

**WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 13, 1999**  
**AFTERNOON SESSION B 16:30 – 18:00**

**Everyday Life in the Warsaw Ghetto - 1941**  
*by*  
***Shulamit Imbar***

**INTRODUCTION**

The core of this learning unit consists of photographs taken by German soldiers in the Warsaw ghetto. The photographs capture a unique and little-known reality that evolved in the margin between life and death.

Although the unit deals with the Warsaw ghetto, it does not claim to cover all aspects of ghetto life. The purpose of the unit is not to provide knowledge through systematic study but to enable students to gain a sense of life in the ghetto as it was experienced by the ghetto residents themselves. Through discussion and analysis of selected topics, the students will become familiar with aspects of the ghetto and its world, with the dilemmas faced by its residents, with their doubts and hardships, and the ways in which they coped with extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

The importance of the unit lies not in providing clear-cut answers, but in getting students to ask relevant and challenging questions.

To achieve this objective, a four-step process will be used. Students will be asked to inspect the photographs carefully and closely read passages from diaries in the Student workbook, voice their views and questions during discussions, and, finally, discuss questions chosen from the key topics that appear in the Student Workbook.

The unit consists of two collections of texts: **Teacher's Guide** and **Student Workbook**.

The **Teacher's Guide** contains the following:

- *A chapter containing analysis and discussion of photography and photographers In the ghettos and camps.*
- *An article by Professor Yisrael Gutman, which surveys the history of the Warsaw ghetto from its establishment up to the outbreak of the uprising. (This article should help the teacher handle the various factual and conceptual issues that will present themselves throughout the learning process).*
- *Pedagogical instruction, the aim of which is to help the teacher shape and give direction to discussions in the classroom.*

The **Student Workbook** contains questions and reading passages. The questions are designed to draw the students' attention toward the key issues and to structure discussion around a clearly defined topic.

**Attention:** Most of the photographs are accompanied by questions and educational activities. The teacher should use his or her own judgment in selecting the photographs and activities most suited to his or her group of students.

### **Photography and Photographers in the Holocaust** by Avraham Milgram

Visitors who come to the Historical Museum at Yad Vashem often ask about the source of the photographs on display, about the photographers who took them and about the manner in which these materials reached the museum. The most frequently asked question concerns the circumstances in which such extraordinary scenes were captured by the camera's eye, for the ghettos were sealed and isolated, the camps were located far from population centers, and the final solution was the best-kept secret of the Nazi regime.

Primary sources (official papers, documents, diaries, etc.) and studies of the phenomenon of photography during the Holocaust indicate that photographs of the ghettos and camps were taken by various people and in different times and locations. Likewise, the photographers were motivated by a variety of concerns.

To begin with, Goebbels and his men engaged in diverse and broadly conceived propaganda activities, including film-making and photography; these activities were aimed at improving the image of Nazi internal and external policies and policy makers. Second, foreign photojournalists during the pre-war years documented many of the Nazi regime's actions, and their work was printed in the newspapers of democratic countries.

This brings us to the question of authorship of photographs taken during the fateful wartime years. It was German and Allied soldiers (the latter at the end of the war) whom made a major contribution to the discovery of the truth about the Holocaust. German soldiers took many unauthorized souvenir snapshots. Many of concentration camp commandants. SS officers, and commanders created special photo albums for themselves and their superiors. These bizarre collections served as aids to documentation or as souvenirs, or simply provided an opportunity for collectors to boast about their exploits. For example, the SS and Police Leader Fritz Katzman. In Lvov, reporting on the destruction of the Jews of Galicia submitted a formal album with 152 photographs. The album of Jurgen Stroop, who was responsible for the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising has been preserved intact, with captions by Stroop's own hand. This album contains fifty-four photographs taken in the Warsaw ghetto during its liquidation.

Another private album was kept by Kurt Franz, second-in-command to Stangi, the commandant of Treblinka. Franz entitled his album *The Best Years of My Life*.

