



FIG. 1



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4



FIG. 5



FIG. 6

as fine as wool. Rumkowski had essentially transformed the ghetto into a slave labour camp, exploiting Jewish workers to carry out his “survival of the fittest” plan in an abysmally crumbling ghetto, yet he wanted to portray the labouring populace with a gloss of “normalcy” to please the ruling Nazi management officials. For these “official” documentary assignments, Ross used his training as a photojournalist to tell compelling stories: he carefully composed frames featuring engaged workers in various stages of production to support Rumkowski’s peremptory motto, “Unser Weg ist Arbeit!” (“Our way is work!”).<sup>10</sup>

Even under the siege of strict regulations and posted demands (fig. 3), Ross and his colleagues managed to document the ghetto’s daily unfolding. Ross photographed relentlessly on rolls of 35mm film, mixing his range of subjects: alongside the official documentation, he also recorded overcrowding, dismal living conditions, disease, empty soup kitchens, starvation and death. Remarkably, Ross and his fellow photographers, along with scholars, artists, writers and poets living in the ghetto, managed to produce the *Lodz Ghetto Chronicle*, which now serves as a historical record of official data, correspondences, news, graphics and photographs.<sup>11</sup> Postal worker Nachman Zonabend played a significant role in preserving many of these documents and images after the ghetto’s liberation in 1945.<sup>12</sup>

On December 8, 1941, anticipating that photographs would no longer show the ghetto in an ideal light, Rumkowski curtailed photography, except to document “official” occasions. The distinction between official, private and personal was malleable, however, and both Ross and Grossman kept taking satisfying “show” pictures for Rumkowski. One series shows Grossman posing with a portrait of a German officer (fig. 4)—a perfect foil to veil the photographers’ prohibited recording of ghetto-life miseries. Grossman photographed until the 1944 mass deportations, often using his camera in the open, without any interference from the Jewish police. Ross similarly documented many deportations, even taking photographs at the Radogoszcz (renamed Radegast) station—Lodz residents’ gateway to the Chełmno



German military personnel in vehicle in Lodz, 1940–1944. 2007/2428.  
Inspection of the ghetto by a German official, 1940–1944. 2007/1997. 12.



German inspectors of production and factories, 1940–1944. 2007/2387.





Postcard with portrait painting of Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski by Obarz Leizerowitza, 1940–1944, 2007/2281.



Ajzemann, Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski's personal guard, with children, 1941–1942, 2007/1979.1.