

by order of the German authorities.²⁸ Professional protocol was strictly observed, as evidenced by the style of the acknowledgments given in the articles written for the research project on starvation and the careful maintenance of the hospital hierarchy. Mindful of the Hippocratic Oath, of their duty to teach and hand on their learning to a younger generation, the physicians of the Ghetto organized illegal medical courses. The professors were all noted Polish scientists, including Dr. Samuel Goldflam, the world renowned neurologist, Dr. M. Kocen, the famous hematologist, Dr. Michael Szejnman, and Dr. Bronislawa Fejginowna, the authority on bacteriophages. Among them also was Dr. Ludwik Hirszfeld, the bacteriologist, an intensely religious Catholic of Jewish origin, who escaped to the "Aryan" side during the mass deportations and was fortunate enough to survive the war. He later became Director of the University of Wroclaw. In his autobiography he has given a vivid description of the life in the Ghetto and in the hospital.

5. The Hunger Project

IN THE MIDST OF THE MASS STARVATION A GROUP OF DOCTORS, on the initiative of Dr. Israel Milejkowski, the head of the Health Department of the *Judenrat*, decided to use the horrors of their daily existence to advance medical science, a touching demonstration of faith that humane studies would survive the war. At that time, when to the best of their knowledge, it appeared that Hitlerism was triumphing, they refused to believe that the victory of evil would be permanent. "Men without a future, with a final effort of will, decided to make a modest contribution to the future. When death struck some of them, those who remained continued their task, awaiting their own deaths," in a feverish attempt to complete their investigations.¹

An Organizing Commission was set up in November 1941, to develop a plan of work, to find resources and to make assignments. Dr. Julian Fliederbaum made a tentative outline of the investigations to be pursued. He enlisted the help of the physicians in the Bauman-Berson Children's Hospital so that simultaneous studies could be carried on in both hospitals.

The working out of the research project was vigorously pursued. All sorts of obstacles, physical and psychological, had to be overcome. The laboratories were re-organized; some new instruments were purchased; cubicles were set aside for patients under study; by February 1942, all was in readiness, and the project formally got under way, although some preliminary work had already been done. Interim meetings to discuss the findings were held monthly up to the beginning of July. At that time a general conference was held to which were invited leading members of the *Judenrat*, including its presiding officer, Adam Czerniakow. The doctors had to convince the *Judenrat* officials who held the purse strings that the project had meaning. Dr. Milejkowski stressed the importance and the goals of the research; Dr. Fliederbaum and Dr. Apfelbaum gave summaries of the work done up to this point. In the animated discussion that followed, the doctors brought out the social significance, as well as the scientific value, of the project. The conference convinced the *Judenrat*. It gave permission to buy and smuggle necessary instruments into the Ghetto, although it had little money to allocate for such purchases.² Voluntary contributions were solicited; those who could give no money gave of their time and labor. The cubicles assigned for experiments were kept spotlessly clean; the floors shone; smoking was forbidden in the laboratories; no one wearing street shoes or rubbers was allowed to enter the special rooms. Blackboards were put up on the walls; graphs and charts were displayed to show the progress of each phase of the work. The statistical material was collated in a manner "that could not be bettered in the best universities in Europe," Dr. Hirszfeld said.³

Just when the studies were going full swing came the mass expulsion from the Ghetto on July 22, 1942. The

work was suddenly interrupted. It was interrupted but not abandoned. The charts and tables, the so painfully gathered data, the rough drafts, as much as were available, were hurriedly gathered together and carefully hidden lest they be lost.

After the temporary cessation of the deportations to Treblinka, further studies were impossible. The necessary human material was lacking, gone up in ashes and smoke at the death camp. Whatever had been saved of the accumulated data was systematized and edited. This final stage was carried out in one of the buildings in the Jewish cemetery, an ironic touch. Those doctors still remaining in the Ghetto held meetings at the risk of their lives to decide what should be included in the manuscript. They had no hope that they themselves would survive to see its publication, but they went on with their labors, nevertheless, confident that future generations would find in the research on hunger an inspiration for scientific investigation.⁴

Shortly before the final liquidation of the Ghetto, the manuscript was smuggled out. It was entrusted to a woman, one of the many unsung heroines of the Ghetto who acted as liaison with the "Aryan" side. She brought it to Professor Witold Orłowski, of the University of Warsaw, together with a letter from the editorial committee. Professor Orłowski says, "I did not ask her name. In those days knowledge of it might have been dangerous to her or to those who sent her." The letter asked him to preserve the material sent to him. He did so. After the Germans had been driven out of Warsaw, Dr. Apfelbaum reclaimed the typescript from its hiding place and readied it for publication, despite the fact that some articles were incomplete because of the disappearance of the authors and their notes.⁵