the Chairman, whom Hurwitz views as “fanatical and half-crazed.”

Ostrowski, Bernard, “The Drive to Employ Children Over the Age of Ten,” 2 July 1942, rpt. in Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto 1941-1944 New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1984, p. 218

Indicates the extent to which Rumkowski strove to include as many people as possible under the “shelter” of work in the ghetto, including relatively young children.

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The chronicle is an overall objective record of the chroniclers' observations of life in, and affairs of, the Lodz ghetto. However, as Dobroszycki points out, it is not known to what extent the content of this official chronicle was censored by Rumkowski or others. Overall, it takes a laudatory view of Rumkowski while his opponents are portrayed as being unreasonable or somehow in the wrong.

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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December 16, 2001

Will Fitzhugh, President
The Concord Review & National Writing Board
730 Boston Post Road, Suite 24
Sudbury, Massachusetts 01776

Dear Will:

Perhaps the most important thing I can say about your work is this: Because I believe so strongly in what you are doing, I've just written a column praising your work that will appear in three of the four largest dailies in Minnesota. In these columns, I offer to pay half the cost of a one-year subscription to *The Concord Review* to the first ten high schools that contact me.

There are many people who describe what's wrong. You are in a wonderful group of folks who set out to make things better. I have respected your work for years (and this is the second time I've written a newspaper column praising *The Concord Review*).

Unfortunately, I don't have a million dollars to endow your work. If I did, I would.

After thirty years in public education, it's clear to me that we urgently need *The Concord Review* and other, similar publications. We must honor excellent academic work. And we must assess student achievement beyond standardized, paper-pencil, multiple-choice tests. You are meeting vital needs, with skill, knowledge and integrity. I deeply admire what you are doing.

Sincerely,
Joe Nathan, Ph.D.
Director
Center for School Change