

EHRI Online Course in Holocaust Studies

National Yiddish Book Center

Ghettos under Nazi Rule – Dissolution and Resistance

Translation: E07 On 15 October, Ringelblum looks back at the terrible summer of 192 in Warsaw

Sloan, Jacob (Ed.): Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto. The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum, New York, 1958, S. 310-313

WHY?

Why didn't we resist when they began to resettle 300,000 Jews from Warsaw? Why did we allow ourselves to be led like sheep to the slaughter? Why did everything come so easy to the enemy? Why didn't the hangmen suffer a single casualty? Why could 50 S.S. men (some people say even fewer), with the help of a division of some 200 Ukrainian guards and an equal number of Letts, carry the operation out so smoothly?

The shops as traps – They took the best specialists away – “a couple of porters” laughed – they were taken away – the professionals were taken away, they looked at their hands, *clean palms*. Office employees taken away... only wearing work clothes – wearing slippers. Accompanied on the way [to the Umschlagplatz] by Ukrainians – they kept shooting.

Selection for deportation in the street among whole blocks – at first, on the basis of working papers, later on the basis of appearance (people dyed their gray hair).

They shaved off all the beards – tore off all the frock coats, ear locks. The street dead all day, except for after the barricade and from five in the morning to seven – the movement from one street to another, where there had already been a barricade. But the Others kept barricading the same neighborhood day after day. – The Jewish agents informed the Others about the populace's mood, about the hideout methods.

The role the shop owners played in the barricades – their cooperation with the S.S. – how they fooled people, for example, [the shop owner] Toebbens at 65 Niska Street. He said he wanted to avoid a barricade, so he took away all the workers' laundry.

Jewish [work] directors helped catch the illegals, for example at Hallman's shop.

THE UMSCHLAGPLATZ – WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE

The heroic nurses – the only ones who saved people from deportation without [asking for] money. Szmerling – the hangman with the whip.

The scenes when the wagons were loaded – the industriousness of the Jewish police –the tearing of parents from their children, wives from their husbands, Rabbi Kanal, Lubliner.

The shooting on the spot of those who tried to escape through holes in the Wall at night – the exemption of people who pretended to be doctors. Nurses' headkerchiefs saved hundreds of professionals, employees of the Jewish Council.

The Great Pursuit – Szmerling currying the Others' favor. More than once he tore the badges off policemen who had saved Jews from the Umschlag.

Faithful executor of Their orders – introduced a check of the nurses because they allowed people to escape without paying money.

Great grafter – took more than 100 zlotys per head. Most of those who were exempted – bought off the watch at the gate. – The police made enormous sums.

["The Thirteen"] Special Service made a lot of money exempting people too; com.[munity] institutions set up a fund to save the professionals.

The tragedy of those seized two, three, and five times – the mother who wouldn't go without her child – the husband who wouldn't go without his wife, etc. – and afterward they all went in the same wagon – hundreds of families went to the Umschlag together because of the children.

Because the quote wasn't met, the Germans seized people on the street, drove them directly into the wagons, not to the Umschlag but straight into the Wagons – 12,000 killed during the resettlement.

THE POT ON NISKA STREET

The 6th of September – the cruelty. In the middle of the night Lejkin was instructed to have all the Jews in the quadrangle bounded on one side by Gesia, on another by Smocza, on a third by Niska, and on the fourth by Zamenhofa to select [deportees] and round up illegals – Massacre of 25,000 people, perhaps even more. Of the barracks that were emptied out (everyone ordered out of the barracks) two of three houses set aside for each shop, most of them in the country – some shops' [workers] got back into their apartments that day – others not till the next day, or the day after.

"Ah, but we had a fine pot!" said Witasek, who directed the resettlement operation. The tens of thousands who remained on Niska Street – the continual slaughtering – seventy people killed in one apartment on Wolynska Street – in two days, 1,000 people killed, taken to the graveyard – hundreds killed in the street during the selections, all forced to kneel on the pavement [to be killed.]

Hundreds and thousands of people lay in their hiding places all week, without water (a water main burst), without food.

Hoffman's shop consists of two industries. One is reworking old things collected in Germany. The things are washed, mended, and then sent back.

Illegals. "Illegals" are those people who do not have [work card] numbers, people who, according to the lay, should have been on the Umschlagplatz, and yet are still alive. How many there are of this kind nobody knows. There are various estimates. Many people

place the number of illegals at 7,000, others estimate 10,000 and even 15,000. The fact is, they *are!*

Who are they? A large number are members of the family of “legal persons” – mostly the police, Jewish Council officials, etc.

The illegals also consist of officials of the Council, or of the YYGA, who were let go, but did not go to the Umschlagplatz; instead they went into hiding, and now they huddle close to their former colleagues for protection.

And then there is a third category – “everyday Jews,” who simply hid out and are still in hiding. They pay off the Work Guard and live at home. Many of the illegals are people who worked in shops that were given up, who managed to save themselves from the Umschlagplatz. Shops of this kind were Hans Miller’s, where many Jewish artists, actors, and others perished. There are houses, such as 35, 37, 41, etc., Nalewki Street, which are entirely occupied by hundreds of illegals.

The problem of offering relief to the illegals is becoming daily more pressing. The ex-officials among them receive a ration of soup and bread.