

From the Diary of Emanuel Ringelblum on the International and Polish Response to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

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

“Little Stalingrad” Defends Itself

The April 1943 “action” became known abroad. American and English radios, which learned of the course of the April fighting from a short-wave transmitter, called on the Polish people to help the Jews with material means and to hide them (Broadcast of 5 or 6 May, 1943). There was already cooperation with the Polish during the April “action”¹. Weapons were supplied in the usual way, that is, across the walls and through sewers. Combatants and others who escaped from the Ghetto were being given a certain amount of aid. The Home Plenipotentiary of the Polish government [in-exile] issued an appeal, filled with praise for the Warsaw Jews who were defending their honour with arms in

¹ During the Warsaw Ghetto rising, the Polish underground organizations carried out a number of armed actions in order to demonstrate their solidarity with the Ghetto in its fight. The Home Army carried out four such armed operations on a larger scale on 19 and 23 April, and some smaller ones on the following days. The *Gwardia Ludowa* staged actions near the Ghetto walls on 20, 22 and 23 April.

their hands; the appeal called on the Polish population to give aid to those who were trying to escape from the burning Ghetto. The P.P.S. [Polish Socialist Party] issued an appeal with a similar content.

Source: Joseph Kermish (Ed.), *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor! Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S" ["Oneg Shabbath"]*, Yad Vashem 1986, p. 603.