

What is the Holocaust? Where do ghettos fit into the history?

L. M. Stallbaumer-Beishline, PhD  
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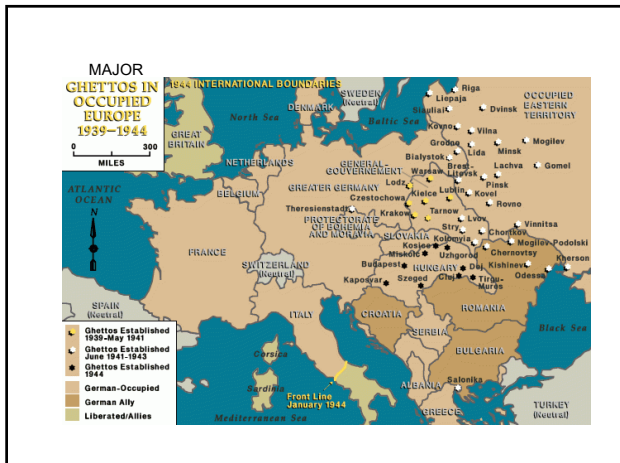
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### Conventional Historical Interpretation



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### Transient Point for "resettlement"



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### Collection point for extermination



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## Gustavo Corni, *Hitler's Ghettos*:

The ghetto inhabitants are viewed as "selfish and indifferent, and who tried to live from day to day by ignoring what was happening to others. . . . The ghettos, swarming with people and their innumerable social and cultural contradictions, have been branded as a phenomenon that only heroic death in combat or the tragedy of Auschwitz could (and should) erase."

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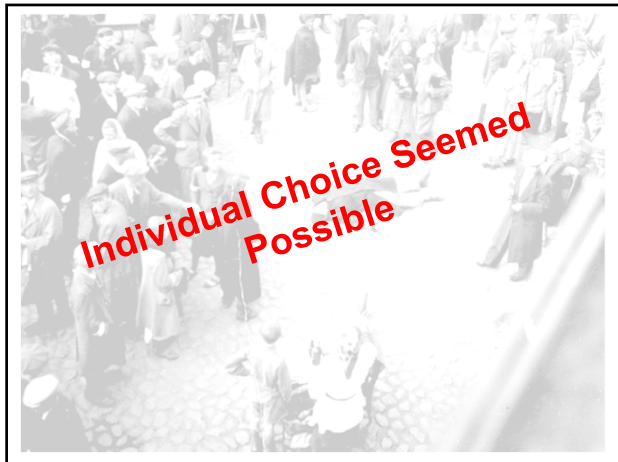
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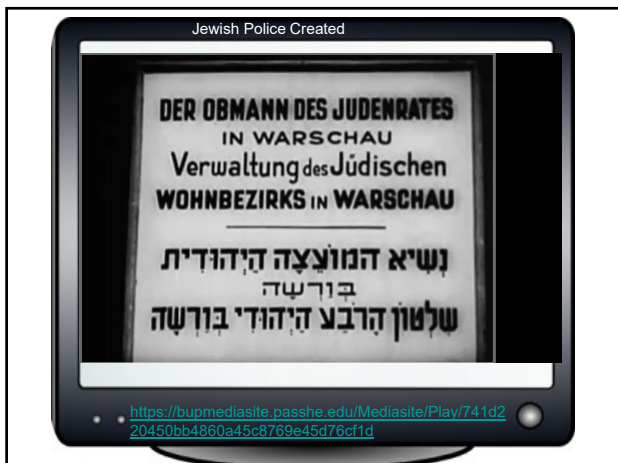
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## Jewish Councils

- Set up with Heydrich Memo of September 1939
- Judenrat or Judenräte - Jewish Council(s)

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## Jewish Police



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## "lose-lose situation"

"Hell, according to the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, is a self-service cafeteria – the worst suffering, in other words, is that which you inflict on yourself. Nazi planners seem to have understood that concept instinctively. By forcing Jewish leaders to involve themselves in decisions about the fate of people in the ghettos they both lightened their own sense of responsibility and increased the suffering within the Jewish community. Powerless as they were, the Jewish Councils had painfully few options. In a lose-lose situation where the options were destruction or destruction – death or death – there could be few, if any, right decisions. It should not be surprising that Jewish leaders based their strategies on the only two hopes available to them: that the Germans would be defeated sooner rather than later, and that somehow at least some Jews could be kept alive until that day." ~ Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 154

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## A Jewish Council Member recalls:

Source: *World at War, The Final Solution, Part 2* (1973-1974)

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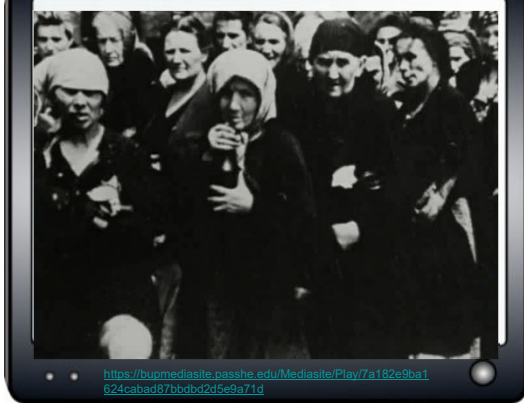
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Jewish Council Employee



