

Mamser'l

Categories: Other

Diminutive form of the Hebrew word “mamser,” which meant “a little extra” in the Jewish pre-war vernacular of Łódź.

In the thieves’ vernacular, the Yiddish idiom “Unterverfn a mamser’l” expressed laying the blame on somebody, however unfairly or wrongly.

In the ghetto, the term “mamser’l” was used only in the kitchens and meant a soup container without any measure markings and smaller than standard containers with measure markings. Meals were delivered from the kitchens to the working departments in closed containers of a certain capacity. For example, if any department had a staff of 200 that should consume 140 liters of soup, the soup was supplied in three containers, namely, 2 x 50 liters and 1 x 40 liters. However, because of a turnover of employees there was often not enough soup, so “additional” soup was brought in a small container just in case; this soup had to be allotted exactly by a “rationer.”

This small container was called a “mamser’l.”

Józef Zelkowicz

Resources

Encyclopedia, s. 135.

Tags

language of the ghetto everyday life

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