Some amateur photographers among the German soldiers, however, were motivated by a wholly different set of concerns. For example, the Austrian soldier Hubert Pfoch, a member of the illegal Austrian Socialist Youth movement, took illicit photographs of a transport of deportees en route from Austria to Treblinka. As an anti-Nazi, Pfoch sought to record the story that the Nazis were doing their utmost to suppress.

Unlike the other photographers, Jewish underground photographers who worked illegally and against enormous odds literally risked their lives every time they captured a unique moment on camera. In the Lodz ghetto, for instance, two Jewish photographers, Mendel Grossman and Henryk Ross, took clandestine photographs of Rumkowski's Factories and photographed the removal of excrement by the fecal department of the Lodz Judenrat, and documented scenes of hunger and convoys of deportees on their way to the death camps,

From the moment of its establishment, the Warsaw ghetto drew particular attention from the Nazi propagandists. The dreadful social and economic situation of the ghetto, its inhuman conditions, had enabled the Nazis to corroborate the distorted image of Jews as they had appeared in Nazi propaganda. Excited by their "discovery" of the incarnation of the caricaturized Jew, Nazi film teams flocked into the ghetto and proceeded to capture on camera the most abject of the ghetto's residents. The idea was to present them as typical examples of the Jewish people. The obsessive preoccupation of the Nazis with staging and filming scenes from ghetto life was described by Adam Czerniakow, head of the Warsaw Judenrat and by other authors of ghetto diaries.

Most of the snapshots from the Warsaw ghetto in our possession were made by the German soldiers who served in the Propaganda and Cinema Department of the Wehrmacht. In addition to the officially commissioned photographs, they took snapshots for private use. One of these soldiers, Joe Heydecker, who served in the photo-lab in a propaganda company, stole into the ghetto at his own initiative in late February and early March 1941.

In 1991, Yad Vashem received a collection of dozens of photographs taken by Willy Georg, who had served in the aerial photography development and decoding section of the army in Warsaw.

Perhaps the best known of these soldier-photographers is Heinz Jost, who entered the ghetto on his birthday, September 19, 1941, and took 129 snapshots. Most of the slides included in this unit come from Jost's collection.

Each of these three soldiers took their photographs in the Warsaw ghetto in 1941 and then happened to suffer from a "loss of memory", which kept the photographs out of public view for several decades. It isn't clear what prompted these former Wehrmacht soldiers to "rediscover" their photographic work after so many years. Be that as it may,

their photographs from the Warsaw ghetto have prompted scholars and many interested lay people to search for other similar visual records of the ghetto. These and other efforts have been instrumental in turning the photo-history of the Holocaust into a research field in its own right. Further efforts in this direction will certainly expand and deepen our knowledge, particularly of the Warsaw ghetto.

In an interview he gave to **Stern Magazine**, Heinz Jost said, **inter alia**:

*In my letters home I didn't describe anything that I saw. I didn't want to sadden my family. I thought automatically. What kind of world is that? I didn't say anything to my fellow soldiers either. Even later on, when the ghetto was burning, we didn't pay any attention.*

In this passage, Jost comes across as a person who is sensitive to the suffering of others, but then, how are we to explain the sudden lack of interest when the ghetto was set afire and turned into a smoldering ruin? Did he really fail to pay *any attention*?

These and other questions as to the motives of the three soldier photographers compel us to reassess the visual information contained in the photographs.

