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Perceptions of daily life in diaries from the Warsaw and Łódź ghettos

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Perceptions of Daily Life in Diaries from the Warsaw and Łódź Ghettos

Karen Elizabeth Porter

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2022

Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

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2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the intersection of daily life, diaries, and the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Poland by analysing diaries and accounts written by Jewish individuals in the Warsaw and Łódź ghettos. These authors wrote their accounts outside of any archival group (such as Oneg Shabbat), allowing the study to glean individual perspectives, created without organisational direction. It combines lengthy and reflective diaries with fragments of diaries to provide an in-depth overview of how Jewish individuals perceived their own situation during the Holocaust. The diaries offer a unique insight into how societies respond not only under the mass death of genocide, but how they attempt to live under this threat. The thesis analyses common themes in the diaries, such as food and family networks and combines them with conceptual issues such as time and place which were also disrupted and threatened by the Nazis. It also analyses the responses of the diarists to their oppressors. The diarists' responses to these facets of life informed their view of their situation and, significantly, how likely they perceived their own survival. It shows how every aspect of life was altered as much as possible in order to survive until forces beyond their control (predominantly disease, deportation, or death) destroyed this.

Overall, the thesis provides nuance in our understanding of daily life inside the two largest and longest lasting ghettos and expands our knowledge of ordinary people who were subject to all manner of injustice, violence, and suffering. It does not laud them as heroes for existing in ghettos but concludes that the attempt to live in such conditions is a quotidian form of heroism.

Furthermore, it suggests that there is potential for employing this diarist-led approach to other ghettos in order to expand our understanding of other ghettos in Nazi-occupied Europe. Shorter, fragmentary texts can be unified with longer texts through the notion of daily life in order to draw conclusions on similarities and differences within different settings of Nazi violence and persecution.

Table of Contents

Introduction *1*

Diaries and the Holocaust **3**

Defining Holocaust Diaries **7**

Scholarship on the Holocaust and the Ghettos **11**

Scholarship on the Holocaust in Poland **15**

Warsaw and Łódź **17**

Daily Life, Microhistory and Emotions **18**

Chapter Structure **21**

Chapter One: Diaries and Daily Life in the Warsaw and Łódź Ghettos *23*

The Diaries and the Diarists **23**

The language of the diaries **29**

When they wrote **34**

How they wrote **35**

Oneg Shabbat **38**

Archive Department and the Encyclopedia of the Łódź Ghetto **40**

Why they wrote **42**

Describing the Indescribable **50**

Chapter Two: Food *53*

Policy **57**

Distribution 57

Receiving Rations 61

Bread 65

Relief for the Poor 69

Warsaw Ghetto Starvation Study 71

Smuggling **74**

Culture **77**

Consumption 77

Inequality and Luxury 83

Taste and Perceptions of Edibility 87

Food in Judaism 91

Passover 92

Daily Religion 95

Food and the Future **97**

Conclusion **101**

Chapter Three: Families *103*

Motherhood in the Ghettos **107**

Sacrificial Motherhood **109**

Mothers with Agency **112**

Fatherhood in the Ghettos **115**

Fatherly Duties **116**

Childhood in the Ghettos **124**

Role Reversals/Shifts **130**

Extended Families and Networks **136**

New Families **138**

Conclusion **145**

Chapter Four: Time ***147***

Present **150**

Work **151**

Sleep **154**

The Sabbath, Other Holidays, and Birthdays **157**

Passive Time **162**

Leisure **165**

Weather and Seasons **168**

The Past and the Future **171**

History **173**

Future **176**

Deportations 179

Conclusion **184**

Chapter Five: Place and Space ***186***

Lebensraum **188**

Creating Ghetto Districts **189**

The Walls (and beyond) **191**

Germanisation of Spaces **195**

Workshops **198**

The *Umschlagplatz* and Deportation **200**

Jewish Space: Resisting Germanization **202**

Living Spaces 202

Nature and Nightclubs 204

Conclusion **206**

Chapter Six: Perpetrators and Persecutors ***207***

Perpetrators **209**

Adolf Hitler **209**

Nazis **212**

Adapting to German Behaviour 215
Beasts and Devils 216
Revenge 218

Germans 220

Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian Guards 222

Persecutors 223
Czerniaków, Rumkowski, and the *Judenrat* 224

Jewish Order Service 230

Conclusion 238

Conclusion 240

Bibliography 251

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Abbreviations

CŻKH	*Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna* (Central Jewish Historical Commission).
EHRI	European Holocaust Research Infrastructure.
GFHA	Ghetto Fighters House Archives, Israel.
IWM	Imperial War Museum, UK.
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC.
YVA	Yad Vashem Archives, Israel.
ŻIH	*Żydowski Instytut Historyczny* (Jewish Historical Institute), Warsaw.
ŻOB	*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa* (Jewish Fighting Organisation).

Introduction

In January 1943 Emanuel Ringelblum, founder of the *Oneg Shabbat* underground archive, observed that: 'during the present war everyone has been writing something, particularly diaries.'[1] It is widely believed that many of the diaries written in the ghettos did not survive, a view augmented by Ringelblum himself who added: 'most of these diaries were destroyed during the Deportation or because their writers were dragged off to the *Umschlagplatz* and the writings they left behind were destroyed along with the rest of their property.'[2] The ruins of the Warsaw ghetto, evocatively and horrifyingly depicted in the Stroop Report, emphasise the reality that most of the materials, possessions, and even buildings of the former ghetto did not survive the war. The Łódź ghetto, though less damaged, also suffered deprivation and destruction as a result of the occupation. In an environment determined to negate the existence of the Jewish people, the survival of their notebooks and pages of writing is nothing short of miraculous. The existence of these texts is essential to our understanding of life in the Nazi ghettos of occupied Poland. Discussing diaries written during the Holocaust (with particular focus on Zalmen Grabowski's, buried near the crematoria in Birkenau), Christopher Bigsby observed that the 'memories were preserved against a tomorrow in which they should have ceased to believe. Grabowski's diary was later discovered. The justice was long delayed and deeply imperfect.'[3] The use and treatment of diaries such as Grabowski's have affected understanding of life under Nazi occupation as told by those who experienced it.

This thesis explores perceptions of daily life in twenty diaries and accounts written in the Warsaw and Łódź ghettos during the Second World War. It sits at the intersection of diaries and daily life in the Holocaust and combines relatively well-known and published diaries with shorter, unpublished, or lesser-known diaries. Everyday experiences in the Holocaust are essential in understanding how Jewish people lived in the ghettos, and they provide an

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[1] Emanuel Ringelblum, 'Oyneg Shabes' in David G. Roskies (ed.) *Voices from the Warsaw Ghetto: Writing Our History* (New Haven and London, 2019: Yale University Press), p. 58.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Christopher Bigsby, *Remembering and Imagining the Holocaust: The Chain of Memory* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 9.

insight into the multitude of components which affected their experience, outlook, and decision-making processes. The daily experience with war, oppression, and genocide pales into comparison with the death that Jews suffered during the Holocaust. However, the millions who died should not be viewed solely through their death, they lived within Nazi ghettos – eating and obtaining food, being with family, working - to the best of their ability operating as a functioning society. The parameters which hindered and prevented this were set by the Nazi authorities, but it is inappropriate to dismiss their everyday experiences. Diaries occupy a space wholly within daily life – events of the day, week, or even year are considered and committed to paper. Exceptional work on Holocaust diaries has been produced by historians and scholars such as David Patterson and Amos Goldberg (this will be explored further below). They, however, predominantly focus on literary diaries written by (highly) educated individuals who produced longer diaries, filled with reflections on their situation. This thesis utilises short and fragmentary diaries alongside literary, contemplative diaries, challenging the notion that experiences of the Holocaust are most valuable or usable when portrayed in an erudite form and demonstrating that daily life is conspicuous even in such fragmentary writings.

The thesis reassesses and reorganises information from the diaries in order to present new conclusions and draws on new and existing fields of research such as time, space, family and food, as well as reassessing the perpetrators through the eyes of the victims. The overlay of daily life and diaries creates a nuanced view of life in the ghettos, especially by showing the attempt to live across the entire ghetto period. The inclusion of diaries and accounts written in hiding take into account a later end period than most ghetto studies do, ending with liberation or the war itself, rather than the ghetto period which was, especially in Warsaw, much earlier than liberation. It predominantly focuses on those in the ghetto and how they lived (or attempted to live) their lives. The diaries provide an insight into the ghetto population as a whole when analysing shared themes such as those raised in this thesis. The perpetrators are predominantly approached through the lens of the diarists' themselves, and thus this thesis helps redress the imbalance of perpetrator studies within Holocaust historiography. It offers insights from diarists across the spectrum of the ghetto population (with notable exceptions which will be detailed below) and allows their writings

to provide resulting common themes, pertinent to the authors, which represent their daily lives. This unique perspective is a product of those themes, assembled through a diarist-led approach, which highlights how individual and collective roles (within the family and wider society) changed under ghetto conditions. In the ghetto change, however, was constant and thus roles and responsibilities shifted with fluidity. The mundane or necessary aspects of lives which are rarely considered in peacetime – food, work, weather, sleep, the spaces we occupy, who we occupy them with – take on great significance in war and, especially in forced communities in war. The diarists do not always explicitly approach these pertinent topics, but their writing encompasses them nonetheless, and this thesis heeds their substantial offering. This introduction offers an overview of diaries, both generally and in the Holocaust context, and it situates the thesis at the intersection of historiography on diaries, the Holocaust, and everyday life.

Diaries and the Holocaust

The imperfect nature of discovery and publication of Holocaust diaries Bigsby describes is evident in the treatment of diaries within scholarly research, at times being 'viewed as an artless, amateur form which is neither literary nor historical.'[4] This thesis, along with other recent studies of Holocaust diaries, reconfigures this position, situating diaries as valuable literary *and* historical texts, in a blended approach which elicits far more than historical information from the diaries. This will include a definition of diaries as used in the thesis and a literature review of works on diaries, both in a traditional, generic context and as a Holocaust-specific text.

Diaries are usually a text written by one author regarding their own life as events occurred, often structured with daily entries. They may be written with future publication in mind or purely as a private document for the author. Diaries are easily recognisable through famous published historic diaries such as those of Samuel Pepys, Winston Churchill, or Anne Frank. However, the seemingly simple task of defining a diary is complicated by its flexibility as a text, an 'adaptability' which, when analysed effectively, can 'enhance its uses in our lives

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[4] Sue Vice, *Children Writing the Holocaust* (Hampshire, UK and New York, USA, 2004), p. 118.

and academic disciplines.'[5] William H. Gass argues that those who write with an 'eye on history' fundamentally alter the diary from an 'emotionally naked' text to one in which the author 'may begin to plant redemptive items, rearrange pages, slant stories, plot small revenges, revise, lie, and look good.'[6] Here Glass summarises a key concept of diaries which separates them from other literary texts; unless an author has specified an intention to publish then it is often impossible to determine whether there was originally an intended audience besides the author, even if it is later published. Paweł Rodak notes that the practice of rewriting diaries or diary entries was an almost exclusively twentieth century practice in Poland, usually linked to the author's desire for publication.[7]

Within the European and Polish diary traditions, Rodak notes that increasing availability of paper and the advent printing led to and increased the prevalence of diary writing in Europe from the fourteenth century onwards.[8] Rodak notes that by the nineteenth to early twentieth century diaries written by writers as literary texts were the 'exception'.[9] An increase in diary writing among the masses occurred at this time and as a genre dubbed 'a medium of crisis' the increase in popularity can be attributed to the tumultuous years of the early twentieth century in Europe, especially the First World War and interwar years.[10] From the nineteenth century onwards, Poland saw the rise of diaries penned by non-writers, a practice which, Rodak notes, increased into the twentieth century as 'peasants, workers and emigrants [from Poland]' began to write diaries.[11] This expansion of the diary writing into the wider population (hastened by increasing levels of literacy across Europe) meant that it was a familiar practice by the outbreak of the Second World War and, in turn, was taken up by individuals from all segments of the ghetto population.

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[5] Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff, 'Introduction', in Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff (eds.), *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries* (Massachusetts, 1996), p.1

[6] Quoted in Lynn Z. Bloom, '"I write for Myself and Strangers": Private Diaries as Public Documents' in Bunkers and Huff, *Inscribing the Daily*, p. 23.

[7] Paweł Rodak, *Miedzy zapisem a literaturą: Dziennik polskiego pisarza w XX wieku (Żeromski, Nałkowska, Dąbrowska, Gombrowicz, Herling-Grudzinski)*, (Warsaw, 2011), p 82.

[8] Ibid, p. 59.

[9] Ibid, p 82.

[10] Sabine Kalff and Ulriche Vedder, Tagebuch und Diaristik Seit 1900: Einleitung', *Zeitschrift für Germanistik*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2016), p239.

[11] Rodak, *Miedzy zapisem a literaturą*, p 96.

Another significant feature of diaries is their personal, unobjective nature. Harriet Blodgett defines diaries as 'literature subjectively interpreting life.'[12] The diary's uniqueness as a genre lies at the intersection of this subjectivity and its real-time proximity to events, separating it from the closely related genre of autobiography, which is written retrospectively, thus allowing the author an opportunity to highlight salient events based on hindsight. Diarists of the Second World War were 'both makers and observers of their historical moment' but also 'lacked hindsight and scholarly detachment.'[13] Alexis Peri noted this of diarists in besieged Leningrad between 1941 and 1944, though it is equally true of diarists in Nazi ghettos. The severity of their experience was clear to the diarists encircled by the enemy.

The trope of heroism in the act of writing diaries is rooted in the focus on armed resistance from the 1950s, which morphed into the viewing of 'cultural activities' as 'an assertion of Jewish viability and spiritual resistance.'[14] Alexandra Garbarini aptly summarises that from the late 1960s:

> 'Historians no longer merely opposed the figure of the heroic fighter to that of the cowering victim. Instead, scholars of this bent maintained that the prior conception of the overwhelming majority of Jews as having faced their murderers by going "like sheep to the slaughter" was grossly inaccurate. They were eager to show that the Jewish masses were not passive but resisted their oppressors by whatever means were available to them. Along with partisans, therefore, "ghetto scribes" have gained posthumous recognition as figures of resistance who attempted to subvert the Nazis with writing instruments as their weapons. The broadening of the category of resistance has since become the prevailing interpretation of Jewish cultural production during the Shoah. This historiographical development has followed on the heels of changes from within and outside the field of Holocaust history.'[15]

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[12] Harriet Blodgett, *Centuries of Female Days: Englishwomen's Private Diaries* (New Jersey, 1967), p. 5.
[13] Alexis Peri, *The War Within: Diaries from the Siege of Leningrad* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2017), p. 208.
[14] Alexandra Garbarini, *Numbered Days: Diaries and the Holocaust* (New Haven and London, 2006), p. 7.
[15] Ibid, pp. 7-8.

Though valid concerns were raised about diaries and the Holocaust, their use in scholarship has increased since the early twenty-first century, partly due to better access to diaries formerly behind the Iron Curtain. Scholars have begun to focus on them as a key source of the Holocaust, helping redress the imbalance of perpetrator-centric research and add nuance to Raul Hilberg's trichotomy which categorises all those involved in the Holocaust as a 'perpetrator,' a 'victim,' or a 'bystander'[16] (this will be explored further below). Thus, Garbarini uses diaries written in all manner of contexts (hiding, ghettos, camps) from France to Poland to exhibit the role of the diary as a tool for expressing similar tropes and experiences. It also places diarists within a distinctly human context, rather than viewing them as heroic resisters through the act of penning a diary.

Rachel Feldhay Brenner exemplified the merits of diary study in *The Ethics of Witnessing: The Holocaust in Polish Writers' Diaries from Warsaw, 1939-1945* (2014), though her work affirmed the reliance on the writing of literary authors, in this case four professional writers.[17] Amos Goldberg's 2017 study highlights the depth of trauma and identity revealed in autobiographical Jewish writing from the Holocaust. This study aims to tie Goldberg's more in-depth study of diaries within the realms of their perception of their historical reality. He criticises the early failure of European and American historians in presenting the Jewish victims of the Holocaust as individuals and overlooking Jewish resistance of Nazi rule by being 'vibrant and active Jewish societies that made every effort, as circumstances allowed, not to lose their dignity and not to yield, engaging in all forms of resistance – civil, cultural, religious, and in some cases, even armed.'[18] His study focuses on perceptions of the self, and the attack this underwent in the ghettos and, in doing so, predominately utilises literary, contemplative texts.

[16] Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945* (London, 1993), p. ix.
[17] Rachel Feldhay Brenner, *The Ethics of Witnessing: The Holocaust in Polish Writers' Diaries from Warsaw, 1939-1945* (Evanston, IL, 2014).
[18] Amos Goldberg, *Trauma in First Person: Diary Writing During the Holocaust* (Indiana, 2017), p. 60.

Through the lens of trauma and disbelief the diarists can be unified from across the Nazi-occupied European continent, as Alexandra Garbarini, Amos Goldberg, David Patterson, and Fiona Kaufman have shown. The diaries used within the present study are analysed through the lens of daily life and are united by place, as it aims to assess their response to shared experiences within a specific context. This use of microhistory will offer a deeper insight into accounts written within a similar context. Most recently, Amy Simon's 2015 doctoral thesis expanded knowledge of victims' perceptions of the perpetrator in Yiddish diaries from the Warsaw, Łódź, and Vilna ghettos.[19] This comparative microstudy of the three largest ghettos emphasised the importance of analysing not only victim-created texts for their view of themselves, but for their view of the perpetrators. Simon's work provided vital insights into how threat affected decision-making during the ghetto period and how much scope remains for uncovering new insights into the Holocaust by placing the victims at the centre of studies. Through a diary-focused microhistory, this thesis will add to the growing corpus of research on the Jewish victims of the Holocaust; highlighting the nuance which exists within this oversimplified term. It will offer insights into daily life in the ghettos which are only available through the diarist-led approach adopted here. The writings of twenty diarists who were not members of any archival or historical group were created without any guarantee of their text's survival or historical direction. Their diaries contribute to our understanding of pertinent aspects of daily life which were broached by the authors themselves, without external influence or direction.

Defining Holocaust Diaries

The quintessential Holocaust diary of German-Jewish teenager Anne Frank was saved by one of her helpers, Miep Gies, after the families were discovered and arrested in August 1944.[20] The published diary is known throughout the world and has been translated into more than seventy languages since it first appeared in the original Dutch in 1947.[21] Alexandra Zapruder has convincingly argued that Anne's story has become a 'symbol,

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[19] Amy Simon, '"Surrounded by the hunter on all sides": Jewish Perceptions of the Perpetrators in Nazi Ghettos', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Indiana, 2015).

[20] Anne Frank House, 'The Publication of the Diary': https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/diary/publication-diary/ [last accessed 24.5.22].

