

Gens' Attempt to Maintain the Vilna Ghetto for as Long as Possible - August 1943

To the very last, Jacob Gens, Head of the Judenrat in the Vilna Ghetto, believed that he would maintain the Vilna Ghetto and save at least part of its population until the victory over Germany. Several weeks before his murder, after the first two deportations to Estonia, at the end of August 1943, he stated:

.... I want to postpone the *Aktion* so as to gain time, which is so valuable for us. Time is on our side. I am convinced that the Soviet Army will reach Vilna by December of this year, and if at that time the ghetto still survives, even though a few will be left in it, I shall know that I completed my task. I can then announce with a quiet heart and pure conscience that I did my duty to my people and to the future. Jews, try to hold on until the end and believe that we shall win a better life.

Source: Y. Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and Bnai Brith, 1980, p. 427.