

KUTNO IN E. RINGELBLUM'S "NEWS FROM WARSAW GHETTO"

translated from the Yiddish by Shoulamit Auvé-Szlajfer

In the Kutner ghetto of *Konstancja*, a Memorial Day was held for Herzl and Jabotinsky, with the agreement of the authorities.

(October 2-10, 1940. p. 52).

The ghetto in Kutno has already been opened... (15.6.40).

(October 23-24, 1940. p. 66).

In Kutno, the ghetto is an open ghetto. Guards were forbidden (?) and they (obviously) let the crowd out.

(December 7-10, 1940. p. 77).

... A woman tells me that last year: "On the 19th of December, I experienced the following incident: I took the train from Łódź to Warsaw, the railway passed through Kutno, and I was seated at the Kalisz station. No Jew was



Jewish children in the ghetto

allowed to travel further from that. At that time, Jews wore signs on their clothes on front and back, and were allowed to walk in the street from 8am to 5pm. That's why we had to run... We had to go down... We arrived in Kutno around 1am... For Warsaw, we had to wait until 10pm. Everyone entered the waiting room, which was very full because it was holiday time¹. There were not many Jews. A little time later, young 'Greeks'² appeared and declared

that (because of) the Jews who were in the room, the atmosphere was humid, they should go out so that the air would be breathable. The Jews had to go out on the side that leads to the city. The crowd sat on the luggage and later, the same 'Greeks' came out and began beating the men terribly. The battle went so far that the Jews left their luggage and fled. Then, they started beating the women terribly. They were struck in the face. Not a single woman came out unhurt, all of them were abundantly bleeding. Among the 'Greeks' were two who were quite agitated and began to ask why they were beating us. The answer came: because Jews were to blame for the critical situation in which Polish Germans found themselves. The two replied that it was not the fault of the Jews, but of the policy of the government. The assailants went out, and with them the two defenders. The two came in and out constantly, especially one of them who worried about us. They brought water for us to wash away the blood and expressed their sympathy. He explained that he was going to intervene to allow us into the waiting room. They left, but did not return. This means that they had not succeeded. Around 3am, a car arrived with officers, the same 'Greeks' who had beaten us came out and ordered us to take out the officers' belongings. I got to drag a crate. After a few steps, the officer realized that I, wounded earlier, was dragging such a heavy crate and mentioned that it was too heavy for me and took it himself. One of the two 'Greeks' who defended us told us: Wait, the thugs will readily go away and you will be able to enter (he meant the 'Greeks' who had beaten us). After a while, they explained us that they would see to it that we did not have to wait for the train until 10pm. Fortunately, a special additional train appeared. At 6pm, as we were told at the station, the train was allowed on a special intervention by soldiers and passed safely..."³

(24.12.1940, pp. 86-87).

I was told that in the Kutno ghetto, the captain had all Jews stripped naked and collected one and a half million marks from all of them, including a quarter of a million from one Jew.

(Beginning of June 1941. p. 278 – from the second book "Writings of the Ghetto", Warsaw, 1961).

¹ TN: Christmas and start of Chanukah 1940 were at the same time.

² Meaning "Germans".

³ All the missing lines were burnt, in the original.