[21] Anne Frank House, 'The Diary': https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/diary/ [last accessed 24.5.22].

capable by its intimacy of rescuing the girl; by the resonance of her voice, rescuing her generation; and, by seemingly dominant theme of hope for humanity, rescuing all of us in the process.'[22] Though Anne's diary piqued an interest in the Holocaust for many who were unfamiliar with the subject, Zapruder warns against applying this hopeful, redemptive framework to all children's Holocaust diaries and expecting that, like Anne, they continue, 'in spite of everything' to 'believe that people are really good at heart.'[23] Even this uplifting last entry of Anne's must be read with caution in any hopeful interpretation of the diary, as Fiona Kaufman notes 'one must always keep in mind that this diary was written in hiding in Amsterdam and not in the barracks of Bergen Belsen where she died.'[24] Thus even for Anne, who edited her diaries in the hopes of publishing them after the war, we cannot state with any certainty that her opinion remained the same during her experiences in the camp.[25] Her diary only informs us of her perceptions of the time until the date of her last entry on 1st August 1944, three days before the Franks, the van Pels and Fritz Pfeffer, were arrested by the Gestapo. This showcases a point which equally applies to all Holocaust diaries; that the text cannot replace what is lost; the society about which it was written, or even the individual author who penned it. The Holocaust diary, regardless of how factual, verifiable, or descriptive, cannot be 'the voice of six million vanished souls' as the *New York Times'* reviewer of Frank's *Diary*, Meyer Lewin claimed.[26] With diaries, there exists an altogether more troubling reality: the survival of a diary is not tantamount to the survival of the author. Furthermore, diaries from the ghettos within Nazi-occupied Poland are often devoid of the 'hope for humanity' message which Anne's has come to embody. Though comparisons of suffering are unhelpful here, it must be noted that Jewish victims in Poland were closer in proximity to the sites of genocide and were thus better informed on the unfolding genocide

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[22] Alexandra Zapruder, *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust* (New Haven and London, 2002), p. 7.

[23] Christopher Martin (ed.), *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Essex, 1988), p. 219.

[24] Fiona Kaufman, 'By Chance I Found a Pencil: The Holocaust Diary Narratives of Testimony, Defiance, Solace and Struggle', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Melbourne, 2010), p. 55.

[25] Anne Frank House, 'The Publication of the Diary': https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/diary/publication-diary/ [last accessed 24.5.22].

[26] Meyer Levin, 'Life in the Secret Annex', *New York Times*, 15 June 1952: https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/97/10/26/reviews/frank-levin.html?_r=1 [last accessed 24.5.22].

than their counterparts in Western Europe.[27] The Nazi treatment of Polish Jews from the invasion was also openly violent and abusive, thus the diarists had a rather different perspective based on perpetrators' behaviours they had observed from the beginning. This established their tone, generally from the outset, as different from Anne's.

As Patterson notes 'it is difficult to place the Holocaust diary firmly within the… description of a more traditional diary.'[28] For Kaufman 'the Holocaust diaries are a unique genre of writing simply because the Holocaust was unprecedented in history.'[29] The diaries of victims of the Siege of Leningrad, analysed by Peri, also occupy the strange duality occupied by ghetto inhabitants as victims of the horrific events experienced in their society, and witnesses who were aware of the historic events they were recording.[30] The diaries are not interpreted as indisputable and fully factual accounts of the events, but instead offer insights into their perception of reality. James Young elucidates: 'Rather than coming to Holocaust diaries and memoirs for indisputably "factual" testimony, however, the critical reader might now turn to the manner in which these "facts" have been understood and reconstructed in narrative: both as a guide to the kinds of understanding the victims brought to their experiences and to the kinds of actions they took on behalf of this understanding.'[31] Patterson, based on his own definition of a Holocaust diary, excludes texts otherwise considered to be Holocaust diaries by Holocaust diary scholars such as Alexandra Garbarini, Alexandra Zapruder, and Rachel Feldhay Brenner. The most striking example is that of Etty Hillesum, a Dutch teenager who wrote her diary in Amsterdam before being murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1943. For Patterson, her diary is not a Holocaust diary because 'no *why* pervades Hillesum's diary… Underlying the why in the Holocaust diary, moreover, is a fundamental refusal to accept the unreality of the Nazis' antiworld as real,

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[27] In Warsaw, the underground ghetto newspaper *Oyf der vakh* [Yiddish: On Guard] received confirmation of the destination and purpose of the mass deportation from an anonymous author. It was described as 'Treblinki'.

[28] David Patterson, *Along the Edge of Annihilation: The Collapse and Recovery of Life in the Holocaust Diary* (Seattle and London, 1999), p. 16.

[29] Kaufman, 'By Chance I Found a Pencil', p. 79.

[30] Peri, *The War Within*, p. 206.

[31] James E. Young, 'Interpreting Literary Testimony: A Preface to Rereading Holocaust Diaries and Memoirs', *New Literary History*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Literacy, Popular Culture, and the Writing of History (Winter, 1987), p. 406.

that is, as viable or meaningful—a fact of life, yes, but not part of life's meaning. And certainly none of these diarists can regard as beautiful a life that runs red with so much blood.'[32] This harsh critique is not shared in this thesis.

Diaries written by those targeted for being Jews during the Holocaust can be considered Holocaust diaries, irrespective of what the author chose to write about in their account. The premise of a Holocaust diary may change in terms of proximity to persecution during the writing period, when compared to ghetto and camp diaries, but the life trajectory and daily life were altered because of the Holocaust, and it defined the lives of all Jews under Nazi occupation. The term of Holocaust diary can, and in this thesis does, have more than one definition, it is ultimately as expansive as the term 'Holocaust' itself. Jacek Leociak notes the difficulties in the flexibility of texts produced during the Holocaust. The terminology in Polish reflects this adaptability, with the term '*pamiętnik'* [memoir] being used the most frequently, even for contemporaneous texts. The terms '*dziennik*,' [diary], '*wspomnienia*,' [memoir] and '*notaki'* [notes] are also used by the authors.[33] Leociak notes the 'astonishingly unconventional' use of these terms but adds that these reflect the 'blurred and ambiguous manner' and are commonly used today.[34] They indicated their intention in producing accounts designed to survive the war and provide the basis for a published version. Other authors do not define their work, beginning their writing with the date or simply their first sentence.

The texts included within this thesis were selected for their contemporary nature. The diarists' usage of 'diary,' 'memoir,' or 'notes' are equally acceptable if the text was written before the end of the war. For accounts written during the war, even in the final months or days before liberation, the knowledge of the event which would become known as the Holocaust was not yet fully established. German military defeat, though increasingly likely after their defeat at Kursk in 1943, had not yet occurred and so the author's survival

[32] Patterson, pp. 25-26.
[33] Jacek Leociak, *Text in the Face of Destruction: Accounts from the Warsaw Ghetto Reconsidered* (Warsaw, 2004), p. 12.
[34] Ibid.

remained uncertain. The situation in Warsaw meant that many Jews were in hiding during and after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. In these cases, this thesis utilises the same premise as Leociak, considering texts which were written in hiding before the end of the war as contemporaneous. These accounts were written at a distance of approximately a year from events inside the ghetto, with authors usually beginning their account with the creation of the ghetto in 1940 and continuing the narrative chronologically 'until at the end of the text they become entirely contemporaneous.'[35] Their uncertain position in hiding and lack of distance from events offer a different perspective than those who wrote their account after the German defeat had occurred.

Accounts written after the end of the war, from May 1945 onwards, can be defined in English as memoirs. The key identifying feature is their retrospective distance from the events they are describing. In the context of the Holocaust this equates to the liberation of the areas of Nazi-occupied Europe, Nazi military defeat, and the authors being survivors. They were survivors of the Nazi attempt to annihilate the Jewish population of Europe and began to give testimony, both written and oral, in a world where news was circulating as camps and their staff were investigated. Though it cannot even be claimed that people living in the immediate post-war world had full knowledge of Nazi crimes committed during the war, there was a growing corpus of information available on the extent of the genocide perpetrated. The narrative of a survivor's story has knowledge of the end, a crucial difference for those writing during the war.

Scholarship on the Holocaust and the Ghettos

As Dan Stone notes 'there is no doubt that the literature on the Holocaust is now so enormous that no individual can have real mastery over its aspects.'[36] The most pertinent aspects of Holocaust historiography, therefore, will be explored here – such as the study of ghettos, of the victims of the Holocaust, and diaries within both the English- and Polish-language literature. In addition to this general overview – which situates the thesis in the

[35] Ibid, p. 16.
[36] Dan Stone, 'Introduction' in Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of the Holocaust* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 1.

wider Holocaust historiography – each chapter will detail the historiography relating to its specific theme.

Tim Cole points out that 'the writing of the history of the ghettos was already being undertaken while the war was still in progress,' with *Oneg Shabbat* being the 'foremost' of these writings.[37] Samuel Gringauz, survivor of the Kovno ghetto called for a theoretical framework to allow for the study of the ghettos, and stressed their distinction from concentration camps.[38] Mark L. Smith further elucidates on the work of survivor-historians Philip Friedman, Isaiah Trunk, Nachman Blumental, Joseph Kermish, and Mark Dworzecki who published on Jewish life during the Holocaust in the immediate postwar years, actively focusing on the victims and how they lived.[39] The Eichmann Trial in 1961 led to scholarship and interest 'with an eye to the victims rather than primarily the perpetrators.'[40] A key work produced following the trial was Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963) which heavily criticised the *Judenräte* for their collaboration with the Germans which, in Arendt's view, made the mass killing of Jews far more achievable.[41] Saul Friedländer dubs this 'unsubstantiated' and emphasises that the *Judenräte* and those living under them had 'marginal' influence 'on the course of their own victimization.'[42] Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961) regarded the ghettos as a constituent part of the process of 'concentration' and criticised the lack of armed resistance from the *Judenräte*.[43] Isiah Trunk's work *Judenrat* (1972), emphasised the complexity of the councils, thus opposing Arendt and Hilberg's views. Lucy Dawidowicz in *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945* (1975) also refuted any notion that the *Judenräte* were collaborators, calling these claims: 'semantic confusion and historical misrepresentation.'[44]

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[37] Tim Cole, 'Ghettoization' in Stone, *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, p. 65.
[38] Samuel Gringauz, The Ghetto as an Experiment of Jewish Social Organization (Three Years of Kovno Ghetto), *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Jan. 1949), p. 4.
[39] For more information see: Mark L. Smith, *The Yiddish Historians and the Struggle for a Jewish History of the Holocaust* (Detroit, MI, 2019).
[40] Cole, 'Ghettoization', p. 70.
[41] See: Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York, 2006).
[42] Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany & The Jews: The Years of Persecution 1933-1939* (London, 1997), pp. xxiii-xxiv.
[43] Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews, Volume 1* (New York, 1985).
[44] Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945* (London, 1990), p. 418.

Gustavo Corni's *Hitler's Ghettos: Voices from a Beleaguered Society* (2003) sought to make 'sources of a personal nature interact with the institutional ones.'[45] This expansive work blended diaries, memoirs, and testimony with official documentation to provide an overview of life (and death) in ghettos across Nazi-occupied Europe. Despite Corni's dual approach, Tim Cole summarises that 'within Holocaust historiography, the ghetto has been studied not simply – or primarily – as the place of the victim, but as a part of the destruction process implemented by the perpetrator. In these terms, the ghetto has been seen, not primarily as a 'Jewish' place, but as a Holocaust place.'[46] Cole's own work on geographies of the Holocaust has made significant progress in unearthing place from the Jewish perspective, an area of research which this thesis builds upon through the lens of space in daily life. Research into specific aspects of ghetto life has been conducted in recent years which offers nuance in our understanding of the function of ghetto institutions, as well as their relationship with ordinary ghetto residents. Helene Sinnreich assessed the complicated food system in the Łódź ghetto, illuminating the extreme imbalance in food rations and the role of Rumkowski. From Sinnreich's research it is clear that this vilified figure was complicated – he constantly requested more food from Nazi authorities (to little effect),[47] yet he and other high-ranking officials were able to lead 'extravagant lives' with access to superior quality and quantities of food.[48] Gunnar S. Paulsson, in his work *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw* (2002), excellently presented the prevalence of Jews who escaped the ghetto to hide in Warsaw. Despite the difficultly in determining the number who hid (which range between 5,000 and 50,000), Paulsson estimates around 28,000 engaged in this activity.[49] Several of those who hid wrote their experiences are included within this study. Paulsson's work highlights the danger of their situation. As will be detailed further below, the accounts written in hiding will be utilised alongside those written inside the ghettos to provide unique insights into daily life.

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[45] Gustavo Corni, *Hitler's Ghettos: Voices from a Beleaguered Society, 1939-1944* (London, 2003), p. vii.
[46] Cole, 'Ghettoization', p. 73.
[47] Helene J. Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto: A Case Study in Nazi Jewish Policy, 1939-1945' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Brandeis University, 2004), p. 99.
[48] Ibid, p. 135.
[49] Gunnar S. Paulsson, *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw* (New Haven and London, 2002), p. 3.

Several works which appeared in English translation are of key importance to this thesis. Svenja Bethke's work on criminality in the ghettos of Warsaw, Łódź, and Vilna adds nuance to the typically oversimplified relationship between the *Judenrat*/Jewish police and the ordinary ghetto inhabitants. Her work redresses the 'prevailing opinion… that there was no internal scope for action within the ghettos.'[50] This thesis highlights the 'scope for action' demonstrated by diarists in their daily lives. Utilising multiple language sources, Bethke's work brings into English-language histography a key work on the institution of the *Judenrat*. Echoing Bethke, Katarazyna Person's work describes how the reputation of the Jewish Police 'as a tool of oppression and terror' prevented it from being viewed as a crucial part of the 'social life' of the Warsaw ghetto.[51] Person also demonstrates how the post-war work of the *Żydowski Instytut Historyczny* (hereafter ŻIH)[52] 'rarely entered wider circulation.'[53] This thesis places diaries from the archives of ŻIH at the centre of the work, showing how essential they are to our understanding of how people lived in the ghettos. Daily life is exemplified through the diaries in great detail which is enhanced by the use of original language sources, where possible. Person and Bethke focus on specific aspects of this, highlighting how the postwar perceptions of life in the ghetto were viewed through the lens of resistance, thus obscuring some facets realities of daily life, a lapse which their work redresses.

In addition, this work has benefitted from two important works written in German. Andrea Löw's monograph, *Juden im Getto Litzmannstadt: Lebensbedingungen, Selbstwahrnehmung, Verhalten*[54] (2006) provided the first study utilising diaries as the main lens into everyday life in the ghettos. She notes that the perspective of Jewish people during the Holocaust is too often missing within German-language historiography, partly caused by language barriers.[55] This language barrier remains a problem within English-language

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[50] Bethke, *Dance on the Razor's Edge*, p. 7.
[51] Katarzyna Person, *Warsaw Ghetto Police: The Jewish Order Service during the Nazi Occupation* (Ithaca and London, 2021), p. 204.
[52] Jewish Historical Institute or *Żydowski Instytut Historyczny*, in Warsaw.
[53] Ibid, p. 205.
[54] German: Jews in the Łódź ghetto: living conditions, self-perception, behaviour.
[55] Andrea Löw, *Juden im Getto Litzmannstadt: Lebensbedingungen, Selbstwahrnehmung, Verhalten* (Göttingen, 2009), p. 10-11.

historiography, and this work uses published and unpublished Polish diaries from the ghettos of Nazi-occupied Poland. Löw's work is permeated with diaries from the introduction to the conclusion, her work takes the perceptions and experiences of diarists as the foundation of the entire narrative of the Nazi invasion of Poland until its liberation by the Red Army. In her work, Löw uses 'as many different individuals as possible',[56] citing an unprecedented group of texts written in Yiddish and Polish to demonstrate the nuance of experiences and perceptions of the diarists in Łódź. The work of these authors, and the survival of their texts, Löw concludes 'ensure that one goal of the National Socialists was not achieved: To erase the memory, the memory of the people, along with the people.'[57] A further recent and crucial contribution has been made by Carlos Alberto Haas. His 2020 study *Das Private im Ghetto: Jüdisches Leben im deutsch besetzten Polen 1939 bis 1944*[58] constitutes the first full-length analysis of the changing concept of 'privacy' inside the ghettos. Haas relies on ego-documents, citing the value of sources written by authors who 'did not know… the outcome'.[59] His work is a powerful example of the research which can be produced from in-depth studies of ego-documents.

Scholarship on the Holocaust in Poland

Despite the Iron Curtain, Poland continued to carry out research into the Holocaust after the Second World War. The 1944 creation of the Central Jewish Historical Commission (hereafter CŻKH)[60] was essential in this regard and was initially staffed by several survivor-historians. They were integral in the discovery and retrieval of the buried milk cans housing the archive. The Ringelblum archive was then deposited within the CŻKH which became ŻIH in 1947. They began publishing diaries in 1947 starting with Noemi Szac-Wajnkranc's account. The survivor account of Jewish Fighting Organisation[61] fighter Marek Edelman, *Getto Walczy*,[62] was published in 1945 and was a crucial piece of the heroic resistance

[56] Ibid, p. 510.
[57] Ibid, p. 510.
[58] German: The private sphere in the ghetto: Jewish life in German-occupied Poland from 1939 to 1944.
[59] Carlos Alberto Haas, *Das Private im Ghetto: Jüdisches Leben im deutsch besetzten Polen 1939 bis 1944* [The private sphere in the ghetto: Jewish life in German-occupied Poland from 1939 to 1944] (Göttingen, 2020), p. 23.
[60] Polish: *Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna*, Central Jewish Historical Commission.
[61] Polish: *Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa*, Jewish Fighting Organisation. Hereafter ŻOB.
[62] Polish: The Ghetto Fights.

narrative of the Warsaw ghetto. The scholarly output of ŻIH in the immediate postwar period was so great that Ewa Kozminska-Frejlak estimates that 25% of all academic work published on the Holocaust in Poland from 1945 to 1989 was produced by ŻIH between 1945 and 1947.[63] The organisation was reduced following the 1968 antisemitic campaign and the subsequent mass emigration of Jews from Poland. An edited collection by Michał Grynberg, an affiliate of ŻIH, produced fragments of diaries which were previously unpublished.[64] Adam Czerniaków 's diary was published in Polish in 1983. From the 1990s focus on Jewish life within the Warsaw ghettos began to emerge, Barbara Engelking emerged as a researcher of 'certain psychological aspects of life in the ghetto' such as 'overcrowding, starvation, work and study, and social and cultural life.'[65] Her work, *Czas prestał dla mnie istnieć…:analicza doświadczenia czasu w sytuacji ostatecznej* (1996),[66] analysed ghetto inmates' sense of time, determining that, as well as being pressurised because of war, it was 'deformed' in ghetto conditions.[67] Engelking then published *Getto warszawskie: przedwodnik po nieistniejącym mieście*[68] in 2001 with Jacek Leociak. Leociak's work on texts in the face of destruction highlighted the literary importance of diaries written in the ghettos. The Ringelblum archive began to be published in Polish in its entirety. This has now been achieved and is being repeated into English.[69] Several scholars have emerged in recent years producing work on Jewish lives within the ghettos.[70] Katarzyna Person's work (mentioned above) on the ghetto police is the first academic study on the institution since the 1990s and emphasised the complicated nature of the police force,

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[63] Natalia Aleksiun, 'Polish Historiography of the Holocaust: Between Silence and Public Debate', *German History*, Vol. 22, No. 3, p. 417.
[64] See: Michał Grynberg (ed.), *Pamiętniki z getta warszawskiego: fragmenty i regestry* (Warsaw, 1988). This volume was later published in English as *Words to Outlive Us: Eyewitness Accounts from the Warsaw Ghetto* (London, 2003).
[65] Aleksiun, 'Polish Historiography of the Holocaust', p. 428.
[66] Polish: 'Time Ceased to Exist for Me': Analysis of the Experience of Time in Extreme Situations.
[67] See: Barbara Engelking, *„Czas przestał dla mnie istniec…" analiza doświadczania czasu w sytuacji ostatecznej* (Warsaw, 1996).
[68] Polish: Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City.
[69] ŻIH, 'The Third Volume of the Ringelblum Archive is Available in English': https://www.jhi.pl/en/articles/the-third-volume-of-the-ringelblum-archive-is-available-in-english,644 [last accessed 24.5.22]
[70] See: Justyna Majewska, The Days of Future Past: Thinking about the Jewish Life to Come from within the Warsaw Ghetto, *Shoah: Intervention, Methods, Documentation*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (2020) and Maria Ferenc, *Każdy pyta, co z nami będzie. Mieszkańcy getta warszawskiego wobec wiadomości o wojnie i Zagładzie* (Warsaw, 2021)

suggesting that they be considered within the 'grey zone' suggested by Primo Levi, rather than as 'uniformly black' as they have been judged since the war.[71] The Ringelblum archive remains the key focus for research in Poland, thus offering scope to assess other diaries. Krystyna Radziszewska, Adam Sitarek, and Ewa Wiatr have led the research on the Łódź ghetto, translating and publishing the diary of Lolek Lubiński, an anthology of diaries and writings from the Łódź ghetto as well as the *Łódź Ghetto Encyclopedia*. These contributions are essential in redressing the balance which focuses on Warsaw (and especially the Ringelblum archive), which this thesis also contributes to. The Polish contribution to our understanding of the ghettos has been significant, but the language remains a barrier to scholars accessing this wealth of work. The efforts to translate the Ringelblum archive into English represent a positive step in the archive becoming better known in the English-speaking world. Polish researchers are almost entirely responsible for the publication of diaries and archival material into English.

