

Institute for Racial Research

Categories: Institutions

At the end of 1939, the community was forced to make Jews available to the German Committee for Racial Affairs¹ as racial research objects. Various body and craniological² measurements were taken. Due to fear of the Germans and reluctance to get in contact with authorities, prosperous people were inclined to pay to the Community all outstanding and current taxes in order to rid themselves from this obligation. Soon afterwards, the activity of the Institute for Racial Research ceased, at least concerning Jews.

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Resources

Encyclopedia, s.

References

In his testimony for the Ringelblum Archive, a refugee from Łódź, Jan Kapczan, gave a detailed description of tests:

“Łódź, January and February 1940.

Among the large number of orders received from the various authorities almost [2] every day by the Eldest of the Łódź Jews, there was a demand from the Rassenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP³⁴⁸ to deliver daily, until the order was revoked, a certain number of clean and deloused Jews for the purposes of racial research.³⁴⁹ Because the order (like all others, in fact) was effective immediately, 20 men who reported to the Judeneinsatz³⁵⁰ for forced labour were delivered the following day. In the Office for Racial Policy, ‘doctors’ in white smocks — under which, as in Kawecki’s telling paintings,³⁵¹ the sturdy brown trousers and

military boots of SA men could be seen — measured the Jews' heads and noses with an instrument of some kind. The noses in particular were examined with great precision. After the examination, photographs were taken. The whole process was not free from harassment. More than one man had a clump of hair removed from his head with barber's clippers. Others had their beards, or only half their beards, cut off. As they went out, they were tripped up, and other similar tricks were played on them. Naturally, the examination gave the 'examiners' great amusement. For those subjected to it, it was unpleasant and even unbearable. It was rumoured among the local Jews that terrible things went on in the voivodship building, where the Office for Racial Policy was situated: apart from being beaten, having their heads shaven and beards cut off, it was said that men had a Star of David painted, or even burnt, onto their foreheads. People were afraid of that building.

Meanwhile, after a week or ten days, the 'doctors' departed without leaving any instruction to terminate the delivery of Jews. At first, the kehillah continued to [3] send them, but it stopped after a couple of days. At the same time, the kehillah tax department mimeographed a large number of official demands to report to the Office for Racial Policy for examination. The demands specified severe penalties for failure to report and also contained a note, with a special stamp, stating that "Your name and address have been forwarded to the German authorities." The demands were sent to people who were due their kehillah tax.

The tardy taxpayers were frightened. They went straight to the kehillah, where a comedy of intimidation was enacted, under whose influence — as in an Aeschylus tragedy — they did as follows: they cleared their debts and... did not have to go to the examination.

It should be added that in the two months following the departure of the travelling racial research office, as later came to light, the Łódź kehillah collected a huge amount in overdue taxes. Here was a case in which racism was put to good use!"

See: The Ringelblum Archive. Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto. Accounts from the Annexed Territories: Warthegau, Reichsgau Danzig-West Prussia, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Upper Silesia, ed. Eleonora Bergman, Monika Polit, Magdalena Siek, Ewa

Wiatr, Warszawa 2022, s. 166-167.

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