

Very Select Examples of Responses

Compliance/Non-Compliance of the Jewish Councils

Warsaw Ghetto
Adam Czerniakow
Suicided rather than list names or facilitate deportations to the East; he may have realized that the Jews would be sent to Treblinka and killed.



Lodz Ghetto
Chaim Rumkowski
Attempted to convince the Nazis not to deport ghetto inhabitants on the argument that they were productive; he also "urged ghetto residents to report for deportation."



Lvov Ghetto
Joseph Parnes refused to list names of Jews for deportation to Janowska forced-labor camp. He was killed for refusing.



Compliance/Non-Compliance of the Jewish Councils

Vilna Ghetto
Jacob Gens, Chair of Jewish Council, "decided to hand over underground leader Yitzhak Wittenberg, claiming that if the council did not turn Wittenberg in the Nazis would liquidate the ghetto."



Kovno Ghetto
Elchanan Elkes supported the underground movement but discouraged them from taking up arms; instead he encouraged them to escape.



Sosnowiec Ghetto
Moshe Merin "denounced the underground, believing that armed resistance would doom the entire ghetto."



Source for Details and Quotations:
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/es/article.php?ModuleId=10005265>

Medical and Social Welfare Aid

Preparing to pass out clothing for the needy from the main warehouse of the ZSS at 13 Leszno St. Yad Vashem Photo Archives FA 32/1725 (photo taken in Spring 1940)



Maternity ward of the TOZ organization at 35 Twarda St. Yad Vashem Photo Archives FA 32/1769 (photo taken in Spring 1940)



Hiding

Anne and her family went into hiding on 6 July 1942, when they received word that her older sister Margot was to report for labor. Four other Jews joined them in the attic. On 4 August 1944, they were arrested; eventually Anne died of typhus in March 1945 in Bergen-Belsen




Hiding



Unidentified photo of a Jewish man emerging from a hideout within the Warsaw Ghetto submitted by Jürgen Stroop to Heinrich Himmler after the suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, April-May 1943. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Stroop_Report_-_Warsaw_Ghetto_Uprising_-_26559.jpg

"Passing" as Aryan

Lena Kichler-Zilberman
In a 1946 interview at a displaced persons camp, she told her story.



By 1942, Lena K. was living in Warsaw under false Aryan papers when she was arrested by the "Gestapo." She escaped from them, and left for the countryside to serve as a "governess for children in the country rather far from Warsaw." Lena expressed remorse that she lied to her employer about not being Jewish, but she "wanted to go on living." When asked about how difficult it was to pass as an Aryan, she stated, "The people kept on observing me all the time. I had to be so watchful of everything – of my Polish language so that expressions used by Jews should not appear. ... And ... at every turn I had to wear a "mask," all day and all night. And in addition to all that the people were not sure. I did not quite resemble a Polish woman, but neither did I resemble a Jewess. They always had a very bad opinion of Jews, ... Actually I was the best worker they had. That saved me. "As for religion, I did not want to go to church. During all that time I never once went to church. In a village if one does not go to church, it is always said that he certainly is an atheist. I said I was irreligious. ..." (Source: *Words to Outlive Us*, pp. 152-153) Her falsified Aryan papers were obtained from someone in the Warsaw ghetto. Most likely the underground but that is not clear.

"Passing" as Aryan

Halina Peabody was living with her mother and sister under false Aryan papers and pretended to be Catholic; at some point, they ended up in Jaroslaw, Poland. They entered a café, to avoid appearing as "stragglers" on the street and apparently her mother started asking the patrons if they knew anyone who took in lodgers. Someone said yes, and this is where the excerpt resumes:



"... this nice old lady who was a washer woman with four strapping sons who were not happy to see us at all, but she said...she was a very good woman. I would say she was a real good Catholic. She saw a mother with two children, worn out and just really completely at the end of their tether. She said she was going to take us in. She took us in and what we got was a bed, that's what you had. I mean you didn't get apartments or rooms, you just got a bed. And that was sufficient, but we were in. [Her mother started working as a housekeeper to pay for her lodging.] We did not speak Yiddish, our accents were pure Polish because my mother went to Polish school, so that was to our advantage. In the meantime, I was going to school with the Polish kids for two hours a day. One hour was religion and one hour was general studies. Of course I was far ahead because I could read and write which was very helpful. I learned the Catechism from A to Z, if anybody's Catholic they know what that means. So, the priest liked me very much, they of course didn't know who I was, but I did very well with him and he was a very nice priest."

[When asked if any of the wash woman's sons was suspicious, Halina responded:] "Yes one of them was very suspicious and he also worked for the Germans and he used to come home and talk about pulling gold teeth out of Jewish dead and things like that for us to hear. But he was suspicious, but [the washer woman] wasn't going to listen."