Warsaw and Łódź

The abovementioned scholarly works contribute to understanding of the effects of ghettoization for Jews inside the ghetto. What is largely absent is a combined in-depth and holistic approach to everyday life in the ghettos, offering the perspective of those who experienced it in the most pertinent areas of life. A comparison of the Warsaw and Łódź ghettos allows for analysis of two ghettos which were created in the same year and located within different administrative sectors of Nazi-occupied Poland. They were thus subject to differing rule from local authorities – though were subject to policy from Berlin such as the implementation of the Final Solution. Cole has labelled Warsaw 'the definitive Holocaust ghetto… to match Auschwitz as the definitive Holocaust concentration and death camp'.[72] As well as being a result of the substantial extant documentation on this ghetto, Cole notes that focus was on the Ghetto Uprising and 'very much rooted in Israeli society and politics of the 1950s and 1960s.'[73] Łódź, in contrast with Warsaw, had no armed uprising and was

[71] Person, *Warsaw Ghetto Police*, p. 208.
[72] Cole, 'Ghettoization', p.71.
[73] Ibid.

the longest surviving ghetto in Poland.[74] The final liquidation of the Łódź ghetto was ordered in summer 1944 and the remaining inmates were deported to Auschwitz by August 1944. The disparate endings of these isolated communities, however, does not necessarily mean that life inside each was markedly different. This thesis takes these ghettos as its base in order to elicit differences which were specific to the individual ghetto, and it reveals that daily life – the responses to it, the constant change and lack of certainty, and the few choices available to the inmates – continued to function in both ghettos. Events such as the deportations, and the Uprising in Warsaw, shattered daily life but, significantly, it continued afterward for those who remained. The length of both ghettos allows for the assessment of daily life before, during, and after deportations and even the uprising itself. This length of time provides as wide a base as possible upon which to assess everyday life and to determine how human beings responded to the extremity of ghetto life.

Daily Life, Microhistory and Emotions

The concept of a history of the everyday lives of 'ordinary' citizens was propagated by Alf Lüdtke (among others) in the 1970s and 1980s from West Germany as historians 'rejected' the traditional study of history which categorised the Nazis as a 'momentary' disaster in Germany's past and thus shifted focus from structuralist histories.[75] *Alltagesgeschichte* is linked to social history, though sits somewhere 'to the left' in 'a kind of dissentient movement' of a more general 'social-science history.'[76] This strand of social history differs in its microhistorical focus, delving deep into the inner workings of 'ordinary life' while taking 'history out of the university.'[77] It deals with both 'the subjective experiences and actual deeds of ordinary people'[78] and thus involves 'housing and homelessness, clothing and nakedness, eating habits and hunger, people's loves and hates, their quarrels and

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[74] It is commonly labelled as the longest ghetto in Nazi-occupied Europe though, as Anna Hájková notes, this is only a result of Terezin's mislabel as a 'concentration camp/ghetto' in the immediate postwar years. See: Anna Hájková, *The Last Ghetto: An Everyday History of Theresienstadt* (Oxford, 2020), p. 11.

[75] Paul Steege, Andrew Stuart Bergerson, Maureen Healy, Pamela E. Swett, 'The History of Everyday Life: A Second Chapter', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 80 (June 2008), p. 359.

[76] Geoff Eley, 'Foreword' in Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (New Jersey, 1989), p. vii.

[77] Ibid, p. vii.

[78] Steege, Bergerson, Healy, and Swett, 'The History of Everyday Life', p. 368.

cooperation, memories, anxieties, hopes for the future.'[79] Crucially, in the work of scholars such as Lüdtke:

> '*Alltagesgeschichte* deals for the most part with people who have left behind few if any source materials in the usual sense. It is rare to find letters or other documents written by the individuals themselves (or consciously passed on, handed down to others). In probing the most recent historical period, direct participants (*Zeitzeugen*) can be interviewed. In such cases, historians then generate their own source materials.'[80]

Here, this thesis differs, instead utilising texts written by some of the 'ordinary' citizens of the ghettos (amalgamated with better-known inhabitants), who may not have written a diary if not for the extraordinary context in which they lived. The thesis aims to balance the horror and violence of this event with the daily experiences people who existed in the ghetto and to emphasise the attempt made to live a daily life. Despite the severity of life in the Holocaust, the agency of individuals is present: 'even in seemingly grand-scale, abstract, or impersonal systems of hegemony (capitalism, fascism, communism, patriarchy, imperialism, etc.) we find human beings acting upon themselves and others.'[81]

Though every reader will understand the term 'daily life' and 'everyday life,' they may interpret it rather differently, therefore a further explanation of the terms (which are used interchangeably) is necessary. The selection of topics is based on what appears to have been important to the diarists to record. Here, it encompasses aspects which were essential to the authors, and which were (as shall be demonstrated) constantly threatened by ghettoization and Nazi policy: food, family, as well as space and time. It also includes an inextricable part of their daily existence as those responsible for their situation: perpetrators and persecutors. These aspects take on a different meaning within the ghetto

[79] Alf Lüdtke, 'Introduction: What is the History of Everyday Life and Who Are Its Practitioners?' in Lüdtke, *The History of Everyday Life*, p. 3.
[80] Ibid, p. 13.
[81] Steege, Bergerson, Healy, Swett, The History of Everyday Life, p. 371.

context. The thesis therefore provides a deeper understanding of how the diarists reacted to their situation, how their 'normal' daily life was eroded, and how they continued in their attempt to live despite an environment designed to destroy them. The thesis offers an insight into the daily choices and decisions diarists took. Lawrence Langer believes that 'the more we immerse ourselves in the daily ordeal of the ghetto residents, leaders and ordinary inhabitants alike, the more we see that they were all faced with a choice between *im*possibilities – no meaningful choice at all.'[82] Anna Hájková challenges this notion, arguing that they are thus removed of any agency.[83] This thesis, too, stresses the (albeit limited) agency that the diarists' exercised, not least in writing their account.

The unprecedented scale of the Holocaust is well-known and has skewed the ways in which scholars approach the concept of daily live during the period, leading to an interpretation of events which lionizes all who experienced the events as 'martyrs and fighters.'[84] Hájková's study highlights a need for the reconsideration of the history of everyday life in ghettos, and indeed other prisoner societies, across Nazi-occupied Europe. As she expertly demonstrates in *The Last Ghetto: An Everyday History of Theresienstadt* (2020), there is a need to re-examine these societies through a more ordinary lens, stepping away from the Holocaust exceptionalism which has plagued research since the end of the war.[85] There is no denying the Holocaust and its horrors, but the diaries in this study highlight that despite the horrors of daily life, an attempt was made to continue living that daily existence. This attempt was also noted by Doris Bergen, Andrea Löw, and Hájková in their 2013 study *Alltag im Holocaust*.[86] This study portrayed the Jewish population of Nazi-occupied Europe not 'as passive victims, but as acting individuals, trying to organise something like an everyday, normality in this abnormal world.'[87] We therefore do them a disservice by glossing over

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[82] Lawrence Langer, *Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays* (Oxford, 1995), p. 44.
[83] Anna Hájková, *The Last Ghetto: An Everyday History of Theresienstadt* (Oxford, 2020), p. 6.
[84] Philip Friedman (ed.), *Martyrs & Fighters: The Epic of the Warsaw Ghetto* (London, 1954).
[85] Hájková, *The Last Ghetto*.
[86] The scope of this thesis is smaller than that offered by Hájková's in Theresienstadt or by Bergen, Löw and Hájková (and their volume's contributors) for the Greater German Reich. The use of archives and a vast array of documents and testimony lead to a wider overview than is possible to achieve through diaries alone.
[87] Doris Bergen, Anna Hájková, and Andrea Löw 'Warum eine Alltagsgeschichte des Holocaust?' [Why an Everyday History of the Holocaust?] in Andrea Löw, Doris L. Bergen, and Anna Hájková (eds.), *Alltag im Holocaust: Jüdisches Leben im Großdeutschen Reich, 1941-1945* [Everyday Life in the Holocaust: Jewish Life in the Greater German Reich, 1941-1945] (Munich, 2013), p. 1.

these attempts and branding every resident a resister or a hero by dint of their presence. By narrowing the source base to diaries, this thesis offers a personal and very specific insight into daily life.

The diaries exemplify a range of emotions in each entry, and, for this reason, the thesis follows the premise of Marion Kaplan, who speaks of 'emotional history' rather than the history of emotions when researching the Holocaust.[88] Though an author may choose to write an impersonal, factual account in a diary, they are rarely entirely devoid of emotion. The specific context in which these diaries were compiled impinges heavily on any attempt at neutrality. Emotions are present within the language of each text included in this study. Lyndal Roper has pointed to the collectivizing nature of emotions, and Alon Confino has added the contradiction that they are simultaneously 'absolutely individual.'[89] The Holocaust diary, therefore, has a key role to play in expanding our understanding of both individual and collective perspectives and behaviours in the daily life of the ghettos.

Chapter Structure

The thesis consists of six chapters; one which introduces and analyses the diaries themselves, and five which address a significant aspect of daily life within the ghettos. These prominent topics – food, family, time, place, and perpetrators/persecutors – each appear with a short, specific historiography. Chapter One provides an in-depth analysis of diaries within the context of the Holocaust and emphasises their value for historians of everyday life. It outlines the specific diaries which are featured in this study and their importance as individuals beyond an archive group. Chapter Two addresses the omnipresent topic of food, from a political and cultural standpoint and concludes that ghetto inmates – despite facing decreasing ration allocations – used food as a barometer for the future. Liberation became symbolised by food. Chapter Three analyses the response of the family unit to ghetto life,

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[88] Quoted from Marion Kaplan, 'Gendering Holocaust Studies: Looking Back and Forward', presented [online] at Western Galilee College, International Women's Day Seminar: New Trends and Approaches on Gender and Holocaust Studies, Tuesday 9 March, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0kUXAUcbro [last accessed 20.10.22].

[89] Peter Biess, Alon Confino, Ute Frevert, Uffa Jensen, Lyndal Roper and Daniela Saxer, History of Emotions Forum, *German History*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (March 2010), pp. 70-71.

evoking Lenore J. Weitzman's premise of 'role shifting' – a practice evident in diaries where members fluctuated between roles throughout their ghetto life. The family network (however this formed, whether with blood relatives or friends) was the single most important factor in survival. Chapter Four explores the emerging concept of time within the ghettos and as a crucial framework of a diary. The under-researched notion of time yields information on how the ghetto not only contorted the daily life, the present – but also the past and the future. Survival was perceived in terms of time – outlasting the Nazis became the goal which, if not achieved by an individual, would be achieved by the collective (however small this collective became). Chapter Five addresses the notion of space within the ghettos. The ghetto was predominantly a Nazi-controlled environment, though there were moments of agency in utilising Jewish space where possible. Chapter Six addresses the perpetrators of the diarists: Hitler, the Nazi guards, the German people and finds that they were less discussed than other aspects of life, but when approached, they elicited notions of hatred and revenge. It also analyses responses to persecutors. The designation of 'persecutors' is a notion of Amy Simon's designed to avoid dubbing Jewish people 'perpetrators.'[90] The diarists' responses to Jewish police and the *Judenrat* feature heartfelt expressions of betrayal and produce the starkest contrast between Łódź and Warsaw diarists: the opinion of their chairman. Rumkowski in Łódź was a vilified figure, whereas Czerniaków in Warsaw evoked pity, sadness, and anger over his suicide. The thesis then closes with a concluding chapter which unites the key points of each theme of daily life. It summarises their importance to the study of daily life in diaries of the Holocaust and offers multiple avenues for potential future research in this area.

[90] Simon, Surrounded by the hunter on all sides, p. 46.

Chapter One: Diaries and Daily Life in the Warsaw and Łódź Ghettos

The Diaries and the Diarists

The extant diaries from the Warsaw and Łódź ghettos are today in archives across the world and, according to Alexandra Zapruder, many more are likely to exist in private collections.[1] The 2019 publication of Renia Spiegel's diary, written during her time in the Przemyśl ghetto, suggests the accuracy of Zapruder's claim: Spiegel's diary was kept in a safety deposit box for over forty years by her sister Ariana before it was translated and eventually published.[2] Within this study, the translation and publications of the diaries of Heniek Fogel, Lolek Lubiński, and Rywka Lipszyc, all from the Łódź ghetto and published in 2015, show that this is a continuing occurrence in terms of discovery and interest from the general public as well as researchers. The group of diarists chosen for this study are taken from a mixture of published and unpublished texts, written by both male and female authors, ranging from the ages of fourteen (at the commencement of their diary) to sixty-one and written originally in the Polish language (with the exception of one diary written in German by a Viennese woman deported to the Łódź ghetto, which will be explored further below).

The diaries utilised here are mostly located at the *Żydowski Instytut Historyczny*[3] in Warsaw, in the former Main Judaic Library on Tłomackie Street. It is located within the area of the former ghetto and stood alongside the Great Synagogue. Both were ordered to be destroyed by Jürgen Stroop after the Ghetto Uprising, to symbolise the final destruction of Warsaw Jewry; however, the library survived and still bears the scorch marks in the main entrance as a testament to the building's survival.[4] The diaries are in Collection 302; the diaries and memoirs collection. In some cases, only a copy has survived or only a copy has been deposited by the donor and is available as a typewritten copy of the original. Others are available to view as scans of both the typed and handwritten versions. One of the diaries is located in the archives of Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Centre in

[1] Zapruder, *Salvaged Pages*, p. xv.
[2] Renia Spiegel, *Renia's Diary: A Young Girl's Life in the Shadow of the Holocaust* (London, 2019), p. 9.
[3] Jewish Historical Institute or Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, hereafter ŻIH.
[4] ŻIH, 'About the Institute' https://www.jhi.pl/en/about-the-institute/history [last accessed 24.5.22].

Jerusalem, another in the Ghetto Fighters House Archives[5] in Lohamei HaGeta'ot, Israel. Both can be viewed as a scan of the original.

Of the twenty texts of this study, eight were written by teenagers or young people from approximately eleven years old to twenty-six and who were unmarried at the time of writing. Mary Berg[6] moved from Łódź to Warsaw at the outbreak of war and was fifteen years old when she began writing her diary. Her mother was an American citizen, then a neutral country, and thus (initially) entitled to leave the ghetto and to receive parcels from the United States upon showing her 'visiting card'.[7] Eventually her citizenship led to their removal from the ghetto and eventual travel to the United States via France. Lolek Lubiński[8] was a native of Łódź, who began his dairy at the age of seventeen. His diary only covers the year 1941. He was deported with his father to Auschwitz in August 1944 and later to Kaufering, a Dachau subcamp. They are believed to have died of starvation or disease.[9] Heniek (or Hersz) Fogel[10] was nineteen years old when he began his diary. He lived with his mother and sister in the Łódź ghetto. They were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in August 1944, his mother was gassed on arrival, he and his sister survived. The female author of diary 9[11] in Łódź is believed to be between eleven and thirteen years old. Ewa Wiatr, editor of the diary, believes she worked in the Underwear and Clothing Resort belonging to Lajb Glazer. She lived with her mother and brother Chaim. Their fate is unknown. The female author of diary 86[12] is believed to be called Esterka or Minia and between fourteen and fifteen years old. She lived with her parents and two older siblings in Łódź. Her fate is unknown, and the extant diary is only a fragment which begins and ends in the middle of a sentence. Dawid Sierakowiak[13] was fourteen when he began his diary, just three months before the outbreak of war. He lived with his parents and sister in the Łódź ghetto. He

[5] Hereafter GFHA.
[6] S. L. Shneiderman and Susan Pentlin (ed.), *The Diary of Mary Berg, Growing Up in the Warsaw Ghetto* (2007, London).
[7] Susan Pentlin, 'Introduction', in Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. xxi.
[8] Anna Łagodzińska (ed.), *Dziennik Lolka Lubińskiego/The Diary of Lolek Lubiński* (Łódź, 2015).
[9] Ibid, p. 104.
[10] Helene Sinnreich, *Hersz (Heniek Fogel), A Hidden Diary from the Łódź Ghetto 1942-1944* (Jerusalem, 2015).
[11] Ewa Wiatr (ed.), *Oblicza Getta: Antologia tekstów z getta łódzkiego* (Łódź, 2017), p. 69.
[12] Ibid, p. 37.
[13] Alan Adelson (ed.), *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak* (Oxford, 1996).

attended school until the age of seventeen, when he was forced to find employment to support his family. His mother was deported to Chełmno in August 1942 and his father died in March 1943. Dawid died of tuberculosis in August 1943, he stopped writing in his diary four months beforehand. His sister Nadzia was deported to Auschwitz where she died. Rywka Lipszyc[14] began her diary in October 1943, at the age of fourteen. At that time, she lived with her sister and three cousins. They were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau during the liquidation of the ghetto in August 1944. Rywka survived until liberation in several camps, and her final fate is unknown though she is believed to have died due to ill health.[15] Abram Iccak Łaski[16] is one of the most recently identified diarists from the Łódź ghetto. His diary was written in the margins of a novel, *Les Vrais Riches* and covers only the end of the ghetto period from 5th May to August 1944. He was born in 1917 or 1918 and by 1944 his parents had died, and he lived with his sister, Rywka. Their fate is unknown.

