

The Dilemma Of Jewish Self Help

May 26, 1942

...Relief work doesn't solve the problem; it only keeps people going a little while. The people have to die anyway. It lengthens suffering but cannot save them; if it [the Jewish Self-Help] really wanted to do anything, it would have to have millions of zloty at its disposal every month, and it does not have them. It remains a proven fact that the people fed in the soup-kitchens will all die if they eat nothing but the soup supplied and the dry rationed bread. The question thus arises whether it would not serve the purpose better to reserve the available money for selected individuals, for those who are socially productive, for the intellectual elite, etc. But the situation is such that, first of all, the numbers even of such select individuals is quite considerable, and there would not be sufficient even for them. Secondly, the question arises why should one pronounce judgment on artisans, laborers and other useful persons, who were productive people back in their small towns. And only the ghetto and war have turned them into non-people, into scrap, into human dregs, candidates for mass graves. There is left a tragic dilemma: What shall one do? Shall one [hand out the food] with little spoons to everybody, and then no one will live, or in generous handfuls to just a few?...

Ringelblum, I, p. 365.

Source: *Documents on the Holocaust, Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland, and the Soviet Union*, Y. Arad, Y. Gutman, A. Margalio (editors), Yad Vashem, 1981, p. 232.