

## **Quotations for Lecture about History of the Ghettos and Remembering the Holocaust**

**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." (p. 330)

### **Statements by contemporaries:**

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."

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

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

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."

### **Historical Assessments:**

Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, p. 117: "lose-lose situation"

### **Lawrence Langer commenting upon his analysis of Holocaust testimony:**

The "**selfish** act ignores the needs of others through choice when the agent is in a position to help without injuring one's self in any appreciable way. Selfishness is motivated by greed, indifference, malice, and many other value-laden categories. The former victim who describes **self-ish** acts is vividly aware of the needs of others but because of the nature of the situation is unable to choose freely the generous impulse that a compassionate nature yearns to express." (*Holocaust Testimonies*, 124)