

DIARY ENTRY FROM THE LODZ GHETTO

“...Do you have any children at all in the ghetto? This species is steadily approaching extinction even before it develops in order to produce at the machine. A child, if fortunate enough to avoid death, immediately becomes a full-fledged grown-up. There are no children in the ghetto; there are only small Jews up to the age of ten, who do not work but queue at the soup kitchens [and] the bread lines, and...small Jews aged ten and over who already work—still beardless and unmarried, but already working.

It is difficult, if only because it's the burden of this small Jew has to report to work by seven o'clock, he has to wake up at six o'clock, and for this small Jew every extra hour of wakefulness means another hour of hunger pangs all day long.

And if hunger has not yet caused their legs to swell, because they do not have to carry a large body as do their parents' legs, they nevertheless have twisted, bent spines; sunken chests; lifeless and turgid eyes, their gazes turned somewhere far away, alien and cold, like today's sky...”

Excerpted from Josef Zelkowitz, *In Those Terrible Days* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2002), 186–188.