Source: USHMM First Person Podcast Series
<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/publicprograms/programs/firstperson/podcast/detail.php?EventId=CEB1DB27-AC8A-404F-9BAE-842DE401F9FE>

Recording Events

Oneg Ha-Shabbat Collective



Recording Events

The yearbook, titled in Yiddish "Slobodka Ghetto 1942," preserves an almost daily record of that year's events. The yearbook begins with a miniature series of maps showing the reductions of the living space of the ghetto. Explanations in Yiddish detail the new boundaries and offer the number of people who were killed in organized actions, as the Germans continued their quest to reduce the size of the ghetto.



Jacob Lifschitz (1903-1945), untitled scene of the Kovno ghetto (watercolor, 8 1/8 x 12 1/4 in., 1943) Credit: Pepa Sharon

From the Last Letter of Jacob Lifschitz, July 6, 1944 "... The experience of the ghetto has forever broken us. I paint a ttle, I draw what you find here, [but] I have yet to overcome, as I write these words. I have not written anything until today, because I wanted to convey my thoughts in creativity and painting in the pictorial arts...."



Smuggling

"Jewish smugglers on top of the wall surrounding the Warsaw ghetto, 1941. Jakub Wierzbicki (third from left) and the others were photographed by a Jew whom the Germans had granted a permit to have a camera in the ghetto to photograph corpses in the cemetery. Only his first name, Edek, is known. His photographs were smuggled out and hidden by a non-Jewish Pole, Jan Kostanski, who also rescued several Jews during the war. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Jan Kostanski)" Source: http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Ghetos/Life_in_Ghetos#id0et6ae



Ghetto Wall

Children Smuggling



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Underground

Sites of underground and resistance activities in Kovno and Lithuania (inset). Credit: USHMM



THE UNDERGROUND

Underground

"Ten Commandments" from the Chronicles of the Irgun Brit Zion, Kovno Ghetto.

"The Irgun Brit Zion (Organization of the Covenant of Zion) was an underground Zionist youth movement in the ghetto. It pursued Hebrew cultural activities and published the underground newspaper "The Flame." Some of its members joined Soviet partisan bases in 1943 and 1944.

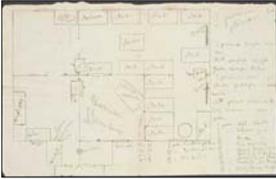
"The "Ten Commandments" of the Irgun Brit Zion unit state that the member:

1. Believes in and will fight to the end to achieve a Hebrew state for the people of Israel.
2. Devotes himself in the ghetto to preparing youth in the war for a homeland.
3. Speaks Hebrew and spreads its usage to the Jewish masses.
4. Fights all despair, believing in the eternal existence of the Jewish people.
5. Keeps the unit's secrets, even under the most trying circumstances.
6. Finds his family in the group, loving and caring for his comrades.
7. Always obeys orders from his leaders and commanders, without hesitation.
8. Is a man of order; he loves work.
9. Is a man of truth and kindness toward all men; He is pure in deeds and words.
10. Always remembers the spilled blood of his brethren and will revenge this blood.

Source: <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/kovno/under/under.htm#>

Underground

"The Anti-Fascist Organization [in the Kovno Ghetto], plan to attack the German Ghetto Guard included this diagram of the guardhouse cellar. The plan was never implemented. Credit: Lithuanian Central State Archives "



"The Anti-Fascist Organization's tactics guide to "encounter actions." Credit: Lithuanian Central State Archives [translation]

"In an encounter action the leader is required to show boldness, initiative, and determination; to easily comprehend the existing situation; to begin to appropriate operations; and to take the initiative....

"The chief goal of an encounter action must be: To break the enemy into pieces and to hit the pieces separately.

"In an encounter action you will surely find opportunities to fight the enemy with technology that the enemy has lost or left behind in the attack. And we know not to be afraid of tanks, but to make the effort to blow up the infantry division that goes behind the tank and the tank itself."

Sabotage

Natan Zelichower, Warsaw Ghetto Inhabitant, recalls committing sabotage taken from *Words to Outlive Us*.

He was a "Raumkommando worker," Jews who had to empty buildings of Jewish property left after the ghetto clearing in January 1943.

"While one of [my workmates] kept an eye on the German *Vorarbeiter*, or foreman, the rest would look for whatever valuables we could stash away for ourselves. We would toss furniture out into the courtyard and so render it useless. We broke down doors, smashed mirrors, gouged polished surfaces, tore curtains into tatters, spilled ink onto carpets, and let lamps slip from our hands so they would break into tiny pieces. Of course such sabotage was an open invitation for a bullet to the head, but we felt emboldened by our first success and pursued our actions even further." (p. 223)

Sabotage

"Ludmilla Page was born to an assimilated Jewish family in Kishinev, Romania. She and her mother, a physician, were living in Poland when the Germans invaded on September 1, 1939. They were taken to Krakow. Ludmilla was forced to live in the Krakow ghetto; her mother was sent to the Warsaw ghetto. Ludmilla worked in a factory at the Plaszow labor camp for a businessman who was a friend of the German industrialist Oskar Schindler. In October 1944, Schindler attempted to save some Jewish workers by relocating them to a munitions factory in Bruennlitz, in the Sudetenland. Ludmilla was among those on Schindler's list to be relocated. She and about 300 other women were detained briefly in Auschwitz before reaching Bruennlitz. There, some of the workers sought to sabotage the production of munitions. Ludmilla was liberated in early May 1945. This excerpt discusses the sabotage