### **Notes for slides (1) and (2)**

- I. Start the discussion with a brief review of the ghettos and ghettoization in general. For example, one might begin with the arguments put forward by the Nazis to justify the establishment of the ghettos in Poland (see Y. Gutman's article, pp. 16-22), and then contrast these arguments with Nazi racial doctrine, which informed the policy of separating and isolating Jews from the non-Jewish population.
2. The first two sections of Y. Gutman's article ("The Ghetto", and "The Character of the Ghetto") should be consulted for background of the establishment of the ghettos in general and the Warsaw ghetto in particular. These two sections discuss the efforts made by Jews to thwart the German plans, the response of the Poles to these plans, the location and area of the ghetto, the evacuation of Poles who lived within the district designated for ghettoization, and the transfer of Jewish residents of other districts to the designated number of Poles who were forced to move out of the Jewish district, and, on the other, the number ghetto. Attention should be paid to the disproportion between, on the one of Jews who settled in their place. Compare the size and quality of the Jewish apartments that the resettled Poles received on the "Aryan side", with that of the apartments the Poles were forced to evacuate in the designated Jewish district.
3. The following questions should be addressed when looking at the slides: What was the significance of the gate? Was it an "open ghetto" which could be entered and left at will? Who were the policemen who guarded the ghetto gate? What were the assignments given to the German, Polish, and Jewish policemen? How might one describe the behavior of these policemen?

4. From the moment the German occupation began, the Jews were exposed to attacks and harassment on the part of both the Germans and the Polish population. For this reason quite a few Jews believed that concentration of the Jewish population in a designated district would shelter them against physical attacks and offer protection against hostile elements.

### Notes for slide (3)

1. As a result of the influx of thousands of refugees from the western provinces of Poland and from the environs of Warsaw, congestion in the ghetto, as illustrated in this photograph, grew much worse in 1941. (All the photographs in this unit were taken that year.) Consult the statistics quoted in Y. Gutman's article (Character of the Ghetto, p.22), to explain to students the causes of congestion in the ghetto.

2. After the students read Question 1 in the **Student Workbook**, the teacher will read aloud the two passages from the diary of Chaim Kaplan that describe the crowded conditions in the Warsaw ghetto.

3. In his diary, Chaim Kaplan addresses the question of the "uniform" dress of the ghetto residents and offers an explanation for this phenomenon. He raises an interesting issue, namely, the way in which dress became a symbol of the struggle for the image of the modern Jew, the struggle that lost much of its power and meaning under Nazi occupation.

### Notes for slide (4)

1. This photograph offers the student an opportunity to address two issues:

*(a) First, students can discuss the following phenomena in light of the Jews' bitter experience prior to the closing of the ghetto: dress, the taking off of one's hat and the various reactions of the Jews to the sight of an approaching German.*

*In this context study the two texts that accompany this photograph (one by Y.*

*Gutman and the passage from Chaim Kaplan's diary) in the Student Workbook.*

*Explain why the Jews were required to take off their hats before the Germans.*

*(b) The second issue has to do with photographers who entered the ghetto and in general, with Germans who entered the ghetto from time to time. it is in this light that one should approach Chaim Kaplan's ironical reference to the ghetto as an autonomous entity.*

### Notes for slides (5) and (7)

1. In these two photographs we can see vehicles that were widely used as a means of transportation on the ghetto streets. The purpose here is to show how vehicles that had

been out of use for generations and had disappeared completely from the Polish landscape, were, by force of circumstance, "reinvented" in the ghetto period.

These slides offer an opportunity for a discussion of the resourcefulness and ingenuity shown by the Jews in the field of transportation. This is but one example of their persistence in coping with the hardships imposed on them in the ghetto.

2. Students should read the two **Student Workbook** passages that deal with the means of transportation in the ghetto.

3. The Warsaw ghetto was not so large as to require an elaborate system of transportation in order to reach various destinations within it, but neither could the problem of mobility be solved by walking.

When discussing this topic, students should be encouraged to think about the area and the size of the ghetto.

4 . Consult Y. Gutman's article (pp. 26-33) for the section on smuggling in the ghetto; then consider the various uses that the ghetto residents could make of the rickshaw.

5 . Draw the students' attention to the clientele of the rickshaw drivers.

6. With regard to slide 7, think of a question on the subject of the rickshaw, and suggest passages from the diary of Peretz Opoczynski for a discussion in the classroom.