The remaining diaries were written by adults, ranging from twenty-six to sixty.[17] In some cases the author was a figure of authority in the ghetto. Adam Czerniaków[18] was the *Judenrat* Chairman, from an assimilated Jewish family. He committed suicide on 23rd July 1942 when he learned of the German intention to deport the population *en masse* from the ghetto. He was sixty-one when he died. Stanisław Gombiński[19] (who wrote under the pseudonym Jan Mawult) was a functionary of the *Ordungsdienst*. He wrote his account in hiding on the so-called Aryan side after the ghetto uprising. Janusz Korczak[20] was a celebrated educator and head of an orphanage in Warsaw before the war. The orphanage was relocated to the ghetto, and he continued to care for the children in the deteriorating circumstances of the ghetto. Although he had the chance to be smuggled out, he refused

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[14] Anita Friedman (ed.), *Rywka's Diary: The Writings of a Jewish Girl from the Łódź Ghetto, Found at Auschwitz in 1945 and Published Seventy Years Later* (New York, 2015).
[15] Ibid, p. 214.
[16] Wiatr, *Oblicza Getto*, p. 49.
[17] It must be noted that for several of the anonymous authors their age is unknown and therefore they cannot be attributed to either category with absolute certainty, however the content suggests that, aside from the anonymous authors described in the young person's category, the others were adults.
[18] Raul Hilberg, Stanisław Staron, and Josef Kermisz (eds.), *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków* (New York, 1979).
[19] Michał Czajka, *Inwentarz zbioru pamiętników (Archiwum ŻIH, zespół 302)/Memoirs Collection Catalogue (Jewish historical Institute Archives, Record Group 302)* (Warsaw, 2007), pp. 36-37.
[20] Aaron Zeitlin (ed.), *Janusz Korczak: Ghetto Diary* (New York, 1978).

and was deported, with the children and other orphanage staff members, to Treblinka during the Great Deportation in August 1942. Noemi Szac-Wajnkranc[21] was born in 1918 and was married to engineer Jerzy Wajnkranc. She mostly wrote her account in hiding after escaping the ghetto, living in Sławek, near Warsaw. She survived to liberation and was killed by a stray bullet from a Red Army officer on 28th January 1945. Dawid Fogelman[22] was a married father of two when the war broke out. He was thirty-one years old. His wife and sons were deported during the Great Deportation, after which he lived with his sister and brother-in-law. He wrote his account in hiding on the so-called Aryan side of Warsaw. Chaim Hasenfuss[23] was an accountant who wrote his 'reflections' in 1942. His fate is unknown. Janina Neuding[24] was the wife of Polish Socialist member Jerzy Neuding who was executed on 17th April 1942. They had a daughter. The female author of an anonymous diary written in a bunker[25] during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, between late April and early May 1943. The diary of Zofia Brzezińska, whose identity was previously unknown, was published under her name in 2021.[26] She wrote her account in hiding on Aryan side in 1943. Her husband, Jakub Pinczewski, was a doctor which protected her from deportation.[27] They had a young son, Juliusz born in 1939.[28] The male author of diary 191[29] in Łódź wrote an account of his arrest and imprisonment by the Jewish *Ordungsdienst*. It covers only November 1940. His identity and fate remain unknown. Irene Hauser[30] was a Viennese native, deported to the Łódź ghetto in October 1941 with her husband, Leo, and son, Erich. Irene and Erich were deported to Chełmno in September 1942. Stefan Szpigielman[31] wrote under the pseudonym

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[21] Polish Centre for Holocaust Research Website, Warsaw Ghetto Database: https://new.getto.pl/en/People/W/Wejnkranc-Szac-Noemi-Szac. [last accessed 24.5.22].
[22] Czajka, *Inwentarz*, p. 34.
[23] Ibid, pp. 132-33.
[24] Ibid, p. 134.
[25] Havi Driefuss (Ben-Sasson), '"Hell Has Risen to the Surface of the Earth": An Anonymous Woman's Diary from the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising' in Silberklang, David (ed.), *Yad Vashem Studies*, 36 (2), (Jerusalem, 2008), pp. 13-43.
[26] Agnieszka Haska (ed.), *Zofia Brzezińska: I Saw No Chance of Surviving so I Began to Write, Warsaw, 1940-1943* (Jerusalem, 2020).
[27] Ibid, p. 13.
[28] Ibid, p. 14.
[29] Czajka, *Inwentarz*, p. 158.
[30] Ewa Wiatr and Krystyna Radziszewska (ed.), *Irene Hauser: Dziennik z getta łódzkiego/Das Tagebuch aus dem Łódźer Getto* (Łódź, 2019).
[31] Marta Janczewska (ed.), *Stefan Szpigielman, Treci Front: O wojne wielkich niemic z żydami warszawy 1939-1943* (Warsaw, 2020).

Stefan Ernest[32] and was a *Judenrat* official in the *Arbeitsamt* in Warsaw and wrote in hiding on the so-called Aryan side. The inclusion of Adam Czerniaków, Stefan Szpigielman, and Stanisław Gombiński, though connected to the *Judenrat*, is due to their independence from any organised group aimed at systematically documenting ghetto life.

The diarists who are included in this study are a varied group; fifty-five per cent of the authors are male, forty-five per cent female. Fifty-five per cent are from the Warsaw ghetto, and forty-five per cent from Łódź. As well as a representation of both genders and ghettos, the selected texts also aim to represent as wide a section of society as possible though some groups cannot be represented by this source type (this will be further elaborated below). The diarists were imprisoned in the ghetto because they were categorized as Jews by the Nazis. This is a unifying feature of the authors, but their observance varied from secular to Orthodox. Though the diary of Lipszyc in Łódź offers a viewpoint from a religious, observant Jew, (Lipszyc's great-grandfather was the chief Rabbi of Łódź in the nineteenth century)[33] this is a notably rare occurrence in the Polish language diaries. Of the twenty accounts analysed in this thesis, three were written by anonymous authors, thus the specific details of their lives are harder to discern, unless mentioned by the author in their text. Not all diarists begin with a summary of themselves and their biographical details (though some do), others do not explicitly specify their gender. The grammatical structure of Polish language proves helpful in this case; the past and future tenses require a masculine and feminine version of verbs, providing certainty of the author's gender, even when no other biographical information is revealed within the text. The age ranges provided are of course estimates as the ages of the anonymous diarists are unknown. From the content of diary 86, for example, it is possible for Ewa Wiatr to approximate the author's age as between fourteen and fifteen and it is believed she was called Esterka or (more likely) Minia.[34] This is due to her writing and, more significantly in the ghetto, the fact that she remained at home for most of the day and was unemployed. Her older sister and brother were in their late teens, and both worked in different workshops within the ghetto. The prevalence of

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[32] Czajka, *Inwentarz*, p. 160.

[33] Alexandra Zapruder, 'Introduction', in Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 59.

[34] Wiatr, *Oblicza Getta*, p. 37. This is the first time the diary has been published in full in Polish.

work and its necessity for survival strongly suggests the author was too young to work, therefore less than fifteen years old.[35] The fact that some authors, and indeed more than one million victims of the Holocaust, remain as yet unnamed and unidentified is a testament to what remains elusive in our knowledge of the genocide, particularly with regard to its victims.[36] In referring to anonymous authors, this thesis follows the approach of Jacek Leociak in attributing them the signature of their diary, thus using 'the author of *Pamiętniki* 129'[37] as Leociak does in reference to a diary by an anonymous author in the 302 Diaries and Memoirs Collection of ŻIH.

As a diary study, this thesis by default omits all who did not write a diary, or whose diary has not survived. In the account given by Szac-Wajnkranc, we are reminded of the texts which we can never know. She visited her uncle after her aunt and cousin Alusia were deported to Treblinka. Her uncle gave her Alusia's diary to read, kept by her grieving father as the last part of her he possessed. Szac-Wajnkranc read it and copied two entries into her own diary. This multi-layered account not only highlights a family mourning a young member, but the diaries which are irrevocably lost.[38] Similarly, the author of diary 86 noted that her brother and sister had both started diaries.[39] Lipszyc read the diary of her closest friend, Suria, and noted that Suria read hers. She mentioned several other friends who were also considering beginning a diary.[40] Many ghetto inmates did not write a diary at all. In textual accounts from the ghetto, the most underrepresented group are those of beggars and the most impoverished in society. They were written *about*, most notably in the case

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[35] This was the case for the ghetto at that time, 1942. Later children were forced to work at even younger ages.
[36] The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names was created by Yad Vashem and has named 4.8 million victims. The Book of Names exhibition in Block 27 of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum physically shows the scale of this database in a large room containing 58 volumes, each with 70,000 names inside. The final volume is left blank, highlighting those who remain unidentified. See: https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/pavilion_auschwitz/design.asp. [last accessed 24.5.22].
[37] Leociak, *Text in the Face of Destruction*, p. 162.
[38] As mentioned above, Zapruder was able to find numerous diaries in private collections, however it is clear that not all documents and diaries survived in the post-ghetto and post-war population displacement which ensued in both Warsaw and Łódź. Dawid Sierakowiak's diary, for example, was found by Wacław Szkudlarek, who inhabited the apartment before it became part of the ghetto. He believed it had been used for firewood because there were pieces torn up. Only five of at least seven notebooks survived. For more information see Adelson's introduction to Dawid's *Diary*.
[39] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 3.
[40] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 118.

of Rubinstein in the Warsaw ghetto,[41] but they were not the authors of diaries; many would have been illiterate and even those who were not were sleeping on the streets without any money for food, therefore the ability to access writing materials was essentially impossible.

In addition, the diary of a non-Jewish Pole, Witold Dobrzański,[42] helps to shed light on smuggling into the Warsaw ghetto. The thesis also includes collections of letters, sent by the Halperson and Lebenhaft families from the Warsaw ghetto to their daughters in Sweden and London (respectively) in order to include the voices of more mothers.

The language of the diaries

In her examination of daily life in Terezín, Anna Hájková highlights the centrality of language inside the ghetto, while noting the omission of this topic in historiography: 'while scholars studying other ghettos, particularly Łódź, have often pointed out the different languages prisoners used, how social hierarchies influenced language praxis has largely remained a lacuna.'[43] The selection of diaries included here were chosen for their language and the language spoken and/or chosen by authors correlated directly with their position in society; who they interacted with, how they viewed other society members, and how they interpreted their own situation, including the perpetrators. The majority of religious Jewish writers, writing in the ghettos of Warsaw, Łódź, and indeed other locations across Nazi-occupied Europe, particularly in Eastern Europe, recorded their experiences in Hebrew or Yiddish. Those who wrote in Yiddish were from the predominantly male 'intellectual, middle-class milieu.'[44] Simon notes that these men were generally members of YIVO and 'their dedication to Yiddish was another kind of politics which affected the way they approached their diary writing.'[45] The collection of diaries utilised here, therefore, do not represent these male writers who, in making a political statement, chose to write in Yiddish.

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[41] Rubinstein or Rubinsztajn was regarded as the ghetto's jester; he performed on the streets of Warsaw. For more information, please see Amos Goldberg's lecture, "A Fool or Prophet? Rubinstein, the Warsaw Ghetto Street Jester,"' given at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (hereafter USHMM), 13 March 2019: https://www.ushmm.org/research/tools/videos-recordings-and-transcripts-of-past-events/past-lectures. [last accessed 24.5.22].
[42] Czajka, *Inwentarz*, pp. 12-13.
[43] Hájková, *The Last Ghetto,* p. 86.
[44] Simon, Surrounded by the Hunter on All Sides, p. 26.
[45] Ibid.

Yiddish and Hebrew were the two main languages spoken by Eastern European Jews, the third was the language of the country of residence. [46] In Poland, Polish was learned by choice or compulsion in cases where Jewish schools were closed, and children were obliged to attend the local Polish school.[47]

The presence of Jews of several nationalities (as well as differing levels of assimilation) in the ghetto meant daily life included hearing and seeing the four main languages of Polish, Yiddish, Hebrew, and German, as well as others from smaller population groups (such as Czech in the Łódź ghetto). The language spoken by an individual determined who they were able to communicate with in their daily lives, which hampered many refugees sent to the ghettos from western Europe. Unable to speak Polish and/or Yiddish, they were less able to communicate with Polish Jews who made up the majority of the population, thus leaving them somewhat isolated. This, however, was not static and with 'the arrival of 20,000 German Jews from the Reich and the Protectorate, the language permanently entered into everyday communication in the ghetto.'[48] Language can be a signifier of national identity, however, the multilingualism of the Jewish population of Poland (and indeed other European countries during the first half of the twentieth century) complicates this. The Jews of Poland, as a shared group, generally spoke Polish, Yiddish, or both. Some could also speak German, or Hebrew as well as other, less common languages depending on their individual circumstances such as family history and education. This multitude of languages is reflective of their position in Polish society as a separate, minority group with some assimilated to the wider Polish community. Broadly speaking their language usage fell into one of three groups; those who spoke Polish and Yiddish were able to communicate with the Polish (largely Gentile Catholic) society, those who were assimilated and spoke only Polish, and the less assimilated group of Yiddish-only speakers. Katarzyna Person notes that 'pre-war Warsaw was the largest Yiddish-speaking community in Europe'[49] however, that 'the group

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[46] Ibid, p. 61.
[47] Ibid, pp. 62-63.
[48] Adam Sitarek and Ewa Wiatr (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Ghetto: The Unfinished Project of the Łódź Ghetto Archivists* (Łódź, 2016), p. xv.
[49] Katarzyna Person, *Assimilated Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, 1940-1943* (New York, 2014), p. 48.

of Jews speaking Polish as their first language crossed all cultural and national affiliations,'[50] and emphasizes that 'it can be assumed that the norm was bilingualism.'[51] The majority of diarists featured here were able to speak Polish and this was the language of their diary. In some cases, this reflects a choice by the author, who was able to speak more than one language, such as Sierakowiak who was well versed in several languages: he read in English and German and even translated works of Lenin into Yiddish.[52] Fogelman, at the end of his account, described reciting poems and writing in Polish and Yiddish as he toasted to 1945 on New Year's Eve.[53] Yiddish, utilised specifically in this circumstance, would have connected Fogelman to his past and those he had lost. In other cases, it is impossible to discern whether the author had use of another written language. Polish accounts were not necessarily written because the author was an assimilated Jew: there was a logic employed that Polish was spoken by more people and, as the war progressed, the number of Yiddish speakers dwindled, leading some to believe there would be very few speakers left alive to read a Yiddish account of the events. Others clung tighter to their connection to Judaism, with Abraham Lewin switching from Yiddish to Hebrew as the Great Deportation commenced, suggested by Antony Polonsky, the editor of his diary, as Lewin 'perhaps feeling that only a sacred language was fit to record a martyrology which made the massacres of Chmielnicki or of 1918-19 pale into insignificance.'[54]

One diary within this study was originally written in German. The diary of Hauser, an assimilated Jew and native of Vienna, is currently published in both its original German and in Polish translation, though not in English.[55] The decision was made to include Hauser due to her position as a mother with a young child. Mothers were rarely diary writers in the ghetto and so they form an underrepresented group, as noted by Goldberg.[56] She also shares a similarity with the Polish language authors, who wrote in the language of their

[50] Ibid, p. 10.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Lawrence Langer 'Foreword', in Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowia*k, p. x.
[53] ŻIH, 302/35, pp. 54-55.
[54] Antony Polonksy (ed.), *A Cup of Tears: A Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto by Abraham Lewin* (Oxford, 1989), p. 37.
[55] For the most recent publication of Hauser's diary, please see: Ewa Wiatr and Krystyna Radziszewska (ed.), *Irene Hauser, Dziennik z getta łódzkiego, Das Tagebuch aus dem Łódźer Getto* (Łódź, 2019).
[56] Amos Goldberg, *Trauma in First Person: Diary Writing during the Holocaust* (Indiana, 2017), p. 8.

residence and nationality, thus her diary is more comparable with the Polish language diaries, than with those who wrote in Yiddish and Hebrew.

Two linguistically exceptional diarists of this study chose to write in multiple languages: Hasenfuss in Warsaw and Łaski in Łódź. Hasenfuss wrote his account of life in the Warsaw ghetto in 1941 titled, in English, 'Two Years of War, Experiences and Reflections,'[57] organising it into sections with title headings on topics such as 'the ghetto street,' followed by a diary with short entries from the period from 1st September 1939 to 1st September 1941 and then an English language 'Diary from September I 1939 to September I 1941.'[58] The entries in English are shorter than the Polish entries which are in greater detail. The act of this dual language provision of his account of events from the outbreak of war to the creation and then daily life of the ghetto is of great significance. Hasenfuss connected his diary to the outside world through the use of Polish, those immediately surrounding the ghetto, and English, the *lingua franca* and potentially the language of his future should he survive the war and emigrate. This was likely the motivation for Łaski who, over the course of his diary, wrote ninety-six entries varying from sentences to several paragraphs. Thirty-two of these entries were in English, thirty in Hebrew, twenty-two in Polish and twelve in Yiddish. The dispersion across languages, spoken by millions of people across different countries and cultures, was likely a means of ensuring the novel containing the diary, if found and even glanced at, would be readable to some extent and thus saved from destruction. At the time of his writing in the novel most of the Łódź ghetto had been deported and a small fragment of the population remained. Survival for the majority of the Jewish population looked unlikely to many, and they knew that a great number had already perished. Thus, this young man's choice to record his experience in four languages shows his connection to his identity which encompassed several cultures and his attempt to ensure his account would survive even if he did not.

The language of Holocaust diaries, as well as the complexities of this, have been overlooked within the historiography, where focus on language and identity among Holocaust survivors

[57] ŻIH, 302/157, p. 188.
[58] Ibid.

has taken precedent. Integral in this field is Primo Levi, who wrote: 'If the *Lagers* had lasted longer a new, harsh language would have been born; and only this language could express what it means to toil the whole day in the wind, with the temperature below freezing, wearing only a shirt, underpants, cloth jacket and trousers, and in one's body nothing but weakness, hunger and knowledge of the end drawing nearer.'[59] Thus, those who lived through it were able to attest to, in the form of their testimonies, interviews and memoirs, the development of language under the regime of the camps. Though written predominantly in Polish, each text contains a scattering of German language. These were words initiated by the Nazi occupiers themselves to describe their behaviour and actions in Poland – words such as *Umschlagplatz*, *Aktion*, and *Judenrat* were exclusively used in their original German. By expressing these words of the Nazi machinery in their original language, the authors distanced their own language from them, unappealing or violent as these locations and actions were. They were inextricably linked to the Nazi authorities and ingrained in people's psyche as such. It is likely that within verbal communication, the ghetto inmates used the German versions of these words. Interestingly, the diarists' spelling of the word ghetto is varied. Some, such as Łaski, use the Polish '*getto.'*[60] Others, such as Szac-Wajnkranc consistently use the German[61] '*ghetto'*.[62] Szac-Wajnkranc ensured that she distanced the Polish language from the Nazi-created ghetto. The word would not have been in the common vernacular prior to the war and their enforced ghettoization, thus the adoption of the word in both languages is not surprising, visible as the word as on streets, signs, and pronouncements in German and Polish. Though it is not within the remit of this thesis to analyse the linguistics of Polish diaries written in the ghetto, the use of the language and how it was used to describe the perpetrators and Jewish community can provide a unique insight into the functioning of daily life in the ghetto. Only by utilising a micro-study and analysing one specific group can an in-depth analysis be achieved. Simon's

[59] Primo Levi, *If This is a Man, The Truce* (London, 1998), p. 129.
[60] YVA 0.33/1032, p. 2.
[61] Please note: although 'ghetto' in German can be 'getto' or 'ghetto', Nazi documents and photographs show that they referred to it as 'ghetto', thus this would have been the German spelling that the diarists were familiar with.
[62] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 19.

work excellently highlights the need to group these texts according to their original language in order to elicit unique conclusions about diary writers in the ghettos.

