

TWO SONGS FROM GHETTO KONSTANCJA

by Tamar KOWALSKA, Tel Aviv

translated from the Yiddish by Marta Krzeminska

Given to print: Tamar KOWALSKA, Tel-Aviv

1.

Listen up, for I am about to tell you about the miracles,
great wonders,
How special is the life all of us Jews,
So very special that they separate us from the whole wide
world —
I will present to you the Ghetto Konstanz.

Not one had his residence there,
Our lads had themselves established "palatial"¹ tents
In the squares and in the middle of the field,
They have established a "proletariat *shtetl*".

The life in Konstanz – a genuine delight
Every day – a wedding and a funeral.
Entire day in a queue for a scrap of bread,
The life reminds here the life of dead.

But! Fellow lads, stay cheerful, it's not a time to worry.
Lift your head higher, for the morning has come.
Then we shall break the ghetto fences, destroy the ghetto-
world.
We'll take our fate into our own hands.
(to be sung with the melody of "They came and
took us" – the title is a transliteration from Polish.)

2.

Behind the wires I will lead you,
Line up everyone! From big to small!
Whatever is bought here you're not allowed to try.
Because the competition with us is vile.
You cannot run into the shop,
It's the group-leader who has to buy for us "the muggle":
Cigarettes, soap, candles and sardines —
So that we can sell them and thereby earn well...
Tra-la-la tra-la-la tra-la-la!

¹ The word used here is "palaten" – a sarcastic translation of the Russian "palace".