

Objective of the proposed research project is to gather and analyze data concerning information in Warsaw ghetto during World War II: its gathering, processing, dissemination and defining their social meanings. Main subjects of research will be news on what was happening outside of the ghetto that had been reaching Warsaw's Jewish district throughout the war. I plan to focus on news concerning fate of Jews in occupied Poland and international situation and developments of war, as well as on reactions to them. Information was a critically significant resource during the Holocaust, it enabled interpretations of current events and predictions for the future. It allowed to give at least provisional answers to question that most of Warsaw Jews were asking themselves: what was going to happen to them.

I will gather source material during archival research in Poland, USA and Israel and analyze it qualitatively. I am planning to reconstruct information net of Warsaw ghetto, identify sources of news and show various modes of accessing information and its interpretation. Project is interdisciplinary and I will refer to both sociological and historical methods of research and analysis. I will analyze reactions to information with the use of sociological theories.

In Polish historiography of the Holocaust, a lot of attention is given to research on Polish-Jewish relations during the war and Polish reactions to destruction of Jews. Little is known about information concerning international situation and beginnings of extermination that had reached Jews incarcerated in ghettos, how they were interpreted and what reactions they evoked. My research project is a chance to fill this important gap in Polish and foreign literature on the Holocaust. Analysis of reactions to that news could also enrich our understanding of the social and psychological meaning that knowledge can possess in extreme or critical situations.