When they wrote

The start dates of the diaries range from September 1939 to July 1944, and they were written by authors who had lived, for a period, in the Warsaw or Łódź ghettos. As described above, in Leociak's definition of *Pamiętniki* in Polish, there is some difficulty in settling on a definition of 'diary' within the context of the Holocaust. This thesis includes diaries written outside of the ghetto but in hiding, thus within the parameters of the event now known as the Holocaust. This approach, admittedly, allows for accounts written with some benefit of hindsight, as an author writing in hiding had lived through the entire ghetto period later reflecting on events. The fluidity of the ghetto walls, allowing people and various goods to be smuggled in and out of the perimeter, meant that bunkers were built before the Uprising of 1943, and used by inmates during the Uprising. The nature of the Uprising and Warsaw's situation in general meant that the city was in a state of chaos until it was liberated. This allowed Jews the chance to hide in bunkers and various hiding places throughout the city. Several authors included here chose to write, either in hiding during the Uprising itself, or in the period following the Uprising until liberation. The Red Army entered Warsaw on 17th January 1945, 'on the 18th, they were joined by units of the First Polish Army in an improvised march-past along the line of the *Aleje Jerozolimskie*.'[63] The disparate histories of the Warsaw and Łódź ghettos led to differences in the type of written accounts produced with regard to the diary-memoir classification. Łódź, where hiding on the so-called Aryan side did not occur because the ghetto was hermetically sealed, did not have bunkers as Warsaw did. The Łódź ghetto's existence until August 1944 lulled inmates into believing they might survive the war and thus the diaries which form this study (and indeed other Łódź ghetto diaries) were written in the period between the Nazi invasion in September 1939 and the final liquidation of the ghetto in August 1944.

[63] Norman Davies, *God's Playground, A History of Poland, Volume II: 1795 to the Present* (Oxford, 1982), p. 480.

How they wrote

Access to items like paper, pencils, pens, and ink was limited for diarists in the ghetto. Often the entries are written in school exercise notebooks, as there was no real opportunity to purchase specific notebooks. Hauser's diary was a small, red leatherbound notebook, most likely brought with her from Vienna to Łódź. Many diarists used whatever paper they could find, even using single sheets of accounting paper in the case of diary 9. The most exceptional case of a diarist utilising any available material was Łaski, who wrote inside the pages of the French novel *Les Vrais Riches*, by François Coppée. Though there was no certainty for anyone that the paper documents they created in the ghetto would survive, those included in this study were not hidden with a group of documents such as the famous milk cans of the *Oneg Shabbat* archive, but wherever the author left it. In some cases, they were not hidden at all, but found in apartments, as was the case with Sierakowiak's notebooks. Others took their diaries with them in their luggage when deported. Łódź Ghetto Administrator, Jeszajahu Szpigiel, evidently aiming to ensure at least some of his writing survived, chose to enact both strategies, knowing that the Łódź Ghetto was being liquidated, 'Szpigiel hid part of his manuscripts in a basement and took the rest with him. On the railway platform at Auschwitz, his luggage was taken away from him, including his manuscripts.'[64] As a result, Szpigiel's writings left in Łódź survived, while the manuscript taken to Auschwitz was lost. Lipszyc also took her diary with her when she was deported with her sister and cousins in August 1944, located within her twenty kilograms of luggage she was permitted to take with her.[65] Rywka's diary was discovered after the war by a Soviet doctor, Zinaida Berezovskaya, who accompanied the Red Army on their march across Europe. The diary was found in the ruins of the crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau.[66] It is regarded as probable that the diary was buried by the *Sonderkommando*, potentially being the ninth of such texts to be discovered at the camp.[67] Here, the diary did not survive because Rywka hid it well, but through the *Sonderkommando*, trying to preserve the words

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[64] Sitarek and Wiatr, *Encyclopedia of the Ghetto*, p. xxvi.

[65] Fred Rosenbaum, in 'Łódź: A History of the City and the Ghetto' in Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 64.

[66] Judy Janec, 'Preface: The Diary's Journey from Auschwitz to America' in Friedman, *Rywka's Diary* p. ix.

[67] Ibid, p. 211.

of those who could not physically be saved, namely those whose belongings they sorted as the owners were sent to the gas chambers or into the camp.

Diaries were usually written inside the home of the author, though this depended on the particular circumstance of the diarist. In the case of Brzezińska, she wrote both while hiding with her family in her husband's hospital and in their apartment. Those who wrote during and after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising were in bunkers or other hiding places, usually cramped and with poor lighting. Zapruder notes that, even in the ghetto, inmates writing at night had to choose between writing by candle or one singe fifteen-watt bulb.[68] Although Kaufman implores us to remember that 'Jewish victims were not well fed, well clothed citizens sitting in a study or lounge room penning a diary. Primarily, one must think in the context of the growing catastrophe and contextualize diary writing within the paradigm of starvation, sickness, death, horror and violence on a daily level, which destroyed the victims both physically and emotionally.'[69] Kaufman's work includes diaries from all of Nazi-occupied Europe, resulting in the nuances of the location-specific context being overlooked. Though she correctly notes the occurrence of 'starvation, sickness, death, horror and violence on a daily level' and the resulting lack of comfort individuals had, the ghetto inhabitants did have homes, especially when compared to those incarcerated in a concentration camp such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, where barracks designed for seven hundred prisoners held up to one thousand two hundred inmates.[70]

Though the ghetto apartments were often overcrowded (with between eight and ten people to one room in Warsaw, [71] and seven in Łódź),[72] they were demarcated homes, for a pre-specified group or groups of people, rather than a communal shared barrack whose inhabitants were determined by the Nazi camp authorities. The physical condition of the diaries is often poor and even those, such as the *Oneg Shabbat* archive, were unable to

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[68] Zapruder, 'Introduction', in Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 17.
[69] Kaufman, By Chance I Found a Pencil, p. 109.
[70] Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum ‚Life in the Camp' http://auschwitz.org/en/history/life-in-the-camp/ [last accessed 24.5.22]
[71] Imperial War Museum, 'Daily Life in the Warsaw Ghetto' https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/daily-life-in-the-warsaw-ghetto [last accessed 24.5.22].
[72] Doris L. Bergen, War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust (Maryland, 2003), p. 113.

guarantee the preservation of their paper documents without materials such as plastic, which was not yet widely available. Some of the Oneg Shabbat collections were buried underground in metal milk cans which undoubtedly aided their survival, they were discovered 'in excellent condition.'[73] Other parts of the archive which were buried in metal cases 'were wet and often mouldy' and did not survive.[74] The survival of the diarists within this study are, to varying degrees, remarkable – removed as they were from any collective attempt to protect the documents for posterity. Sierakowiak's notebooks survived inside the apartment where he lived with his family. The original Polish owner, Wacław Szkudlarek, returned to his home after liberation, and discovered Dawid's notebooks. Szkudlarek reported to the Regional Commission for the Examination of Nazi Crimes in Łódź that 'a whole pile of notebooks filled with writing was lying on the stove. Someone must have been using them to keep their fire running because some of them were torn up. They contained stories, poems and other notes.'[75] The handwriting of the diarists can be illuminating, reflecting the conditions in which they wrote. Hauser's account features snippets of text added at different times and her scrawling handwriting hints at increasing anxiety in certain entries though the entire notebook is legible. Łaski's diary was written in the margins of François Coppée's 1892 novel *Les Vrais Riches*.[76] He evidently tried to ensure his writing was legible though the words snake across the pages, avoiding the print and drawings of the novel itself and at times being encircled by Łaski to separate entries. The handwriting in each language is neat though often cramped due to lack of space. The author of diary 9 wrote in consistent, neat handwriting which is legible throughout the entire text. The anonymous bunker diary wrote on ten individual pieces of paper with neat handwriting.[77] Szpigielman's account, too, was written in neat, legible handwriting. His notebooks include some small drawings, suggesting he was bored and was entertaining himself as well as writing his experience.[78] In some cases, ŻIH has only a typed copy of the diary, meaning inferring information from the physical condition of the account is impossible.

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[73] ŻIH, 'Discovering the Second Part of the Archive' https://www.jhi.pl/en/articles/discovering-second-part-of-archive,66
[74] Ibid.
[75] Adelson, 'One Life Lost' in *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 5.
[76] French: The Truly Rich.
[77] GFHA, 6045, p. 1.
[78] ŻIH, 302/195, p. 150.

Amos Goldberg notes that a constant location was required by ghetto inhabitants in order to write their accounts.[79] Leociak concurs, adding that 'home was a certain fixed point in the space of the ghetto with which the situation of writing was linked. Although what was going on surpassed any previous experience, the conditions in which it was all recorded seem almost traditional, even classical. The diarist came home from the street after a day full of impressions and noted down what he had seen and heard.'[80] Family members were, of necessity, present when most authors were writing. The crowded nature of apartment rooms meant that the diary, commonly considered a private and personal endeavour, adapted to its purpose in the ghetto reality. Łaski confessed to reading his sister's diary, and her sadness greatly upset him.[81] Lipszyc, when attempting to read 'late at night' decried her cousin, Chanusia, for 'rushing me to bed, she says I can finish tomorrow.'[82] The entries reveal the physical proximity of the relatives of the authors to the texts; the accessibility of Łaski's diary to his sister and the likely proximity of Rywka's cousin to her in the 'tiny dwelling… on Wolborska Street' that the five Lipszyc girls shared after July 1943.[83] Sierakowiak's diaries were written in composition notebooks and the physical appearance of those available to view shows that the majority were not written in bound diary books.[84] The author of diary 9 from Łódź wrote her account on accounting ledger sheets, though it is unclear where she obtained these.

<u>Oneg Shabbat</u>

Many of the members of the archive kept diaries themselves, which have become invaluable resources for scholars. These ten diaries are in Hebrew or Yiddish, with the exception of Rachela Auerbach's, whose diary and writings are mostly in Polish with an occasional number of entries and notes written in Yiddish.[85] The choice of language in the members' diaries are reflective of the ideological and political stance described above.

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[79] Goldberg, Trauma in First Person, p. 8.
[80] Leociak, Text in the Face of Destruction, p. 55.
[81] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 13.
[82] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 153.
[83] Rosenbaum, 'Łódź', in Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 61.
[84] As was the case with the quintessential example of Anne Frank's white and red checked diary.
[85] Karolina Szymaniak (ed.), *Rachela Auerbach: Pisma z Getta Warszawskiego* (Warsaw, 2015), p. 18.

Generally, these diarists were anti-assimilationist and members of the intelligentsia before the war. Person notes the methods of documentation in the *Oneg Shabbat* archives, which show the categorization of assimilated Jews in their research, 'signifying a view of assimilation as an apostasy and the last step before baptism.'[86] Thus, their decision to write in Yiddish and Hebrew has great significance and, as Simon stressed, was borne of political ideology.[87] The *Oneg Shabbat* group had a core group of key members (as well as more casual workers)[88] and a clear purpose: to provide historians and researchers of the future with answers to fundamental questions about the Warsaw ghetto and beyond. This is in contrast to the diaries featured in this study; they did not write their diaries as part of a wider organisation, nor with the knowledge that they would be stored with such a collection to help preserve them. The well-known, published diaries of various *Oneg Shabbat* members and others (men like Chaim Aron Kaplan, who was not a member of the organisation but who was an intellectual and known to Ringelblum) comprise their own, unique category of Holocaust diary. These writers, as Goldberg explains, were focused on what they perceived as their duty to record for posterity 'the lives of the people imprisoned there, their moods, and their collapsing consciousness.'[89] Abraham Lewin described the activities of their weekly meeting in a diary entry on 6th June 1942:

> 'We gather every Sabbath, a group of activists in the Jewish community, to discuss our diaries and writings. We want our sufferings, these 'birth-pangs of the Messiah,' to be impressed upon the memories of future generations and on the memory of the whole world. We meet every Sabbath, and we talk over our duties in this matter and in doing this we are unable to refrain from recounting to each other everything they are doing to us, these old-new Amalekites.'[90]

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[86] Person, *Assimilated Jews*, p. 36.
[87] Simon, Surrounded by the Hunter on All Sides, p. 92.
[88] ŻIH, *Oneg Szabat* Portal, '*Oneg Szabat* Group': http://onegszabat.org/en/oneg-szabat-group/ [last accessed 24.5.22].
[89] Goldberg, *Trauma in First Person*, p. vii.
[90] Polonsky, *A Cup of Tears*, p. 120

Though the diarists included in this study felt a 'duty' similar to Lewin (which will be analysed further below), they were not engaging in an organisation with a shared mission, as the *Oneg Shabbat* members were. The breadth and depth of the organisation's work meant that it covered and preserved many artefacts of Jewish life in occupied Poland including (but not limited to): diaries, bulletins, newspapers, reports, and interviews with many ghetto inmates.[91] It also actively strove to record the realities of life for those at the bottom of society as well as the larger majority. As described above, however, this did not and could not include testimonies written *by* social outsiders such as beggars. It also did not convene the efforts of all individuals writing diaries whose accounts have survived and been acquired through means outside the archive itself. It must be noted that Ringelblum did attempt to include in the collection diaries which were written by people outside of the archives. Of Chaim Kaplan's diary, Ringelblum wrote: 'Several times I implored Kaplan to let me preserve his diary, assuring him that after the war he would get it back. The most he agreed was to have me copy the manuscript, but that was a physical impossibility because of the hardships.'[92] This attempt was of course not possible for every diary written in the ghetto. Their inclusion into the underground archive gave them a better chance for survival. Those writing outside of the framework of an archive or organisation had no organised plan for concealment and protection of their diary as in the same way as the Ringelblum Archive, which was buried underground and protected as much as was possible.

Archive Department and the Encyclopedia of the Łódź Ghetto

In Łódź there existed a similar, but lesser known, archival organisation dedicated to preserving the realities of ghetto life for future generations. The Archive Department, which itself fell under the jurisdiction of the Registration Office of the *Judenrat*, was officially created by Rumkowski, and was known to the German authorities.[93] The archives of the pre-war Jewish community were preserved in the archive department, though their duties

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[91] For a full inventory of the Ringelblum Archive in English, please see, Robert Moses Shapiro and Tadeusz Epsztein (ed.), *The Warsaw Ghetto, Oyneg Shabes – Ringelblum Archive, Catalog and Guide* (Indiana, 2009).
[92] Israel Gutman 'Foreword,' in Abraham I. Katsch, *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan* (Indiana, 1999), p. 6.
[93] Lucjan Dobroszycki (ed.), *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto 1941-1944* (New Haven and London, 1984), pp. ix-x.

soon expanded to preserve content 'for future scholars studying the life of a Jewish society in one of its most difficult periods' as described by Henryk Neftalin, a high-ranking official within the Jewish administration.[94] The Archive Department was responsible for producing the Polish-language *Biuletyn Kroniki Codziennej*[95] later produced in German, and renamed the *Tageschronik*[96] arguably the best-known account of Łódź ghetto society.[97] The *Chronicle* was a publicly available bulletin, produced almost daily between 1941 until mid-1944, usually dated with several headings per day such as weather, births, and deaths, as well as pertinent news of the day.[98] As well as the *Chronicle*, the Archive Department began a project to create a lexicon of the ghetto in 1943 headed by Oskar Rosenfeld. Entitled 'The Encyclopedia of the Łódź Ghetto,' the ten members of the project planned 1,347 entries on a multitude of topics pertaining to life inside the ghetto. This included biographies of society members (ranging from senior administration members to shopkeepers), words and terms new to ghetto life, and ghetto departments and institutions.[99] Rosenfeld's ultimate goal for the Encyclopedia was that it become 'part of the cultural history of the ghetto.'[100] Almost one-third of the entries were completed before the ghetto was liquidated in August 1944, predominately the biographical entries because, as posited by the editors of the published Encyclopedia, they were the easiest to complete.[101] Of the ten male contributors to the Encyclopedia, at least six attended university or further education.[102] All were educated to some extent and worked for various ghetto departments. In writing the Encyclopedia, with its commendable goal of documenting ghetto life for future researchers, they were engaging in a shared, cultural goal. As with the *Oneg Shabbat* archives, several members also kept diaries. Though their work was exceptional and important, their diaries will not be included as the key source basis for the present study. If we (rightly) take these remarkable archives to be exceptional, then it bears fruit to consider the accounts written beyond them

[94] Quoted in Dobroszycki, 'Introduction' in *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*, p. x.
[95] Polish: Daily Chronicle Bulletin.
[96] German: Daily Chronicle.
[97] Dobroszycki, 'Introduction' in *Chronicle*, p. xv.
[98] Ibid, p. x.
[99] Sitarek and Wiatr, *Encyclopedia*, p. xvi.
[100] Quoted by Piotr Zawilski, 'Preface', in Sitarek and Wiatr, *Encyclopedia*, p. viii.
[101] Sitarek and Wiatr, *Encyclopedia*, p. xv.
[102] Ibid, pp. xxi-xxviii.

as a separate collective, offering somewhat different accounts, or, perhaps more importantly, accounts which were written with different goals in mind.

Why they wrote

Garbarini and Bethke describe the concept of *Amidah*, propagated by Mark Dworzecki in the 1950s and revisited by Yehuda Bauer in the 1980s. This notion defines resistance as 'standing up against'[103] which includes 'cultural, religious, political, and education efforts, along with the smuggling of food and the medical care provided by Jewish doctors and nurses' in order to maintain 'the Jewish collective and individual existence until the time of Germany's presumed defeat.'[104] Bethke notes the value of this definition, but emphasises its reliance upon a postwar perspective and how it overlooks 'the fact that Jewish people living through ghettoization had all kinds of reasons for committing acts classified by the Germans and/or Jewish Councils as criminal, as some of the examples in this chapter have shown. It matters whether an action is classified as "resistance" with hindsight, or in the contemporary context of the situation itself.'[105] The authors of diaries and other contemporary sources do not classify their actions as 'resistance'. The explanations for creating such documents are complex and differ depending on the author.

Unlike a man such as Ringelblum, whom Leociak credits with being 'undoubtedly one of the best-informed people in the ghetto,'[106] the diarists of this study were often individuals whose principal concern was their immediate circle, namely their family and friends, and engagement with wider issues was limited or non-existent. Philip Lejeune, autobiography and diary scholar, is celebrated for his 'respect for what ordinary people produce and think about in opposition to the social prejudice (and the prejudice – too often – of intellectuals) "ordinary" things and people have engendered since the eighteenth century.'[107] Unlike members of *Oneg Shabbat*, the intention of some diarists is not explicitly stated or clarified in their text. Leociak offers an explanation for these writers, stating that they were

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[103] Bethke, *Dance on the Razor's Edge*, p. 11.
[104] Garbarini, *Numbered Days*, p. 59.
[105] Bethke, *Dance on the Razor's Edge*, p. 160.
[106] Leociak, *Text in the Face of Destruction*, p. 28.
[107] Julie Rak, 'Dialogue with the Future: Phillippe Lejeune's Method and Theory of Diary, in Jeremy D. Popkin and Julie Rak (ed.), *Philippe Lejeune: On Diary* (Hawaii, 2009), p. 18.

participating in the invocation of Jewish tradition, stretching back to 'the obligation of bearing witness to wickedness' as commanded in the Torah and the Talmud.[108] Simon has analysed the Yiddish writers who made historical connections between their situation and the Jewish past, quoting Ringelblum's dubbing of Hitler as 'the modern Haman.'[109] This can also be observed in the diary of Berg who bestowed the name 'New Egyptians' upon the Nazi invaders.[110] With the exception of Berg, few diarists included here openly invoke Jewish history or religious tradition in their attempt to explain or situate their circumstances within the Jewish experience.

