

(The Ghetto Uprising) It was a sight that no memory could have sustained, no film director could have staged credibly, and which any description would have misrepresented to an even larger degree.

On Krasiński Square the carousel erected there before Easter was working, despite the battle near-by and the stinging smoke which blurred vision. Is it heartlessness or lack of imagination? We all are heartless, thinking about our Easter dishes rather than about them, and so many of them die.

(After the liquidation of the Ghetto) I went to see the ruins. Yesterday I was in the city of the dead. I looked at Leszno, covered with soot, in ruins. The smoke still lingering... I wanted to see the synagogue, the last chord of the destruction. Ruins, a huge pile of bricks, stones, fragments of glass, framed by broken parts of the roof. Only the bronze seven-branched candelabra on guard, intact... Blood congealed in my head and I felt how my skull was turning into fetters.

I reach the conclusion that my attitude toward the fugitive Jews cannot depend on their unfavorable transformations. The dangers that I have experienced are trivial in comparison with their certainty [of death] and therefore do not require internal resistance which takes the form of the desire to live. The only criterion of my modest operations needs to be an inner imperative, a feeling that I am obligated to be faithful to myself. Succumbing to depression, anxieties, all kinds of torments, they can hardly remain the same as they used to be; but I, until now protected by fate, am accountable for every transgression of my voluntarily undertaken obligations.

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Zofia Nalkowska

I stay by it [the burning Ghetto] and I live! I am being transformed into somebody else. Being alive means to acquiesce with it. This is not only torment; this is infamy. This is horrendous shame, not just compassion. All the efforts to bear it, not to go insane, to somehow sustain one's self in the midst of this horror evoke guilt.

I am next to it [the burning Ghetto] and I live! I am being transformed into somebody else. Just being alive means to acquiesce with it. This is not only torment; this is infamy. This is horrendous shame, not just compassion. All the efforts to bear it, not to go insane, to somehow sustain one's self in the midst of this horror evoke guilt.

The fate of the people behind the wall. The dead in the graves and the dead there. The big processions of the resigned, the leaps into the flames, the leaps into the abyss. A woman in this little garden, hearing the falling bodies. A little boy in the window, children in arms. I cannot bear the thoughts; they transform me.

People inflicted this fate upon people

The Cemetery Woman:

“People are shot in the street. They burn them in their apartments. At night such cries and weeping. Nobody can sleep or eat, nobody can stand it. The worst is that there is no rescue... They set the houses on fire and don't let them escape. So the mothers wrap the children in anything soft they have and throw them out to the pavement. And then jump too... some with the smallest child in arms. From one place we could see how a father was jumping out with a small boy... And even if we cannot see it, we can hear it... All the time they jump like that, they prefer to jump than to burn alive.” The cemetery woman listened intently. In the soft cooing of the cemetery birds, she recognized the distant sounds of bodies falling to the pavement.