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## Context: political structures imposed



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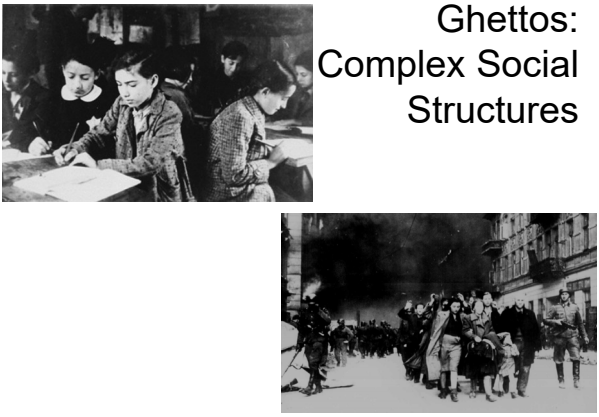
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### Ghettos: Complex Social Structures



The top photograph shows a group of children sitting at desks in a classroom, focused on their work. The bottom photograph shows a group of people, including children, walking down a street in a ghetto, with some carrying bundles on their heads.

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### Assessing behavior against an unreasonable standard



The left image is a black and white photograph of a crowded street in a ghetto, with many people and a sense of confinement. The right image is a sketch of a similar street scene, showing the layout of buildings and the movement of people.

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### Warsaw Ghetto



The map on the left shows the layout of the Warsaw Ghetto, with a legend indicating the ghetto boundary before deportations of 1942, the remnant ghetto in 1943, Umschlagplatz, and German machine gun and artillery positions. The top right photograph shows a street scene with rubble and people. The bottom right photograph shows a street scene with people and a cart.

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Adam Czerniakow  
(1880-1942), Warsaw



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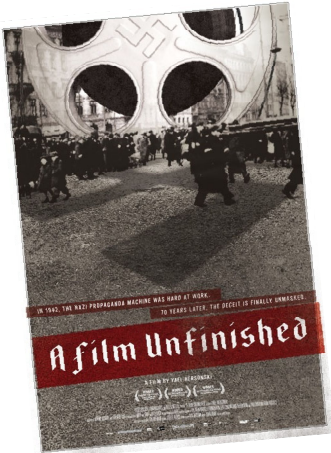
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## A Film Unfinished



Director and Writer:  
Yael Hersonski  
*Shtikat Haarchion* (original title,  
2010, Israel)

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### Moving into the Warsaw Ghetto



<https://bupmediasite.passhe.edu/Mediasite/Play/15068f655288476ba338eb6edb6d4bec1d>

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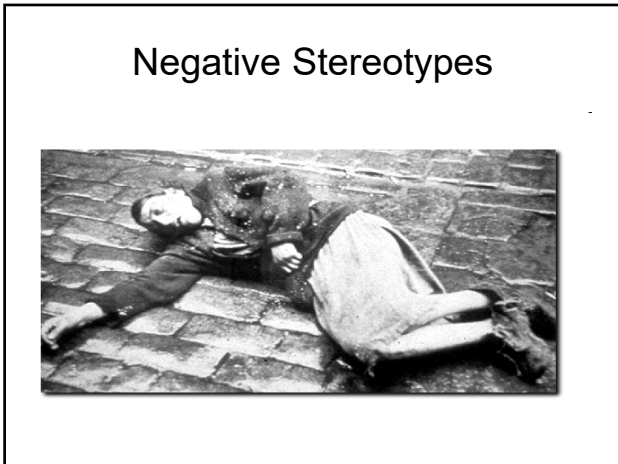
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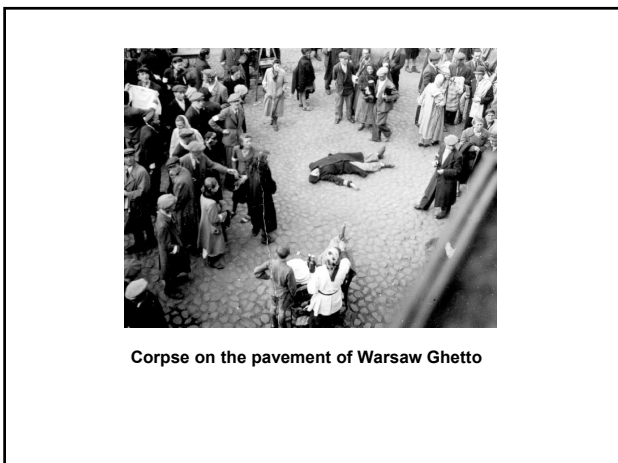
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**Warsaw Ghetto**

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**Children begging, Warsaw Ghetto**

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**Lodz Ghetto**

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Kolomya Ghetto inhabitant: "Each person had become an island. There no longer existed any compassion nor even self-respect. Even just sharing a crust of bread with someone was an enormous sacrifice."



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Lodz survivor: "morality, in those days, was worth less than a daily ration of bread."



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Medical doctor in Warsaw: "The most repulsive aspects of the Diaspora are bared in broad daylight and in concentrated form in the Ghetto."



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Rabbi in Warsaw in 1942: "You, Jews of Warsaw, have no pity for little children, naked in the streets, entering stores to beg for crumbs only to be cruelly chased out."



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