

Senior Thesis Seminar Project

Child Smugglers in the Warsaw Ghetto

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Essay Topic

Topic:

The socioeconomic background of the children who smuggle food (child smugglers) for their families in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Research Questions:

What was the socioeconomic background of the families, who needed children to smuggle as a main source of sustenance?

How did the child's or their families' resources correlate to the extent of the child's smuggling?
Did the resources correlate to how much food is smuggled in and how frequently a child must smuggle?

How did smuggling impact family roles?

Findings

Thesis:

Analysis of the smuggling activities of children is crucial for understanding the socioeconomic background of these families and how smuggling experiences transformed the character of child smugglers.

1. Child smugglers came from families with two major characteristics, the parents did not have a stable source of income and the children could not access social welfare provided by social institutions.
2. The frequency and scope of child smugglers depended on the ability and decisions made by children, rather than the amount of available resources the child's family had.
3. Ghetto conditions destroyed the role of a child in the structure of the community, and children were forced into adult roles, especially child smugglers.

Methodology

- ❖ Limited to sources in English
- ❖ Mainly based on primary source analysis because of lack of secondary sources
 - ❖ USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive
 - ❖ *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow*
 - ❖ *In Those Nightmarish Days: The Ghetto Reportage of Peretz Opoczynski and Josef Zelkowicz*
 - ❖ Jack Klajman's memoir
 - ❖ *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum*
 - ❖ Wladyslaw Szpilman's memoir
- ❖ Secondary sources mainly provided structural framework

Research Timeline

July-September 2017: Preliminary research on WWII in Poland

September-October 2017: Research on the Warsaw Ghetto

October-November 2017: Focus on sources about smuggling and children, listening to Shoah interviews, essay outline

November – 11 December 2017: Essay Drafting