

THE BAN ON BIRTHS IN THE SHAVLI GHETTO, FROM THE DIARY OF E.
YERUSHALMI, 1942-1943

July 4, 1942

...Dr. Charny drew the attention of the Jewish delegation to the Security Police Order concerning births. The Order was first issued on March 5, 1942. The latest date for authorized births was August 5, 1942. He would extend the date to August 15, 1942. In the event of a birth taking place in a Jewish family after this date the whole Jewish family would be "removed"(executed) and the responsibility would rest with the Jewish delegates....

Page 9

July 13, 1942

Re: Security Police Order

In accordance with the Order of the Security Police, births are permitted in the ghetto only up to August 15, 1942. After this date it is forbidden to give birth to Jewish children either in the hospitals or in the homes of the pregnant women. It is pointed out, at the same time, that it is permitted to interrupt pregnancies by means of abortions. A great responsibility rests on the pregnant women. If they do not comply with this order, there is a danger that they will be executed, together with their families. The delegates (**Shavli** Judenrat) are making this matter widely known. In warning the women of the possible consequences, they believe that the women concerned will remember it well... and will take the necessary measures during the registration of pregnant women which will take place during the next few days.

The Delegation

Protocol of the meeting of the **Shavli** Judenrat on March 24, 1943

Those present: M. Lejbowicz, B. Karton, A. Heller and A. Katz of the Judenrat; the doctors: Burstein, Blecher, Goldberg, Dyrektorowicz, L. Pesachowicz and others. The Agenda: How should births be prevented in the ghetto? M. Lejbowicz: "The ban on giving birth to children which has been imposed on the Jews applies with the utmost severity to all the ghettos. Recently there was a birth in Kovno and all members of the family were shot and killed. But no attention is being paid to this and here people are behaving most irresponsibly. There are already several cases of pregnancy and no measures have been taken against them." Dr. Blecher asks: "Can the pregnant women be forced to have abortions performed? Are there statistics on the women who are pregnant?" Dr. L. reports: "We have had three births since August 15 of last year; he did not know how they took place because he did not treat the cases. At present there are about 20 pregnant women in the ghetto, most of them in the first few months, but some are already in the fourth or fifth month and one even in the eighth month. Only two of the pregnant women refuse to have an abortion; for one of them this would be the third abortion and she is threatened by the danger of subsequent childlessness, and the other is the one who has reached the eighth month." Dr. P.: "They must be persuaded to agree to have an abortion. They must be told what happened in Kovno and Riga. If necessary one must make use of a white lie in this emergency and tell them that the Security Police is already looking for these cases." Dr. Burstein proposes that the whole medical team, including the midwives, should be forbidden to attend to births. Dr. Bl. proposes that all cases of pregnancy should be registered and

the pregnant women persuaded to have abortions. M.L.: “We must not make propaganda against births in public! The matter could reach ears that should not hear it. We must discuss the matter only with those concerned.” He proposes that the pregnant women be summoned to the clinic, that they be warned in the presence of the doctor and a representative of the Delegation, and the full danger that awaits them be explained. Dr. L.: “How can one perform an abortion on a woman who has already reached the eighth month of her pregnancy? Surely we must understand the feelings of the mother. It will surely be impossible to convince her. And what will happen to the infant if we cause a premature birth? We cannot carry out an operation like that in a private home, and it is forbidden to leave the child at the hospital. And what will happen if despite everything the child is born alive? Shall we kill it? I cannot accept

Page 10

such a responsibility on my conscience.” Dr. Bl. adds that the position is really very difficult in a case like this for no doctor will take upon himself the responsibility of killing a live child, for that would be murder. Dr. P. asks: “Perhaps we should let the child be born and give it to a Christian?” M.L.: “We cannot allow the child to be born because we are required to report every case of a birth. We have been asked three times whether there were any births and each time we answered in the negative.” B.K.: “What can we do when the ghetto is in such danger? If the danger were only to the family of the infant we could leave the matter to the responsibility of the person concerned, but it endangers the whole ghetto. The consequences are liable to be most terrible....”

E. Yerushalmi, *Pinkas Shavli* (The Shavli Communitite Minutes Book), Jerusalem, 1958, pp. 88, 188-189.

THE LODZ GHETTO: CHILDREN IN THE GHETTO

“In the ghetto there are no children, only little Jews... little Jews aged 10 and above, who are already working...”

From: Yosef Zelikowicz, *Bayamim Hanora'im Hahem* (In Those Terrible Days), Yad Vashem, 1994, p. 182.

A few days before his 21st birthday, now Christmas, Jack had been sent to the area of St
Vith to turn back Hitler’s last major push West, an unlikely and assault of tanks and
paratroopers into some of the most forbidding country in Europe. Hitler had no choice
but romantic darin. For not only were the allies marching slowly across Europe—Paris

preparation for their long awaited assignment--deployment in the Netherlands but, suddenly.

Suddenly, on the evening of the 23rd the orders changed and he was loaded standing onto trucks, grinding over snowy roads for four hours and finally stopping in then suddenly loaded into open trucks, crowded and standing for four hours through France into Belgium. By the time he arrived on Christmas Eve, the Panzers were pressing, it seemed ineluctably, toward the River Meuse on their way back to the English channel and the residents of largest town, Bastogne, under seige by an enemy with, it seemed nothing to lose. A few days before, at Malmedy, there had been a massacre of 150 American prisorers in cold blood the day before as a unit of Waffen SS at Malmedy deployed on enemy soldiers the technique by now so common in the East, and the rhetorical heights to which usually phlegmatic generals rose were higher and higher.

By the first week of January Jack's letter's, sent daily, are tense and full of unsprung rage. "The New Year finds me"

On Jan 17th saw Jacks unit finally called into action in an action for which they would be tried as War Criminals and giving immediacy to reports now irrefutable of

Jan 17th Now we propose to attack, attack and attack until a final decision is reached on the Western Front... Tomorrow morning begins the final challenge by German brutality, venality and inhuman warfare. Behind us stand 90,000 of the best manhood in the world ditch at close range.

Jack writes