Leociak's study is predominantly a literary one which relies heavily on the *Oneg Shabbat* archive, though he does include other, non-members as well. Similarly, both Kaufman and Garbarini focus on well-known diarists of the ghettos such as Chaim Kaplan. Their premise of analysing diaries across the width and breadth of the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Europe offers useful insights, but, by their sweeping nature, they exclude the specificities of ghetto diary writing. The thesis' main aim is to marry some of the well-known and published diaries (such as Berg and Sierakowiak) with lesser known, sometimes anonymous, diaries, all of which were written organically, that is, without organisational influence. By doing so, it offers an opportunity to investigate the diaries as ghetto-born texts and to elucidate specific conclusions about life in the ghetto context. To this end, the thesis will investigate the attention diarists devoted to their perpetrators and persecutors, similar to the approach of Simon. The use of Polish language-text will elicit some variation in perspectives on the German, Polish, and Jewish groups and individuals believed to be responsible for Jewish suffering in the ghettos. The personal perspective is of utmost importance to the themes of the thesis and echoes the centrality of this in Peri's study of *blokadniki*[111] diaries: 'Although they tried to generalize about blockade society from their encounters in lines, cafeterias, and bathhouses, the diarists' entries underscore the very personal, particular nature of their perspective. Their impressions depended on where they stood – at the front or back of a

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[108] Leociak, *Text in the Face of Destruction*, p. 96.

[109] Amy Simon, 'The Modern Haman: Ghetto Diary Writers' Understanding of Holocaust Perpetrators,' *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*, Volume 17, Nos. 2-3 (2011), pp. 123-44.

[110] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 47.

[111] Russian: blockaded people.

line, before or behind a food counter – and next to whom they ate and bathed. Moreover, the operating logic and configuration of each locale informed the diarists' visions of the social order.'[112] Fogel exemplified this when describing the experience of the *Szpera*[113]: 'Every ghetto inhabitant has their own story about the things they have gone through in the past few days, but most importantly [I have to write] what I have gone through during these few days!'[114]

The idea of vengeance toward the perpetrators is prominent in some diaries, though contrary to what may be expected, it was not listed as a motivation for writing the diary, but in a milder (though no less powerful) tone to bear witness to crimes, so that they may be justly punished after the war. Gombiński prefaces his account with his intention to bear witness. He begins by quoting Remarque, whose book *Na zachodzie bez zmian*[115] begins 'This is not intended to be an accusation.' Gombiński counters his own powerful text as accusatory, adding that 'these memories are… an indictment against the true culprits.'[116] Though most diaries contain emotive passages and opinions such as Gombiński's opening line, others were written in a factual tone throughout, seemingly to emphasise the veracity of their account such as Brzezińska: 'I try to faithfully dedicate in writing this conversation conducted late at night with an unknown German. It is necessary to find a place for it in these pages'[117] In addition, her original diary contained few references which could reveal her identity, in case of discovery.[118] Szpigielman, too, wrote for a future audience and described his efforts 'trying to be objective.'[119]

For the diarists, the question of audience is an important, but often unanswered question. For those outside of any organisational framework there was a lower chance of survival, and (if the text did survive) also a vaguer sense of who would read it after the war. The

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[112] Peri, *The War Within*, p. 160.
[113] The Polish word from the German 'Allgemeine Gehsperre' – general curfew. This was the prohibition for people to leave their homes during the deportations of September 1942.
[114] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 149.
[115] The Polish title of the First World War epic, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929).
[116] ŻIH, 302/38, p. 6.
[117] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 30.
[118] Haska, *Zofia Brzezińska*, pp. 10-11.
[119] Janczewska, *Stefan Szpigielman*, p. 94.

historically minded organisations, should they survive, were clear foundations for future research to be carried out, particularly given their collective goal to document ghetto society. In all cases, however, the hope which pervades the act of writing is paramount. Even diarists who did not have hope in their own survival were hopeful of the ability to testify. This act of 'writing themselves into the future,'[120] emphasises a small act of hope in writing their account, even for those who came to believe writing was not a worthwhile endeavour. In contrast to members of the organisations of *Oneg Shabbat* and the Łódź Ghetto Archives, Lubiński questioned his diary writing in late 1941. As his diary resumed after an uncharacteristic two-month break, he explained: 'Recently, last week, I wondered why I was not writing. I have come to believe that writing every day is pointless, because there is so little of any interest nowadays, and thus there is very little to write about. Secondly, the enthusiasm for writing, as I have discovered, diminished as the time goes by.'[121] This was Lubiński's penultimate entry, making it probable that he had neither the physical or mental capacity to continue writing, nor could he conceive of the diary as valuable. Rywka, too, questioned the benefit of keeping a diary, in one of her first entries on 23rd October 1943.[122] She described herself as 'hesitating over whether I should keep writing… I have neither the patience nor time.' Before adding, 'Well, no, I will stop…'[123] Her uncertainty over whether she can continue her diary is ultimately assuaged, demonstrated by the continuance of the diary in several more entries before the text ends in April 1944. This devotion to writing, as with Lubiński's initial vigour for the activity, was threatened, though not destroyed by the physical condition of the author. Her dedication to writing despite her conditions, though not explicitly stated as writing to testify, is strongly suggested by her complaint that due to a lack of ink, 'I leave out many things. Oh…'[124] This implicitly shows how Rywka's objective is to write about her experience, though her circumstances greatly limit her ability to do so. Fogel did not engage in questions of why he wrote his diary, nor did he suggest there was little need. He did, however, acknowledge how inconceivable the events will be to those who were not present. When discussing

[120] Kaufman, By Chance I Found a Pencil, p. 66.
[121] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 182.
[122] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 71.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid, p. 73.

Jewish children who were taken from their mothers during the deportations from Pabianice to Łódź, Fogel added: 'I am not sure if anyone who might read this in the future will believe all of this.'[125] Person notes how Gombiński 'turned directly to the reader of his memoirs.'[126] The inconceivability of Nazi crimes outweighed the prospect of discovery and any fears over incomprehensibility of a future reader.

The diary functioned as a means of reminding the diarist they were human, and that they were an individual. For all their similarities, the diaries prove that each individual author was unique. The sense of a diary as a 'space' in its own right is supported by Haas, who notes: 'For many ghetto residents, the pages of their diaries were the only place where they could be with themselves and express what was important to them. In their letters, they could communicate with someone they were not forced to live with. Ego documents were an expression of self-determination and autonomy in an extremely heteronomous environment.'[127] The chance to be an individual was greatly reduced within the Nazi methods of Jewish persecution which sought to dehumanize their victims, most infamously in the example of prisoners in Auschwitz-Birkenau tattooed with their prisoner number on their left arm. Tattooing of prisoners was not practiced at any camp other than Auschwitz, but inmates in other camps were addressed using only their number, not their name. Ghetto inmates retained their name, but many other choices and daily freedoms were severely curtailed such as attending school or further education, and where to work. Individuals did not have a great deal of control over what they could produce in the ghetto, they were often forced to labour for the workshops, and they were very restricted in terms of the food they could prepare and give to themselves and family members. A personal written document provided a potentially infinite space (resource-dependent) within which an author could write whatever they chose. Authors (typically children or young adults) often utilised their diary space as a means of expressing their grievances against family members, here offering similar conclusions to Peri's study of Leningrad diaries.[128] Diarists

[125] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 91.
[126] Person, *Warsaw Ghetto Police*, p. 53.
[127] Haas, Das Private im Ghetto, p. 324
[128] Peri, *The War Within*, p. 103.

sometimes lived with family members they did not have good relationships with; the result of long-standing issues exacerbated by ghetto life while others were created by their present circumstances. Diary writing thus offered companionship in a lonely world, similar to Anne Frank's famous 'dear kitty' who was a 'friend'[129] to her. Lipszyc, too, occasionally addressed her diary directly, assuring it after an inspection by a hygienist at school: 'don't be afraid, my diary, I was and am clean.'[130]

Diary writing provided a chance for escapism. Fogel explained in an entry of 12th April 1944: 'First of all, I will point out that I am too swamped with work to find any time for writing. But I need to leave all of that behind and write something.'[131] His writing necessitates a departure from his current circumstance. Historian Laqueur Weiss noted similar justification in the concentration camp context where authors felt the need 'to escape the present and hold on to an ideal or a concept in order to survive' and also 'to write themselves out of the concentration camp world.'[132] Fogel, and others, were not only using writing as a means of leaving their present reality as they wrote, but were also in the view of Fiona Kaufman, 'writing themselves into the future.'[133] This historical function of the diaries is part of the diarists' creation of 'narrative identities that would be understood and believable in the future'[134] which was achieved through the method of recording events 'simply and accurately, giving dates, geographic details and names.'[135] While the historiography often uses these unadorned details given by the authors to supplement, for example, a basic overview of hunger in the ghetto, they can be utilised in a deeper way in order to show diarists' perception of their daily reality. Fogel's entry above also highlights the literal difficulty of being able to write. The physical and mental capacity which writing demands, though it may seem minimal to many, was a rather severe requirement for ghetto inmates who were undernourished and overworked.

[129] Martin, *Diary of Anne Frank*, p. 4.
[130] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 121.
[131] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 145.
[132] Weiss quoted in Patterson, *Along the Edge of Annihilation*, p. 23.
[133] Kaufman, By Chance I Found a Pencil, p. 82.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.

The concept of escaping the ghetto and, potentially, entering a different world through the creation of a text is evident in the diary of Hauser. The first seven pages of her diary contain a list, akin to an address book, with her relatives and acquaintances, beginning with her immediate family members. It also specifies that, if found, the diary should be sent to her sister, Josephine, in England. The diary serves as a form of communication with the outside world for Hauser. The addition of thirty-one names succeeding her sister's details emphasizes that for Hauser it represented a dialogue with people to whom she was connected by familial bonds, in an environment where she was a foreigner who knew few people and her own immediate family was struggling to survive. Garbarini aptly summarises that Hauser wrote her diary 'for and to her siblings.'[136] Her listing of numerous people also grounds Hauser to life in the present, providing a visual list of the roots she has in Vienna and beyond.

Berg also used her diary to communicate with the outside world, when she directly implored: 'Where are you, foreign correspondents? Why don't you come here and describe the sensational scenes of the ghetto? No doubt you don't want to spoil your appetite. Or are you satisfied with what the Nazis tell you .... that they locked up the Jews in the ghetto in order to protect the Aryan population from epidemics and dirt?'[137] Though, of course, no foreign reporter was able to read Berg's diary at the time of writing, she used the blank canvas of her diary here to ask a question which was undoubtedly being asked by ghetto inmates. The diary could bridge the gap between the ghetto and the wider world, in the case of Berg and Hauser, to beyond Nazi-occupied frontiers. The diaries of Hauser and Berg addressing the world outside the ghetto, both to family members and foreign reporters, also hints at a potential readership for their diaries. In the hope that it might be found (in Hauser's case) and in the plans for publication (which Berg potentially made before or after her departure from the ghetto with the diary in her luggage) their specification of people and matters outside the ghetto show contemporaneous communication with future readership and, in Berg's case, an indictment of those who did not act during the event itself.

[136] Garbarini, *Numbered* Days, p. 123.
[137] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 80.

Diarists who had written before the war, writers Garbarini regards as 'veteran diarist[s],'[138] were those with a passion for writing and recording events around them. They were well versed in the practice and the events themselves, though offering ample material for recording daily life, did not serve as the impetus for their account. Sierakowiak's diary began before the Nazi invasion of Poland on 1st September 1939, on 28th June 1939. Though only a short duration before the invasion, it is evident that the war did not prompt Sierakowiak to start his account. His first mention of the possibility of war is in his fourth entry, dated 2nd July 1939. He notes the rumours that Hitler may annex Danzig but dismisses this, adding, 'I doubt he'll dare for now.'[139] His diary, began shortly after his fifteenth birthday, was an intellectual endeavour for a young man with a keen, inquisitive mind. The war came to feature and eventually ghetto life dominated the text, but his passion for writing is evident within the diary. Within this study, Sierakowiak's is the only diary which was started before the war.[140] Other diarists, however, displayed a passion and ability for writing which extends beyond their immediate circumstance and the need to bear witness. Lipszyc also viewed her diary writing as an essential, stress-relieving task.

This highlights what is omitted from the diaries and can never be gleaned from them. Only that which the diarists themselves chose to include can be extracted and analysed from the texts, reinforcing the benefits of a diarist-led approach, as manifested in this thesis, which selects topics chosen by the authors themselves. The question of silences within the diaries is a prominent one which can never fully be resolved. The words which were written and were then destroyed or lost are irrevocably gone, only a hint of them exists in other diaries, whose authors noted that friends and family had also penned a diary. In addition, that which was not written can never be discovered, even survivors cannot fill these silences on behalf of those who were murdered and the text itself cannot answer every question arising from a modern-day reading. The diarists were motivated to write because of their (varied)

[138] Alexandra Garbarini online lecture for USHMM, 26th August 2020 [Quotation at 6:18:00]: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNUbBHplJ0o [last accessed 24.5.22].
[139] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 21.
[140] It is possible that other diarists did write before the war, but these are not referenced or have not survived.

awareness of their position. By 1942, which Garbarini identifies as a turning point in diarists' narrative due the growing realisation of their likely fate because of the Final Solution, placing the authors in the dual position of being eyewitnesses and victims.

Describing the Indescribable

The Holocaust, the post-war designation for the genocide of six million European Jews, was unlike any prior event in history. Though now recognised as one of several genocides which occurred worldwide in the twentieth century, the events which swept Europe as a result of the Nazi regime's invasion of much of the continent were wholly unique in the history of the people subjected to it. Survivors give their testimony to ensure a catastrophe like the Holocaust never happens again, they also acknowledge the impossibility of conveying what it was like to experience the events in first person. The post-survivor landscape will lose this first-person connection to events, relegating them to written and audio/visual testimony. These modern-day worries about teaching the Holocaust in a post-survivor world echo the concerns expressed contemporaneously during the events, who feared that their experiences could never be described. Diarists questioned their own ability to accurately impart knowledge of the events to those who were not there. Szpigielman wrote that the 'multitude of unbelievably terrible events surpass all normal imagination, I cannot always finish writing them.'[141] Lipszyc asked 'what are human words worth? They express so little. I have just written an entire page but I haven't even described my feelings.'[142]

On the other hand, the duty diarists felt resided in tandem with their reservations and concerns about imparting their experiences to the future. The authors were aware that the events they were living through surpassed anything previously experienced by Jews and, especially prevalent in diaries/entries written after Garbarini's watershed mark of mid-1942, by any group in history. The use of facts in accounts, using names, street names, statistical information, and other factual detail highlights the diarists' need to anchor their experiences in a lived reality, and simultaneously their awareness that the events they witnessed were indescribable and beyond comprehension. Their clarity in the face of

[141] ŻIH, 302/195, p. 7.
[142] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 83.

cruelty, violence, and ultimate possibility of death, is a result of their need to relay events which, though seemingly indescribable, happened to them and their community. It is clear that, regardless of their representability, the authors of diaries felt they must at least attempt to convey something of their experience to outsiders. Faced with their attempt, historians, and other researchers, have a duty to engage with these texts, despite the difficulties present in their use as sources. Researchers need to utilise some degree of imagination in order to envisage, interpret, and attempt to understand said events. This notion was first posited by Robin G. Collingwood in *The Idea of History* (1946).[143] Here, precise accounts of historical events is key, however, this is not what can or should be required from the diaries. Their interpretation of events is their indispensable contribution to knowledge of the Holocaust, rather than providing indisputable, factual descriptions of the ghetto. Engelking too, notes that 'one's own imagination and intuition' are crucial 'in trying to understand the inner life of the ghetto.'[144] Goldberg further elucidates the ordeal experienced by the diarists who underwent 'trauma in first person.'[145] Goldberg's lens of analysis highlights that the diarists' witnessing and experience of the upheaval and violence of life in the Holocaust led to a 'fundamental unsettlement and internal disintegration that shook the identity of the victims to the point of threatening to nullify their very human existence, beyond the question of their biological survival.'[146]

The exceptional circumstances of the ghetto conditions did not, necessarily, create exceptional lives. People continued to be what they once were, if only to a limited extent: they remained wives, husbands, children, siblings; assimilated, Orthodox; educated, non-educated. These designations morphed throughout the ghetto period, but the conditions did not automatically strip them of their self-identity. The key elements highlighted above will be utilised as the grounding for the categorization of elements of daily life, as outlined by the diarists themselves. The topics of food, family, time, place, and perpetrators and persecutors will be used as categories of analysis linking the diaries as a collective and

[143] Robert G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford, 1994).
[144] Barbara Engelking, *Holocaust and Memory: The Experience of the Holocaust and Its Consequences: An Investigation Based on Personal Narratives* (London and New York, 2001), p. 85.
[145] See: Goldberg, *Trauma in First Person*.
[146] Ibid, p. x.

allowing us to draw deeper conclusions about the daily lives of individual diarists in the ghettos. As will be shown, diaries offer a complex and often contradictory insight into how life was attempted in ghetto conditions, adding nuance to our understanding of daily life. The diarists described what was of personal importance and provide us with a greater sense of their reality.

Chapter Two: Food

Food is an essential component of human life. It provides the calories and nutrients needed to sustain the body, and on a metaphorical level it is bound in the history and culture of groups and nationalities. As such, food occupies a much larger space in daily life than purely as fuel; humans can taste and experience the variety of food available in the world, can express joy at pleasurable food, and disgust at poor-quality food, or that which is perceived as undesirable. Food historian Amy Bentley notes that 'food plays a role in virtually every area that is important to our lives: from the rituals of daily life, leisure activities, and aesthetic pleasure, to politics and government, war, social interchange, and commerce.'[1] Food evokes emotions and is inherently connected to our social and cultural reality.

Scholars in Vienna in the early twentieth century began analysing specifically Jewish food and the role it had played in Jewish history.[2] Historian John Cooper describes the efforts of two such scholars, Yehuda Zlotnik and Max Grunwald, as an attempt 'to demarcate more clearly the boundaries between the Jewish and the Gentile worlds.'[3] Jewish food has its own long-standing traditions which are heavily linked to its history. Ken Albala, in investigating the importance of food in various cultures, concludes that 'no other culture through history has been more focused on food than that of the ancient Hebrews.'[4] Practices of this ancient religion have, in many ways, revolved around food and several key traditions of Judaism and food today take their roots from these. Albala notes that 'food rituals span the Hebrew calendar'[5] and that 'how what people eat essentially defines their relationship to God.'[6] The study of Jewish food has developed both academically and in popular literature. Its connection with the Holocaust remains underexplored.[7] The topic has, however, been approached in other perilous periods such as the First World War. Belinda Davis assessed

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[1] Amy Bentley, 'Introduction', in Bentley, (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age, Volume 6* (London and New York, 2012), p.1.
[2] John Cooper, *Eat and Be Satisfied: A Social History of Jewish Food* (New Jersey and London, 1993), p. xi.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ken Albala, *The Food History Reader: Primary Sources* (New York and London, 2014), p. 169.
[5] Ibid p. 170.
[6] Ibid, p. 171.
[7] Gesine Gerhard, *Nazi Hunger Politics: A History of Food in the Third Reich* (London, 2015), p. 15.

the effects of food shortage on the everyday life of Berliners, revealing the inseparability of food and politics, and arguing the case for viewing 'those on the home front as historical actors whose beliefs and everyday acts might have changed what politicians said and did, and even how the war was fought.'[8] Maureen Healy offers a useful approach to the interconnectedness between food and everyday life. She details the myriad effects food had on the home front of Vienna during the First World War, as well as the 'roots of the collapse' of the Habsburg state in these developments.[9] The importance of food in everyday life cannot be understated, yet is often overlooked, as the work of Davis and Healy proves.

