**"More Important than Life: Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto"**

**Exhibition**

**The Ringelblum Archive at the Documentation Center of Nazi History**

**in Munich, Germany**

**The priceless collection, listed on UNESCO's Memory of the World list, will be presented outside Poland for the first time on such a scale. The documents comprising it, stored at the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, have been presented in the exhibition "More Important Than Life: The Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto”. The exhibition will be available to view from June 29 at the Documentation Center for Nazi History in Munich.**

The exhibition introduces the viewer to the act of civil resistance against German occupiers of Poland during 2nd World War: that was the Underground Warsaw Ghetto Archive — an unfinished, shocking, but ultimately successful attempt to write the history of the Holocaust from the perspective of its victims.

The so-called Ringelblum Archive was created between 1939 and 1943 by members of the “Oneg Shabbat (Joy of Shabbat)” group – as was their code name. The group was founded by a respected Jewish historian and social activist, Emanuel Ringelblum (1900-1944). He was the one who engaged trusted scholars, teachers, writers and activists to document the situation of the Jewish community under German occupation. The names of many of the more than 60 conspirators remain unknown to this day, while only three of the Oneg Shabbat members managed to survive the war — including Rachela Auerbach, who after the war was one of the associates of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw and, after leaving for Israel in 1950, became the creator and head of the Yad Vashem archive. When news of the mass German murders of Jews began to reach Warsaw in early 1942, the group started documenting the extermination of Jewish communities and informing the public about it. In 1942, through the Polish and Jewish underground, Oneg Shabbat reports on genocide reached the Allies.

The archive created in this way was hidden at the height of the German anti-Jewish action in two parts (discovered on September 18, 1946 and December 1, 1950). It remains a key testimony about the Holocaust of the Jews. This extremely valuable collection is kept at the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (during the war, members of Oneg Shabbat met in the building that is today the seat of the Jewish Historical Institute). The entire surviving Archive collection contains approximately 35,000 sheets of notes, diary entries, essays, photographs, drawings, official documents and other testimonies of everyday life.

*The Ringelblum Archive is a unique proof of invincible civic resistance. The members of Oneg Shabbat did not stop fighting for themselves and for the historical truth, even though they risked their lives every day. The activity of the group is the first attempt in history to directly document the mass murder of European Jews carried out by Germany during World War II*, says the **director of the Jewish Historical Institute, Monika Krawczyk.**

Presenting part of the collection at the exhibition in Munich is of major importance. It was here that Nazism was born, the tragic consequences of which were described by members of the Oneg Shabbat group. The Ringelblum Archive, inscribed in 1999 on UNESCO’s World Heritage List "Memory of the World," will be presented outside Poland for the first time on such a large scale. At the same time, the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, previously known to researchers, becomes the first institution to speak the language of the victims so explicitly in a place that was at the heart of Nazi ideology during the war.

The exhibition is divided into three main parts. The first focuses on the concept of the Warsaw Ghetto Archive, its founder, creators and the areas of activity of its members. The message is reinforced by documents from the collection and photos showing the everyday life of the inhabitants of the closed Jewish district. The second part presents a sudden turn in the work of archivists, related to information reaching Warsaw about mass murders of Jews carried out by the Nazi Germans. The exhibition includes lists of the murdered they collected, a plan of the German extermination camp in Treblinka obtained from escapees, and preserved correspondence. The third part is a story about the last days of the ghetto, the uprising and the hiding of the Archive and its post-war discovery.

The exhibition looks at the ghetto from the inside, from the Jewish perspective, putting the Oneg Shabbat Archive at the center and letting the documents and photos speak for themselves. In this way, an intense and diverse picture of life, suffering and death in the ghetto is presented.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue and a program of accompanying events.

**“More Important than Life: Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto”**

June 29, 2023 - January 7, 2024

National Socialist Documentation Center Munich / NS-Dokumentationszentrum München

The exhibition is open from Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 to 19:00.

**Director:** Mirjam Zadoff (Munich) and Monika Krawczyk (Warsaw)

**Curators**: dr Piotr Rypson (JHI), Ulla-Britta Vollhardt (Munich)

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Information about the exhibition

<https://www.jhi.pl/wystawy/465>

Information for the media

https://www.jhi.pl/dla-mediow