Upon the partition of Poland into Nazi and Soviet controlled areas, the Jewish population was similarly severed between both occupied zones. The Soviet-controlled regions included many Jewish inhabitants, to whom were soon added a large influx of refugees fleeing from Western Poland when the war broke out or who were expelled by the Nazi authorities. Later on, some of the refugees were deported from the Soviet-occupied areas of Poland to the eastern provinces of Ural, Siberia, and Kazakhstan.

For a period of some 22 months, up until the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, a stream of letters and parcels persisted between the Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland and their relatives in Soviet-occupied Poland and the rest of the Soviet Union. These ties were largely overlooked by a scholarship focused primarily on the desolation of Jews under Nazi rule, with minimal exploration of the fate of the hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews who spent the war as refugees in the Soviet Union. As I shall strive to demonstrate in the presentation, a retracing of these correspondences could potentially contribute significantly towards an understanding of these two collectives and the relationship between them.

For the most part, it was the Jews living under Nazi occupation who sought to assist their kin scattered across the Soviet Union. Concurrently with the erection of the first ghettos and the mass incarceration of Jews in the Nazi occupation-zones, and even from within the confines of the ghetto, they expressed their concerns for, and called to lend aid to, their brethren that were held in Soviet work-camps or wandering the countryside as destitute refugees. Thus, one may point out a certain reversal of roles between these two diasporas of Poland's Jews.