"Well, we, there was no safety under German occupation. There was no safety because these people had, they were torturers, murderers, there was no, no logic in it, no reason in it, this was just pure hatred and pure murder all the time. But Schindler assumed that if his workers were work for the war effort, and he changed it, in Bruennlitz, he changed his production to a production of shells, from enamelware. Because he had to prove really, because they, arrested him twice because they didn't think that he was working for the air, war effort, and so on. So we were doing, making shells, and we were supposed to polish these shells. But all the production was faulty because we on purpose were sabotaging this, you know, they were never as they ought to be. You know, always was something flawed, flawed in those shells during our months in Bruennlitz. And this is how he could save us, proving that his factory was indispensable for the war effort."

By the way, some scholars have come to question the accuracy of whether or not sabotage was actually committed simply because they do not believe it sounds plausible.

Source: http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_oi.php?ModuleId=10005787&MediaId=3185

Partisans




Source: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/source/Holocaust/resistmap.html>

This account was written by Joseph Harmatz, a resident of Vilna who became commander of a partisan company in the forests of Rudniki in Lithuania.

"Life as a partisan in the woods posed two separate challenges. One challenge lay in carrying out attacks on the Germans, wherever they were - on their bases, at various guard posts, in transit, and more. The other challenge, which was just as difficult, was in regularly providing our soldiers with the necessary supplies. This involved sending soldiers to rural areas to get food. It was a dangerous yet unavoidable mission, and as time went by it became more and more difficult. ...

"The attacks on the Germans included blowing up trains, telegraph lines, railroad tracks, or burning bridges - anything that would damage the Nazis war capabilities. These activities were usually carried out at night. These military operations were well-planned and could always be modified, postponed or even canceled. On the other hand, going into a nearby village to get food was a different story. We came like bandits - we would take food away from farmers and disturb their peace. In the beginning it was one sack of flour, and then a pig or a cow or a horse, and that was not difficult to obtain. But soon enough, we needed another bag of wheat, and another cow or horse. Additionally, the population in the woods kept growing, as more and more people escaped the ghettos to the forest. Russian prisoners of war who had fled their German captors also asked to join the partisans, because they were considered traitors in the eyes of the Soviet authorities, since the did had not given their lives in the line of duty. The escaped prisoners believed that if they rejoined the battle against the Nazis they would be forgiven for falling into the hands of the enemy.

"As a result of these "invasions" from the forests, the nearby villages began to run out of food. The villagers whom the partisans tried to befriend became their enemies. We tried to explain our needs and not to take too much from their reserves and crops, but we needed too much.

"What began taking one cow but thus turned into taking all the cows and only leaving one. We would arrive at the village and load carts pulled by horses (which we had also taken from them). In order not to rob them of all their horses and cattle, we would sometimes take just the farmer with us to help us with the supplies and then they could go back home.

"In the end we suffered more casualties from the supply operations than the operations against the Germans. The armed missions took place only at night, while the supply missions lasted several hours and were only completed in daylight. Leading several carts loaded with supplies - moving slowly through muddy paths up to the base would take a long time.

"Some villagers who saw the convoys on the way would quickly inform the Germans, who, of course, set up ambushes along their path. After we completed a military mission, we could wait patiently for the appropriate time to strike again. But we needed food every day. Most of us came from urban areas, so we were new to life in the outdoors. Thus, the need to obtain and prepare our food regularly in conditions that grew more and more difficult, or even eating without proper utensils was not an easy task."

Partisans

Source: Jewish Resistance in the Holocaust, <http://c3.ort.org/>



- United Partisan Organization (FPO)
- Yitzhak Witenberg
- Soviet Paratroopers
- Polish Home Army (AK)
- 1 September 1943

Armed Resistance
Viina Ghetto



Yitzhak Witenberg



Abba Kovner



Gate into Vilna Ghetto

- Jewish Fighting Organization (ZOB)
- January 1943
- 19 April-15 May 1943

Armed Resistance
Warsaw Ghetto



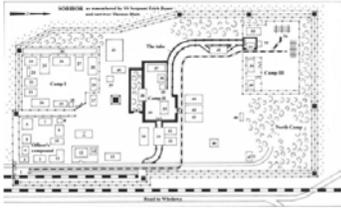

- 2 August 1943
- Dr. Ilya Horonitzki
- Marceli Galewski

Armed Resistance
Treblinka



- Alexander (Sasha) Pechorsky
- 14 October 1943

Armed Resistance
Sobibor



Two questions to ponder:

1. So what are the three most important ideas that you must contemplate about Jewish responses, specifically resistance, as you read primary and secondary sources?
2. Given your definition of resistance, to what extent, if any, did Jews resist?