### Notes for slide (8)

1. The discussion here should address the following issues:

*\* The emergence of new social groups such as smugglers and orphans in the ghetto. (What caused their emergence? What problems did they present? How were they treated by fellow residents of the ghetto? etc.)*

*\*The phenomenon of "food snatching" in the ghetto streets, which took place usually during the day, when the chances of obtaining something to eat were higher. How did the ghetto residents respond to the snatchers? How can their response be explained? Etc.*

*\*In the struggle for survival, snatching was one among many means of prolonging life. What were some other "ethical problems" that the ghetto residents faced in the struggle for survival?*

2. Encourage students to discuss the social and behavioral consequences of living conditions in the ghetto.

3. How did diary writers describe individuals and groups such as the one seen in this slide?

#### Notes for slides (9) and (10)

- 1 . Encourage students to discuss the problem of livelihood in the ghetto. How did Jews in the ghettos earn a living? What were the different levels of "livelihood"? Address the issue with regard to ghettos in general and the Warsaw ghetto in particular.
2. It is important to distinguish between official work (under the auspices of the Judenrat and the German administration) and what was known as the "clandestine industry".
3. In what sense can the "home-grown" economic activity be described as a response by the ghetto's residents to their conditions?
4. Read the section Hardship Gets Worse in Y Gutman's article (p. 41-44), and encourage students to discuss the issue of the ties between the ghetto and the outside world. In particular, address the nature of the links between Jews and Poles. How did these economic links affect life on both sides of the ghetto border?

#### Notes for slide (11)

1. Have students study the reading passage by Rachel Auerbach in the **Student Workbook**, in which the author describes the process of impoverishment of the ghetto's residents.
2. Have students contrast this picture, together with the excerpt from Rachel Auerbach's memoirs, with the two previous slides (9, 10) and the reading passage that accompany them. Slide 11 conveys the limited nature of subsistence and livelihood in the ghetto.

#### Notes for slide (12)

- 1 . Direct students' attention to the background of the photograph, where there is a store that sells food and luxury items. This is of considerable interest in itself and raises many questions concerning Jewish community life in the ghetto.
2. There was no economic equality in the ghetto. In order to prevent any misconceptions, the teacher should study the section Death in the Ghetto (Y. Gutman, pp. 44-48), particularly the discussion of economic disparities in the ghetto, and the description of groups who lived a life of relative luxury.
3. The discussion of economic inequality in the ghetto can be expanded to include inequality as an universal phenomenon. Students should be reminded, however, of the deliberate character of Nazi policies which brought about inhuman conditions in ghetto.

4. Have students study the two passages below: the first is an excerpt from Emmanuel Ringelblum's diary, in which the author dwells on the passivity of the hungry Jewish masses in ghetto; and the second is a response by Professor Yisrael Gutman. Discuss these two passages with the class.

*One of the questions that arouses much interest is the passivity of the Jewish masses who succumb to death with a hushed sigh. Why do they all remain silent? Why do fathers, mothers, all the children die without any protest? Why hasn't the prospect that threatened the public a year ago (i.e. rampant theft and plunder which, incidentally, motivated the building councils to purchase food for their impoverished tenants) come to pass? There are many answers to this question: the occupation regime has cast such a heavy shadow of dread that people are afraid to lift their heads for fear of mass terror in response to any outburst by the starving masses. And that is why some of those who are conscious and alert remain silent and passive and do not create an uproar in the ghetto. There is also another reason: a good number of the poor who exercised initiative managed to get by somehow. The smuggling provides a means of subsistence for thousands of porters. The "shops" and the orders from the German authorities provide job opportunities for a substantial portion of the laborers and craftsmen. A section of the active proletarian element engages in street trade (the sale of bread brings in a profit of 25 pennies per kilo). So there remains the passive and hopeless portion that goes to its death in silence. E.Ringelblum, Ktovim, vol.I pp. 288-289.*