Anna Hájková notes that deliberate deprivation characterised Nazi food policy in the *Generalgouvernement* but 'beyond this assertion, we know little about how hunger and access to food shaped ghetto society.'[10] Indeed, the attention paid to food in the ghettos of Poland (including the Warthegau and the *Generalgouvernement*) is almost entirely on ration levels, and the literal effect this had on inhabitants. Christopher R. Browning addresses food as a subsection of the intentionalist versus functionalist debate, describing the factions of 'attritionists,' who favoured starving the ghetto populations *en masse*, and the 'productionists' who believed that feeding the ghettos would lead to an efficient workforce which could benefit the Reich and its war efforts.[11] Ultimately, neither side wholly won this ideological debate on how best to address the "problem" of the Jewish population of Poland. The ghettos continued to exist and were fed while producing goods for the war effort, but they were never truly self-sufficient. Browning also notes that this temporary status relied on plans, then in circulation, which focused on Jewish reservations in the Lublin area, or expulsion to Madagascar. The ghettos of Warsaw and Łódź eventually existed for three and four years, respectively, which provided ample time to implement and modify food policy and distribution as the external situation dictated. Helene Sinnreich's doctoral thesis on food in the Łódź ghetto offers a detailed micro-analysis of the Nazi and

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[8] Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill and London, 2000), p. 4.
[9] Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire, Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 300.
[10] Anna Hájková, *The Last Ghetto: An Everyday History of Theresienstadt* (Oxford, 2020), p. 100.
[11] Browning, 'Nazi Ghettoization Policy in Poland', p. 345.

Jewish administration of food, as well as how ghetto residents responded, both contemporaneously in diaries and writings from the ghetto and retrospectively from survivors. Sinnreich stresses that a more detailed analysis of reactions to the constant spectre of food within everyday life is necessary. This chapter will offer nuance on diarists' responses to food as a crucial part of everyday life. As Cara de Silva notes 'food is who we are in the deepest sense, and not because it is transformed into blood and bone. Our personal gastronomic traditions – what we eat, the foods and foodways we associate with the rituals of our childhood, marriage, and parenthood, moments around the table, celebrations – are critical components of our identities.'[12] These connections associated with food were altered and, at times, enhanced due to the realities of ghetto life and must be viewed beyond the scope of survival and rations. The reaction to food in the diaries varies between those who did not approach food on a level other than sustenance and those who offered a more emotional, contemplative perspective. Its presence in each diary attests to its importance for everyday life.

The chapter aims to situate food in the context of the Third Reich's genocidal policies and the daily life of the diarists. It uses the official perception of food in the ghettos as its foundation and combines this with the various Jewish responses to the actual and imagined reality of food. Supplementary evidence will be acquired using official Nazi and *Judenrat* policies and decision making, as these are also crucial in understanding Jewish ghetto inhabitants' relationship with food. It will analyse policy decisions implemented by the authorities and the diarists' response to these: the distribution and reception of rations, bread, and poor relief. It also briefly describes the Warsaw Ghetto Starvation Study as an example of doctors trying to fight starvation to highlight the response of Jewish medical professionals to the starvation epidemic. It then assesses the prevalence of smuggling in the Warsaw ghetto, as well as the lack of it in Łódź. Of equal importance is the cultural response of the diarists, assessed through the lens of behaviours of consumption in family units, inequality and luxury, changing perceptions of edibility and food within Judaism – both in daily religion and in Passover. Finally, it addresses how food affected perceptions of

[12] Cara De Silva, 'Introduction' in Cara De Silva (ed.), *In Memory's Kitchen: A Legacy from the Women of Terezin* (Oxford, 1996), p. xxvi.

the future. These aspects of food in the ghetto defined daily life and directly impacted the amount of food a family might have on any given day and how they may prepare, share, and eat it. The practice of 'reading rations' became commonplace, where diarists interpreted the rations as information on the wider ghetto situation, as well as their own prospects for individual survival. The lack of food was often the focus of entries. The diary became a place to record frustrations relating to food, approaching this topic through diaries thus offers a uniquely personal insight into the realities of a society deprived of food. No diarist overlooked the topic of food, showing its omnipresence in daily life. The constant cycle of thinking of food, hoping for food, waiting for food, preparing food, and eating food permeated the daily lives of the ghetto inhabitants – and they learned how to interpret what they received as informing their future and chances of survival. This chapter will demonstrate that food was the fundamental distinguishing and dividing factor in ghetto life and was the single most significant part of daily life for the inmates both as human beings, and as Jews.

This chapter will be based upon writings by all twenty diarists included within this study. Significantly, only this chapter features every diarist's perspective on a facet of daily life, highlighting the centrality of food and its effect on every individual within the ghetto, regardless of social status and situation. The Łódź diarists included within this chapter are: Dawid Sierakowiak, Rywka Lipszyc, Heniek Fogel, Lolek Lubiński, Abram Łaski, Irene Hauser and the anonymous authors of diaries 9, 86 and 191. The Warsaw diarists included within this chapter are: Noemi Szac-Wajnkranc, Mary Berg, Janusz Korczak, Stanisław Gombiński, Adam Czerniaków , Janina Neuding, Zofia Brzezińska, Stefan Szpigielman, Chaim Hasenfuss, Dawid Fogelman and the anonymous author of the bunker diary.[13] In addition, the chapter will also draw on letters from the Halperson Family Collection and reference will be made to other diaries and writings from the ghetto such as that of Emmanuel Ringelblum and others.

[13] For full biographies (including gender, age, and status), please refer to 'the Diaries and the Diarists' section of Chapter One, pp. 21-26.

Policy

Distribution

Rationing was a defining characteristic of life on the home front of many nations involved in the First and Second World Wars. Rationing, as demonstrated by Maureen Healy in her study of home life in Vienna during the First World War, can have a disastrous effect on the everyday life of the population on the home front; if poorly managed, it can eventually jeopardise society's support for the government. The ghettos, though not on the home front but in occupied territory, were filled with civilians, who relied on the *Judenrat* for food, which in turn relied on the hostile Nazi authorities. Thus, the rations were not distributed from a fair system by a government responsible for the welfare of its citizens. Food distribution has been analysed in Amartya Sen's model of famine, through the lens of an individual's access to food. Sen's theory, as Sinnreich notes, does not provide for instances when groups are subject to 'inequitable distribution of food based on racism.'[14] She suggests that Sen's food entitlement theory must be modified before being applied to the Nazi ghettos. The diarists' perspective strengthens Sinnreich's modification of Sen's model, emphasising as they do the physical and emotional toll of hunger on the diarists which was the direct result of their racially influenced distribution. The work of Gesine Gerhard elucidates how Nazi leadership came to use food as a 'justification for war, and as a tool for genocide.'[15] The rampage across Europe provided the Nazi authorities with the opportunity to export and expand their weaponization of food, specifically against those it designated as 'useless eaters.' This concept was initially developed for utilisation on disabled people in Nazi Germany, known as the T4-Programme.[16] Applied on a wider scale, these methods became the *Hungerplan*, devised by Reich Minister of Food and Agriculture, Herbert Backe.

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[14] Helene J. Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto: A Case Study in Nazi Jewish Policy, 1939-1945' (unpublished doctoral Thesis, Brandeis University, 2004) p. 17.

[15] Gerhard, Nazi Hunger Politics, p. 9.

[16] Though the Nazis developed this concept as a tool of genocide, the term was used by German armies in the First World War to refer to French and Belgian civilians/internment camp inmates who refused/were unfit to work but expected to be fed. See: Matthew Stibbe, 'Gewalt gegen Zivilisten: "Arbeitsverweigerer" im besetzen Nordfrankreich und im südlichen Bayern während des Ersten Weltkriegs', in Sven Oliver Müller, Christin Pschichholz (eds.), *Gewaltgemeinschaften? Studien zur Gewaltsgeschichte im und nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt and New York, 2021).

He 'foresaw the starvation of tens of millions of Soviet citizens in cities and other regions.'[17] As well as Soviet citizens and POWs, Sinnreich notes that this approach was utilised in Poland, against both Poles and Jews.[18]

In Łódź the effects of the Nazi invasion on diet were immediate. The Jewish population was given less on principle than Polish civilians, even before it became official policy.[19] In November 1940, following a bread shortage, bread was rationed.[20] Full rationing was introduced in both the areas of the *Generalgouvernment*[21] and the Warthegau[22] for all segments of the population. Ethnic Germans received the highest rations, Poles received significantly less than Germans. Jews received the least. In Warsaw rations were initially controlled by the Municipal Provisioning Section of the Municipal Board for the entire city. In January 1941 the *Judenrat* took complete control of rationing for the Jewish population.[23] Residents paid a tax to collect their card, and then were able to use it to purchase goods in distribution shops.[24] The goods themselves were imported into the ghetto based on trade agreements between the *Judenrat* and the German administration. However, even receiving goods from the Nazi administration in Warsaw at times proved difficult due to ideological disagreements. Browning stresses the foresight of health officials, such as Dr Wilhelm Hagen, who realised that the failure to feed the Jews of Warsaw would lead to serious health problems. Hagen eventually resigned in protest over a Nazi policy which permitted the mistreatment of Polish tuberculosis patients. In a report on the spotted fever epidemic, Hagen wrote that 'in order to curb misery and demoralization and reduce the pressure to break out of the ghetto, the entire provisioning of the Jewish quarter requires an increase to the bare minimum for existence.'[25] Many could see the logic in keeping the Jewish inmates alive and labouring for the war effort. This group, dubbed the

[17] Ibid, p. 10.
[18] Sinnreich, The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto, p. 65.
[19] Ibid, p. 70.
[20] Ibid, p. 102.
[21] Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City* (New Haven and London, 2009), p. 412.
[22] Boris Shub, Reports of the World Jewish Congress (British Section), (London, 1943), p. 14.
[23] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 412.
[24] Ibid, p. 413.
[25] Christopher R. Browning, *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 155-56.

'productionists' by Browning, were opposed by the 'attritionists' who advocated for deliberate starvation. Eventually the 'productionists' prevailed, and the ghetto continued to receive rations. Heinz Auerswald, the Commissar for the Jewish District in Warsaw,[26] attempted to create a market economy in Warsaw to make the ghetto self-sustaining.[27] This, in theory, would mean that the ghetto was capable of feeding itself. In reality this was never achieved. Łódź also attempted to make itself a self-sufficient ghetto, providing vital goods for the German war effort and favouring workers in ration allocations.

Further complicating the control of food supply by the Nazi administration was the rationing system of each *Judenrat*. In Łódź, the Provisioning Department was created by the *Judenrat* on 16 October 1939.[28] Initially this was responsible for organising food for Jewish charitable institutions such as hospitals, schools etc. though it became responsible for providing food to the entire Jewish population when Jewish food merchants were barred from trading with non-Jews, thus excluding Jews from the food economy and forcing the creation of their own system which relied on trade with the Nazi authorities only.[29] Rationing of food was staggered between June and December 1940. Rationing of all foodstuffs came into effect on 15th December 1940. From 30th December 1940, it was announced that the *Judenrat* Provisioning Department would be the exclusive distributor of rations (prior to this house committees had also distributed rations).[30] The rationing system functioned on the premise that every inhabitant was given a base amount, and supplements were added for certain categories such as the sick who were receiving prescriptions (though this policy was short lived), or heavy labourers.[31] Similarly in Warsaw, the problem of food and feeding the ghetto population became the responsibility of the *Judenrat*. They created a department responsible for provisioning the ghetto called the Supply Section in December 1940.[32] This, *Gazeta Żydowska* reported on 28th November 1941, was 'the official responsibility of the

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[26] He was later the Governor of the Warsaw Ghetto from March 1941 to November 1942. For more information, see: 'Auerswald, Heinz' Biography on YVA, Shoah Resource Centre: https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%205780.pdf [last accessed 24.5.22].
[27] Browning, 'Nazi Ghettoization Policy', p. 362.
[28] Isiah Trunk, *Łódź Ghetto: A History* (Bloomington, 2008), p. 105.
[29] Ibid, p. 105.
[30] Ibid, p. 106.
[31] Sinnreich, The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto, p. 94.
[32] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 187.

chairman of the *Judenrat'* as an agency with a 'wide-ranging, responsible, and complicated task.'[33] Its main activity was in trading goods, both for itself and third parties. It imported foodstuff through the *Transferstelle* which was brought through Stawki Street into the ghetto where it was loaded onto Jewish carts and distributed according to product type.[34] Ration cards were distributed through a residence registration officer who created lists for the residences they were responsible for. Only those registered in the properties could receive a ration card. The officer would request the ration cards needed from the District Office for Distribution of Ration Cards.[35] Those perceived as "productive elements" of ghetto society were to be fed more than the "unproductive." As a result, the Ringelblum archive estimated that *Judenrat* officials, shopkeepers and shop workers received around 40% more daily calories than a beggar or refugee in a centre.[36] Adam Czerniaków made efforts to try and increase the ration levels for the ghetto population, recording in August 1941 that 'Auerswald declares that Krakow is also inclined not to starve out the ghetto Jews. However, the rations cannot be increased at this point because the newly captured territories absorb a lot of food.'[37] Czerniaków did attempt to improve the situation, and reports this matter-of-factly, but he was essentially powerless to alter the policy of the Nazi authorities, who had neither the intention nor any incentive to increase rations, regardless of events on the military front.

Łódź had higher official ration levels than in Warsaw, but residents received less overall. For residents in Łódź, the rations given to them by the administration were essentially the full extent of the food they received because the ghetto was sealed, and smuggling, in contrast to Warsaw, was made virtually impossible. Because rations were distributed by the *Judenrat* and it was difficult to obtain food through other channels, it was obvious which inhabitants were allocated supplemental rations. Rumkowski and his administration selected a group of around 10,000 ghetto residents to be part of the Cooperative, generally referred to in

[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid, p. 412.
[36] Ibid, p. 417.
[37] Hilberg, Staron and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 269.

German as the *Beirat*[38]. These were senior figures in the ghetto such as doctors, lawyers, and other professionals, as well as people with social connections. Those in the *Beirat* received higher rations which became known as B-rations. Recipients of this were well-known in the ghetto as ration levels by group were published in the Ghetto *Chronicle*. On Thursday 24th June 1943, the *Chronicle* reported that even the additional supplement of the potato ration given in the B-I, B-II, and B-III[39] rations were too small to subsist on,[40] though generally diarists reported that the *Beirat* rations were high, and recipients much better fed than the rest of the ghetto population.

Receiving Rations

Rations could be obtained at numerous points throughout the ghetto upon presentation of a ration card. In practice families would send one member with all the ration cards to pick up the rations for all members.[41] The removal of choice in selection and time when to acquire food came to be an integral part of daily life. It was paramount for ghetto inmates to participate in the ration system to obtain food. The ration list was publicly announced on posters attached to announcement boards. The inmates were therefore informed on what they should receive, though often the actual allocation fell short. The repeated recording of ration levels highlights how diaries became a part of the process of food procurement, alongside collecting them. On three occasions in a six-day period the author of diary 86 listed the ration levels which had been published. On 11th March 1942 she recorded the family's ration allocation[42], and on 14thand 17th March she wrote the ration list which had been published for workers.[43] Sierakowiak, too, noted the ration allocation with regularity. On 27th April he enumerated the family's meagre food possessions; '15dkg[44] of sugar, 25dkg

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[38] '*Beirat*' literally means advisory council. It is sometimes referred to in diaries as '*Bajrat'* in its Polish spelling.
[39] The subsections of the overall Beirat group were often written this way and were often known colloquially as B-rations. See: Lucjan Dobroszycki (ed.), *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto 1941-1944* (New Haven and London, 1984), p. 31, footnote 44.
[40] Dobroszycki, *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*, p. 349.
[41] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 12.
[42] Ibid, p. 10.
[43] Ibid, p. 13, 16.
[44] Dekagrams; unit of measurement used in Poland (particularly in this period though it remains in use today), a single unit is 10 grams. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dekagram

of wheat flour, 10dkg of honey, 20dkg of salt, 10 dkg of margarine, 20 dkg of sauerkraut, soda, baking soda, matches, and citric acid.'[45] On 25th May 1942 he was concerned that there were 'no vegetables in the June ration, not even potatoes.'[46] Lipszyc, too, noted the rations due to be distributed. On 13th December 1943 she described a 'new order by Biebow' which stipulated that 'those who will work fifty-five hours a week will receive a coupon 'a half kilo of bread, 2 dkg of fat, 10 dkg of sausage.'[47] This was above the base ration but, due to the inadequate food supply coupled with hard labour and long hours required to obtain these extra rations, Lipszyc believed 'this coupon will take away more than it will bring.'[48] Often the rations, even when distributed, did not provide foodstuff which would keep inmates healthy. Szac-Wajnkranc called fat 'our only saviour.' She questioned: 'Ach, magical fat, which could heal us, which could sustain us, why is it not available to us? Children sing of it, adults pray for it every night, they want to live, to return to strength, to work, to their homes, these beggars, these people.'[49] Michał Halperson wrote to his sister, suggesting that 'if it was easy' could she send 'sprats or sardines, not because we miss them, but because of the fat.'[50] Such comments reflect the desperation of the inmates and an early acknowledgement of the lack of essentials such as fat, were distributed in ever dwindling portions. They were also frequently given rotten vegetables. Fogel noted that beetroot was given to them rotten, as it arrived in the ghetto earlier than the cabbage ration, so the beetroot was left to rot. He believed this was because 'they want to have a lot of rotten vegetables to account for the shortage.'[51] Non-perishable or longer lasting food was often distributed to inmates. Indeed, an 'unexpected ration' received by Sierakowiak contained '25 dkg of sugar, 7 dkg of artificial coffee, 5 dkg of margarine, caustic soda, soap, and matches. Again, a prolonging of life for a day and a half.'[52] Every ration was significant to families such as the Sierakowiaks. Though the next ration did not guarantee survival, nor spare them from the effects of hunger, without it they knew their demise

[45] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 160.
[46] Ibid, p. 172.
[47] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 80.
[48] Ibid.
[49] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 8.
[50] ŻIH, 363/4, p. 12.
[51] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 130.
[52] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 173.

would be quicker and starvation assured. He also commented on the difference in official distribution and what was received. On Tuesday 24th March 1942, he wrote that although 'a loaf of bread already officially costs 100 RM… you can't get one for even that much.'[53] Sierakowiak repeatedly listed the food he and his family received in their allotted rations. The communal nature of ration distribution could lead to perceptions of unfair portions between family members. Dawid obsessed over how much the family receive, and which family members eat most of the rations, usually accusing his father if this. He blames his father who 'cheats at every opportunity'[54] at the expense of his family. The author of diary 9 mentioned food in seven of her twenty-nine diary entries. On 2nd July 1944, she wrote of meeting a friend who informed her that they had 3 soups and 35 dkg of bread at home, suggesting the centrality of food in everyday social interactions. Writing ration lists emphasises the diarists' possession of the food. Their appraisal of their paltry food supplies testifies to a future reader the severity of the food crisis in a factual, statistic list. The diarists in Łódź were rarely able to purchase additional supplies outside their allocated rations, even for those who could, the exorbitant cost meant this was not a sustainable practice and thus could not be relied upon to help them survive.[55] The list of foodstuffs that is presented in the diaries was most often all that the diarist and their family unit had to survive on for the duration of the ration cycle.