*Ringelblum also cites the fact that the Jewish Police had begun to beat people, which was a further restraining force. But one nonetheless has the impression that the principal reason for the passivity is to be found in another quarter, which Ringelblum does not sufficiently explore. Death from starvation was a gradual process. Those who were doomed to starve to death constituted about half of the ghetto's total population. But at no time during the existence of the ghetto did the entire public find itself in the same situation. Some had died, another sector was already starving, while a larger portion was destined to die within a month or two but cherished the hope that in the time left to them the coveted salvation would arrive. Moreover that portion of the population already in the grip of death had sunk below the ability to organize, act or even bring itself to the point of a spontaneous outburst.*  
*Yisrael Gutman, p. 108-109.*

### **Notes for slides (13) and (14)**

- 1 . Study the section entitled Death in the Ghetto (Y. Gutman, pp. 44-48), where the author describes the phenomenon of begging. (This phenomenon was much more widespread in Warsaw than in other ghettos.)
2. On the one hand, begging can be seen as a symptom of demoralization and decay;.

On the other hand, it may indicate the presence of the will to survive. Discuss the images in the photographs: Do they illustrate survival or demoralization?

### Notes for slide (15)

1 . This photograph, in which distribution of food to the needy is depicted, touches upon two important issues relating to the establishment of public kitchens in the ghetto:

- (a) *The institution of the public kitchen as an example of Jewish resourcefulness, which expressed itself in voluntary activity outside the official communal framework of the Judenrat*
- (b) *The way in which public kitchens gradually assumed other functions as well, especially those of social centers. Toward the end they also stimulated cultural and political activity in the ghetto.*

2. In her diary Rachel Auerbach notes that, by themselves, public kitchens could not solve the problem of hunger in the ghetto. (See the accompanying passage in the Student Workbook and note that Auerbach took active part in the development of the public kitchen network.)

### Notes for slide (16)

1. The teacher should emphasize that despite the torment and suffering inflicted on the ghetto's residents, cultural and intellectual life, including literature, was hardly extinguished.

2. The existence of an active intelligentsia, the passion of the ghetto's residents for writing diaries (a passion stemming from a conviction that records must be left of that historically unprecedented period), and the widespread reading of books - all these provide evidence of the vitality of the Jewish community, of its refusal to bow to fate. This cultural activity might even be conceived of as a form of resistance.

3. The three reading passages that accompany this slide have to do with the fate of books in the ghetto. The author of the first text, Rabbi Huberband, discusses the backsliding of the people of the book, which he locates in the cynical and offensive treatment of books as material objects that could be traded away. In the second text, historian Emmanuel Ringelblum describes the fate of bookstores in the ghetto, the types of books offered for sale, and the handling of such books. The third text is an excerpt from the memoirs of Stanislaw Adler; the excerpt discusses the fate of libraries and the smuggling of books from the Aryan side into the ghetto in order to meet the strong demand for reading material among the ghetto's residents.

1. Please note that this picture presents two unrelated phenomena: (a) birth in the ghetto, and (b) the uprooting of trees and the lack of greenery in the ghetto.

### Notes for slide (17)

2. Despite a soaring mortality rate and horrendous living conditions, the life-force proved hard to extinguish in the ghetto. In his book (Hebrew Version) **The Jews of Warsaw 1939 - 1943, Ghetto, Underground, Revolt**, p. 81, Professor Yisrael Gutman notes that, despite the general trend of a sharp decline in the birth rate during the ghetto period, births did not stop altogether:

In the first seven months of 1941 (about which statistics are available), births averaged 294 per month. Figures for the first five months of 1942 indicate an even greater decline: from January to May, 82 children were born on average each month.

These figures raise a number of questions about the life of Jews in the Warsaw ghetto:

*(a) Why is it that children continued to be born in the ghetto? To answer this question it is necessary to emphasize the difference between our historical perspective on the Warsaw ghetto and that of the Jews who lived there. The latter did not know what fate awaited them.*

*(b) How did the feelings of uncertainty affect fertility trends in the ghetto?*

3. Large parts of the ghetto were deliberately amputated -- so that every green area or group of trees was excluded. Krasinskich Park -- a tiny patch of green located at the heart of the Jewish district - was not included in the ghetto, and Jews went to great lengths to persuade the Germans to reincorporate it. Adam Czerniakow, head of the Judenrat, was given many promises in this regard, but like many other German promises to the Jews, this one, too, was hollow.

### Notes for slide (18)

- 1 . In this photograph we see two things: a woman selling armbands, and a posted notice announcing a cultural event in the ghetto.
2. The decree calling for Jews to wear badges was promulgated as early as 1939. Even after the physical separation of Jews from non -Jews had come into effect (with the establishment of special residential areas for Germans, Jews, and Poles), the decree was not rescinded. With the ghettoization of the Jewish residents, the Nazi program to set different racial groups apart by means of special distinguishing marks lost its raison d'être. Nevertheless, photographs taken in the ghetto show Jews wearing arm-bands on

their sleeves. The arm-bands provided yet another way of humiliating the ghetto's residents, and many were a popular object with the German photographers.

3. Some ghetto residents, like the woman shown in the photograph, made a living by selling armbands. The passages in which the armband is described as a mark of humiliation for the Jews should be read aloud in class.

4. Members of political parties, youth movements, and the intelligentsia in general engaged in wide-ranging cultural activity in the ghetto.

Excerpts from the diary of Mary Berg give a sample of some of the cultural events staged in the ghetto. Mary was a young woman whose parents fled from Lodz and arrived in Warsaw as refugees. Owing to the relatively good material situation of her family during the first year of the ghetto's existence, she was able to observe first-hand and even take an active part in activities pursued by members of the upper crust of the ghetto society, i.e. the well-to-do and the new class of nouveau riche - smugglers, members of the Jewish police force, and some underworld figures who maintained business ties with Poles and the Germans.

### Notes for slide (19)

1. Slide 12 offered us an opportunity to discuss the question of why the hungry resigned themselves to their death. Slides (13) and (14) were meant to stimulate discussion of the phenomenon of widespread begging. The well-dressed couple that can be seen in slide (19) adds yet another perspective to the discussion of stratification in the ghetto. Use this slide to introduce the point of view of the nouveaux riches, or new rich. (see Smuggling in Y Gutman's article, p. 26-33).

2. The frivolity associated with ghetto cafes, restaurants, and the popular entertainment industry drew strongly worded denunciations from different quarters, especially organizations and individuals who were committed to social issues: youth movements, political parties, and men of letters. Their criticism is widespread in diaries and the underground press and diaries.

3. The existence of "high society" in the ghetto is likely to become an emotionally charged topic, and there is nothing easier than to condemn outright those who lived a life of relative luxury. It is the teacher's duty to raise the moral aspect of this phenomenon (see the excerpt from the underground press in the **Student Workbook**) while trying to maintain a balanced view of the matter. It should be emphasized that the Nazis frequently filmed and photographed members of the "privileged" group - smugglers, the nouveau riche and others - for propaganda purposes. In particular, they presented these characters as incarnations of flawed Jewish genes, and as an expression of depraved Jewish culture. Needless to say, they did not bother to mention that this new class was a direct result of Nazi policy - that it emerged in the wake of the radical transformation of

Jewish society, and that the Nazi war against the Jews was the root of that transformation.

### Notes for slide (20)

1. The subject of this photograph is an encounter between a Jewish policeman and a young woman in the ghetto. The factual background for the question of the Jewish Police and its recruits is to be found in Y Gutman's article (pp. 33-36)
2. Using the reading passages that accompany this photograph, the teacher should focus discussion on the following issues:
  - (a) *The social composition of the Jewish police force.*
  - (b) *The difference between the social profile of the Jewish police and that of an "ordinary" police force.*
  - (c) *The way in which the tasks of the Jewish police changed during the different phases of the ghetto's existence.*
  - (d) *The way in which the reputation of the Jewish policeman deteriorated as the tasks of the force and its work methods changed.*

In this connection, the teacher should draw students' attention to 1) the excerpt from Mary Berg's diary, in which she describes the initial period in the police force's existence; 2) the article in the underground press, which deals with the second period; and 3) the following excerpt from Y. Gutman:

*The ways of the Jewish police and the modus operandi of its contacts with the population in the ghetto can be presented as passing through three distinct stages. In the first stage, from the establishment of the force to the spring of 1941, i.e. the beginning of abductions for forced labor, the Jewish police force had a relatively good reputation and its relations with the ghetto's residents were mostly normal. The second stage from the spring of 1941 to the great deportation in July 1942, was characterized by a progressive demoralization of the force and the deterioration of its relations with the public. In the third stage during & deportations, the behavior of Jewish policemen reached the nadir of depravity, and [the force] became the most hated Jewish body in the ghetto. (Y. Gutman **The Jews of Warsaw 1939 - 1943, Ghetto Underground Revolt**, pp. 89)*

- 3 . Discussing history in general, and the Holocaust in particular, one should be careful to avoid generalization. One should be circumspect, and draw students' attention to comparable situations in different periods and places. For example, one must not jump to conclusions about the Jewish police in other ghettos on the basis of evidence on the behavior of the force in the Warsaw ghetto. Although some parallels in the patterns of

behavior of Jewish policemen do exist in some ghettos (Minsk, for example), the Jewish police actively opposed Nazi rule.

### Notes for side (21)

1. After reading the text below, the teacher is advised to use this photograph as an opportunity to discuss the issue of information flow in the ghetto. In the picture we see a man selling newspapers, but what other sources of information were there? Who had access to it, and how was it disseminated?

*The German occupation forces imposed severe restrictions on mail links, particularly in the isolated Jewish districts (ghettos); in some cases the mail was cut off completely. Radio sets were confiscated, independent newspapers were forced underground and from the fall of 1941 leaving the ghetto without a permit was forbidden under pain of death.*

*The Germans did not succeed however, in turning the Warsaw ghetto into an “informational “wasteland. World news in general, and from the various fronts of war in particular continued to reach the ghetto through clandestinely monitored transmissions in addition, clandestine publications crossed the ghetto walls from the "Aryan" side. "They were brought over", E. Ringelblum wrote, "by patriotically disposed Polish policemen, and by street sweepers". The newspaper collections of **Oneg Shabbat**, which reflect the ideological heterogeneity and broad spectrum of attitudes of the Polish underground indicate that the ghetto maintained contacts with Polish underground organizations. This facet of ghetto ties with the outside world has not yet been adequately researched.*

*In defiance of the ban imposed by the Germans both German and Polish newspapers were distributed in the ghetto. "The prohibition is not effective", E. Ringelblum wrote. "For the price of 50 groschen one can get the **Krakauer Zeitung** and for the same price, the Polish-language **Nowy Kurier Warszawski**".*

*Strikingly the occupier was not able to enforce his countless prohibitions which in regard to contacts with the outside world, inter alia, were defied both in the ghetto itself and on the "Aryan" side. The preserved **Oneg Shabbat** collections contain dozens of postcards, including those from ghettos under the threat of liquidation **Aktionen**. As their postmarks indicate, they reached the ghetto within a relatively short time -four or five days.*

*Independently of the **Deutsche Post Osten**, Jews established a clandestine network of communication between the ghettos which operated beyond German control. Although primitive, this "gossip mail" (as labeled by the clandestine newspaper **Morgnfreihheit**) nonetheless proved quite effective. Defying the prohibition which carried the death penalty, ghetto residents continued to leave the restricted areas in search of livelihood on personal or underground business; escapees from other*

*ghettoes and camps arrived in the Warsaw ghetto, joining their landsleit and bringing news from their native towns; women couriers operating under aliases traveled throughout the country on behalf of various underground organizations slipping through police cordons and evading roundups and searches on train and at railway stations*

*(Ruta Sakowska, "Two Functions of the Ringelblum Archive", in **Yad Vashem Studies**, 21, 1991, pp. 193-194)*