Food was meant to last until the next distribution date, but inmates often found that they ran out before receiving their next allocation. Their reliance on the ration distribution is emphasised by the author of diary 86, who noted on 9th March 1942 that there was 'emptiness in the apartment. There is not a crumb, or even a little coffee.'[56] Thus, when they received their next ration on 11th March, her belief was that 'on this ration depends our two-weekly life. The body is depending on this next ration.'[57] On 5th September 1942, Irene Hauser noted the effect of receiving their bread ration too early (and 20dkg less per

[53] Ibid, p. 149
[54] Ibid, p. 188.
[55] Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto', p. 161.
[56] 302/86, p. 8.
[57] 302/86, p. 10.

person) was that 'now we have none for two days.'[58] Sierakowiak noted, on 27th April that they had received their ration in the afternoon, the following day he remarked 'there is almost nothing left. What the hell! There will be a new ration in ten days.'[59] The inadequacy of ration levels was at times augmented by delays from the administration (caused by both the Nazis and *Judenrat*). Fogel noted, on 19th August 1942 that 'the domestic ration is here at last, but we are greatly disappointed, because they held back the ration for a day longer than usual and they said it would be better!'[60] Fogel's comment also shows that in addition to inadequate supplies of food received, the ghetto populations also ate poor quality food. Upon invading Poland and other countries rich in food production such as Ukraine, Nazi authorities had increasing access to resources. These were reserved for Germans (in occupied lands and also in Germany itself), 'leaving only the minimal quantity and worst quality for the populations in the east.'[61] This affected the entire native population of Poland, but for the Jews in the ghetto it was most pronounced. Sinnreich notes the discrepancies between the food technically ordered for the Łódź ghetto and the amount actually received, which she attributes to embezzlement.[62] The foodstuffs which arrived in the ghetto were often considered inedible, and that which was consumable was not distributed evenly among the population.[63] In late 1940 a delivery of 10,000 tonnes of potatoes yielded only 1,500 tonnes which were edible for consumption.[64] In Warsaw, the food sold to the Jewish Council by the *Transferstelle* was often rotten when it entered the ghetto.[65] In December 1941, Berg recorded a large influx of potatoes, which was a surprise to the ghetto population. However, this import was from a load of potatoes intended for Wehrmacht soldiers on the Russian front which had frozen en route and was deemed unfit for soldier consumption, and had been sent to the Warsaw ghetto instead.[66] By the end of the ghetto period in Łódź, the author of diary 9 noticed the effect of the diminishing population through rations: 'Today for the first time in five years we have in our ration:

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[58] Wiatr and Radziszewska, *Irene Hauser*, p. 62.
[59] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 160.
[60] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 139.
[61] Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto', p. 12.
[62] Ibid, pp. 99-100.
[63] Ibid, p. 100.
[64] Ibid, p. 118.
[65] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 429.
[66] Shneiderman and Pentilin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 110.

15dkg of herring.'[67] The deportation and murder of the majority of Łódź's inhabitants by 6th August 1944, when the diarist noted this welcome offering, meant that there were less people to distribute rations between, so many more people could eat a rare ration of fish. Generally, the starvation imposed upon the population was never alleviated for inmates', this was by genocidal Nazi design. Eventually, the diarists' response to food was their only recourse, obtaining more food was essentially impossible without a drastic change of situation – such as sudden elevation to higher levels of ghetto society – they were not without agency as they remained able to use food to commemorate festivals, to share with neighbours or acquaintances, or to prepare food with their families, but the situation left them entirely reliant on starvation-level rations.

Bread

In Warsaw, Korczak wrote on 4th August 1942: 'Our Father who art in heaven… This prayer was carved out of hunger and misery. Our daily bread. Bread.'[68] This modification of the Lord's Prayer, a key prayer in Christianity, emphasises the symbolic connection between God and bread. The centrality of bread in the ghetto diet is indicative of the ancient connection between humans and bread. Bread was the most important part of the diet for the Israelites.[69] Piero Camporesi places an emphasis 'upon the reality and the metaphor of *bread*, that staff of life, which is the symbol of survival but which, taken on its own, was equally the marker of abject poverty.'[70] The diet consumed by the majority of ghetto inmates, as Sinnreich has shown for Łódź, but which equally applies to Warsaw, reflected a new reality in Nazi genocidal policy. The crucial, essential food item in both ghettos was bread which was rationed in Łódź from November 1940.[71] Each ghetto had several bakeries within its boundaries. In Łódź there were five bakeries open by 20th January 1941,[72] for up

[67] 302/9, 3.
[68] Zeitlin, *Janusz Korczak*, p. 188.
[69] Cooper, *Eat and Be Satisfied*, p. 8.
[70] Piero Camporesi, *Bread of Dreams: Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge and Oxford, 1989), p. 10. Emphasis in original.
[71] Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto', p. 102.
[72] Ibid, p. 112.

to 210,000 people.[73] During the entire period of the Warsaw ghetto there were more than forty local bakeries[74] for a population which peaked at approximately 460,000 people.[75] Ration allocations included several categories which included miscellaneous foodstuff (which varied greatly due to the supply issues previously mentioned), fuel (on occasions when it was available) and bread. It was, in varying degrees of quantity and quality, to be included in every ration. Bread was an indicator of the individual or wider familial fate: if they had none, or too little, their chances of survival were dramatically reduced. Bread ration levels were also tied to the wider ghetto's fate; when the quantity dropped, it risked the survival of the ghetto itself and indicated that the Nazi administration was deliberately starving the population, more so than the lack of fresh vegetables and meat did. On Friday 2nd May 1941, Sierakowiak wrote that the bread he received in his ration 'won't feed me for more than two or three days; after that my stomach's empty, and all I can think of is the next load of bread.'[76] Due to supply issues, there were occasions when the bread ration was delayed. The author of diary 9 wrote of receiving overdue rations on 15th July 1944. It is likely that the deportations of the summer of 1944[77] had halted the usual ration supply and instead she received 'seven or eight loaves for two rations.'[78] Though bread, throughout times in history, can be taken as 'the symbol of survival,'[79] even after receiving bread survival was not guaranteed in the ghetto. The quantity of bread was not adequate to subsist on and yet it was the main provider of calories in Łódź[80] and in Warsaw.[81] When the author of diary 86 received a bread ration intended for seven days she wrote 'the horror! When I went to the co-op today, I learned that the bread is for seven days.'[82] The inadequate quantity was further compounded by the poor quality of the bread. In Warsaw,

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[73] Laura Crago, 'Łódź', Geoffrey P. Megargee, Martin Dean, Mel Hecker (eds.), *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945: Volume II Ghettos in German-Occupied Eastern Europe* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2012), p. 77.
[74] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 426
[75] Ibid, p. 49.
[76] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 86.
[77] These deportations marked the start of the final liquidation of the Łódź ghetto, when remaining residents were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, culminating in August 1944.
[78] ŻIH, 302/9, p. 2.
[79] Camporesi, *Bread of Dreams*, p. 10.
[80] Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto', p. 116.
[81] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 426.
[82] Ibid, p. 14.

the bread was supplemented with chalk and sawdust[83], similar to the Siege of Leningrad, where residents were given bread made with cottonseed cake and rotten grain.[84] Though in this case it was the Soviet government providing the substandard bread, it was a direct result of the Nazi blockade of the city. The deliberate policy of starvation was so severe that even the 'staff of life,' this critical staple, was not of sufficient quality or quantity to survive on. In Korczak's first diary entry, he described the conditions he was writing in, including his bedroom: 'my bed stands in the middle of the room…on the night table, black bread and a jug of water.'[85] Black bread was prolific in the ghetto, white bread was, as revealed in report of Stanisław Różycki for *Oneg Shabbat*, 'sprinkled with talcum powder to make it whiter'.[86] Brzezińska recalled seeing emaciated children on the streets of the Warsaw ghetto crying and begging for bread,[87] an everyday scene of poverty contrasted with the restaurants and cafes which sold white bread,[88] a sought-after but unobtainable item for most ghetto inmates. Poor children begging on the streets, noted in many contemporaneous sources, were an everyday sight in the ghetto. The author describes the plight of those she saw while working in the Housing Committee on Ogrodowa Street, where the young people in every apartment block were trying to do petty trade on the street in order to earn a few groszy for bread.[89] The attempt to make any money in order to purchase bread shows its place at the core of ghetto life, they had to obtain bread, the only item which could help them survive for another day. During the *Grossaktion*, when she was hiding in the hospital her husband worked in, she noted, that bread cost 20 złotys and 'practically no one had that money.'[90] In this instance, bread would have provided a convenient source of food during the daytime when they could not return home, nor cook inside the hospital. This crucial foodstuff was unobtainable for her family due to its exorbitant cost. The deportations

[83] Ibid, p. 426.
[84] Salisbury Harrison*, The 900 Days: The Siege of Leningrad* (New York, 1969), p. 370.
[85] Zeitlin, *Janusz Korczak*, p. 84.
[86] Stanisław Różycki 'Obrazki uliczne getta [Street scenes from the ghetto]' in Katarzyna Person (ed.), *The Ringelblum Archive, Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto, Volume One: Everyday Life* (Warsaw, 2017), p. 31.
[87] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 4.
[88] Ibid, p. 7.
[89] Ibid, p. 3.
[90] Ibid, p. 12.

caused the price of food, including bread to rise exponentially as people panicked and stocked up before their journey.

Bread was also taken as an indicator of survival in the context of deportations. It played a crucial role in convincing people to volunteer for the deportations of summer 1942. Significantly by this time starvation was the main cause of death in the ghetto and this showed no signs of abating.[91] Gombiński described the posters which adorned the streets of Warsaw advertising the 'bonus, three kilos of bread and one of marmalade for each volunteer.' He cautions the reader not to judge this too harshly: 'Food is not to be scoffed at! In the ghetto – starvation, total starvation. They go to the *Umschlag* and receive bread and marmalade…'[92] For those who joined the deportations voluntarily their future was wholly uncertain inside the ghetto, but the lack of food swung the balance in favour of leaving. Starvation was so prolific that many were tempted to voluntarily join the trains because of the promise of food. The Nazis therefore exploited the starvation they had caused to further their genocidal aims by luring people to their deaths upon the promise of bread. The author of diary 9 noted that when her family believed they were being deported, on 11th August 1944, 'we put on our rucksacks and held our bread in bags.'[93] Both Dawid and the author of diary 9 used food to inform their response to the deportations. The author of diary 9 only had bread left to take and this formed a significant part of the goods they chose to pack; no other item is explicitly mentioned. This was, based on rumours the diarist had heard, different from the situation in Warsaw. On Tuesday 25th July 1944 she wrote: 'they say that Warsaw is occupied. Every day is a step toward liberation. The rations [in Warsaw] are cheese, sausage, carrots, berries, cherries, and chocolate.'[94] The lack of the staple food, bread, in this rumoured Warsaw ration reflects the diarist's perception of reality: luxurious items heralded freedom. The situation in Warsaw did not allow for such items to be available, but the diarist's mention of this highlights her view of what liberation

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[91] Typhus was another leading cause of death in the ghetto. In Warsaw the heat of the epidemic was summer/autumn 1941. See: Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 49. In Łódź, hunger outweighed all other causes of death and continued to grow into 1942. See: Trunk, *Łódź Ghetto*, p. 210.
[92] ŻIH, 303/38, p. 47.
[93] ŻIH, 302/9, p. 3.
[94] ŻIH, 302/9, p. 2.

and freedom would entail, and bread was not an essential part of this compared to the luxury which would be available.

The centrality of bread to ghetto life is apparent in the account of non-Jewish Pole Witold Dobrzański, who smuggled food from the "Aryan" side into the ghetto. He recalled how 'it wasn't hard to throw a sack with flour or bread to the other side.'[95] When the death penalty for smuggling was implemented the trade over the wall diminished, according to Dobrzański. He noted that during this time 'those who were hungry anyway went to work thinking of bread.'[96] This further confirms that bread was the staple item in the ghetto diet, especially for the poor. When he began his operation of smuggling the first transport sent across the border was bread.[97] The reality of bread as a crucial component of everyday life in Warsaw and Łódź was very similar, it was given to residents as a consistent part of the diet, providing a close link between the ancient staple food necessary for sustaining life, and the modern use of food as a policy and method of genocide.

Relief for the Poor

In addition to Jewish Council-administered rations, those who were impoverished were able to supplement their diet with food provided by soup kitchens. Rachela Auerbach was asked by Ringelblum to establish a soup kitchen immediately after September 1939. She was manager of the kitchen at 40 Leszno Street[98], which she led from September 1939 to July 1942, when the deportation *Grossaktion* began. She recalled: 'In the course of nearly three years I stood at the very centre of Jewish suffering, on the front lines of the struggle against hunger. I experienced the fate of the Jewish masses so close up it would be impossible to be any closer to it.'[99] Describing the prevalent hunger, Auerbach wrote: 'he who has not lived through the ghetto in Warsaw or elsewhere in 1941-1942 does not know a thing about it.'[100] The centrality of the soup kitchen in her daily life in the ghetto exposed Auerbach to

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[95] Ibid.
[96] ŻIH, 302/7, p. 4.
[97] Ibid, p. 5.
[98] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 305.
[99] Levitan, Seymour and Auerbach, Rachel, 'A Soup Kitchen in the Warsaw Ghetto: From the Memoirs of Rachel Auerbach', *Bridges*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Autumn, 2008), p. 100.
[100] Karolina Szymaniak (ed.), *Rachela Auerbach: Pisma z getta Warszawskiego* (Warsaw, 2015), p. 222.

the poorest and neediest of ghetto society, whom she tried to help for as long as it was possible. Łódź also had several soup kitchens to help the destitute, set up by the *Judenrat* as part of the provisions department, created on 15th October 1939.[101] They continued for most of the ghetto period. In May 1941, Berg describes 'the community kitchens are still open and there one can get a dish of soup, consisting of hot water with a potato swimming in it, for thirty groszy.'[102] None of the diarists within this study appear to have utilised these services

There were also kitchens attached to workplaces or schools which served food to their employees or pupils. Neuding wrote of taking a break from work to go to a kitchen and get some soup. She noted how busy it was and difficult to get in.[103] The kitchens formed a normal part of life, even for those who were not destitute like Neuding, who frequented them during her working day. The author of diary 86 noted her father receiving soup at work, which he divided in order to bring some home for her.[104] Sierakowiak recorded eating at the *Bajka* kitchen with his school group. *Bajka* was in a former cinema and was multifunctional; it held religious services and housed 'a soup kitchen and a canteen for young people'[105] Soup, like bread, can also be taken as a symbol of poverty; it is cheap to produce, easy to divide into many portions and can be bulked or stripped of vegetables as supply dictates. The lack of soup, 'a dietary staple' in the ghetto occurred when delivery of vegetables ceased or was delayed and, as Sinnreich highlights, was a motivation for some to volunteer for deportation.[106] Gombiński observed the refugee house located at 3 Dzika Street and concluded 'they are no longer people. There is no longer anything human in these creatures. They only awaken when they are given a piece of bread in the morning, and then a plate of liquid called soup. Bread, bread!'[107] He described their poor hygiene and noted that they had 'no desire to work'.[108] The most destitute of the ghetto only ate poor

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[101] Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto', p. 100.
[102] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 51.
[103] ŻIH, 302/159, p. 1.
[104] ŻIH, 302/86, pp. 7-8.
[105] Joanna Podolska, *Traces of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto: A Guide to the Past* (Łódź, 2004), p. 96.
[106] Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto', p. 104.
[107] ŻIH, 302/38, p. 15.
[108] Ibid.

quality soup and bread and were dependent on relief to eat.[109] The food they received from the official rations was not enough for the human body to survive on.[110] Housing committees spent the majority of their money on providing food for the inhabitants of the housing block.[111] Brzezińska recalled the establishment of her housing committee's kitchen so that a few dozen of the neediest of the block could get some hot soup every day.[112] Susan Berger estimates there were approximately 2,000 housing committees distributing soup.[113] When Brzezińska's kitchen was liquidated in 1941 because the ghetto borders were altered it led to an increase in hunger because, without this soup, many in her neighbourhood had lost their only chance of survival. She witnessed the overcrowded, squalid living conditions of people in the housing blocks, who were living 'without nourishment.'[114] She recalled one instance which 'shocked the entire ghetto,'[115] when a young boy approached the ghetto fence and pulled a carrot through a gap from the Aryan side. He was caught by a Nazi guard and shot.[116] That a Nazi would shoot a child over a carrot highlighted the extent of their calamitous food situation.

Warsaw Ghetto Starvation Study

Food deprivation induced by Nazi policy upon the ghettos created unparalleled conditions in which to observe human functions and their reaction to starvation. This interest was not limited to Nazi-Occupied Europe. The 'Minnesota Starvation Experiment' was conducted in 1944 by Ancel Keys, a professor of physiology at the University of Minnesota. The study aimed to limit the diet of healthy civilians, observe the effects, and determine the most efficient method of refeeding.[117] In addition, starvation was studied by physicians at both Belsen and Dachau following liberation. After former inmates had died after being given too

[109] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 304.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid, p. 305.
[112] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 3.
[113] Quoted from 'Proceedings of the Conference, Women Surviving: The Holocaust' in Susan J. Berger, 'Hope, Survival, and Determination: An Informal Curriculum of Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto', *American Educational History Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 1, (2006), p. 152.
[114] ŻIH, 302/21, pp. 4-5.
[115] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 5.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Leah M. Kalm, and Richard D. Semba, 'They Starved So That Others Be Better Fed: Remembering Ancel Keys and the Minnesota Experiment', *The Journal of Nutrition*, Vol. 135, No. 6, (2005), p. 1347.

much food by liberating soldiers, it was noted that death could follow the 'refeeding' of starving victims.[118] Both studies greatly advanced medical knowledge of starvation. Another significant study was undertaken by 'physicians condemned to die of the same disease they were studying – hunger and subsequent starvation.'[119] Although one of the only surviving creators, Emil Apfelbaum, published a report shortly before his death in 1946, it received little attention and was overshadowed by the Minnesota Study until the 1970s when it was revived at a symposium in New York.[120]

The Warsaw Ghetto study was undertaken by a group of medical doctors living in the ghetto who tasked themselves with scientifically recording the reality of starvation. They believed that 'still the clinical aspects and the bio-chemistry of continuous hunger as well as the pathogenesis of the symptoms are not very well described'[121] and thus they recorded their own experiences of treating patients suffering hunger as it occurred *en masse* around them. The report was partially completed and signed by Dr Israel Milejkowski, Head of the Department of Public Health of the *Judenrat* in October 1942.[122] It contained a list of all participating doctors and their fate, as well as an acknowledgement dedicated to Adam Czerniaków and Abraham Gepner[123] for their help in the study.[124] The endorsement from the Jewish Council attests to the significance of the study, and the realisation of the official Jewish administration of the dire situation of the population. The study comprised of 70 adults, 40 children and 30 private patients.[125] The adults were examined at the Czyste Hospital and the children at the Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital.[126] The diet given to participants consisted of 800 calories which was made up mostly of carbohydrates, some fat and lacking in vitamins.[127] The food provided was reflective of the general diet in the

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[118] Gregory Hollis and Anna Holdgate, 'Starvation and the Refeeding Syndrome – Food for Thought', *Emergency Medicine*, 9 (1997), p. 332.
[119] Mryon Winick (ed.), *Hunger Disease: Studies by the Jewish Physicians in the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York, 1979), p. vii.
[120] Ibid, p. viii.
[121] Ibid, p. 13.
[122] Ibid, p. 12.
[123] Head of the *Judenrat* Economic Council.
[124] Winick, *Hunger Disease*, p. 12.
[125] Ibid, p. 13.
[126] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 256.
[127] Winick, *Hunger Disease*, p. 13.

ghetto and is supported by the food received by diarists. There were vegetables in some rations, though these were not in large quantities, and the main staple of the diet was bread.

The authors of the study noted that patients exhibited increased thirst, rapid weight loss and 'a constant craving for food' in the initial stages.[128] They later 'experience general weakness and the inability to sustain even the smallest physical effort, and are unwilling to work.'[129] The starvation study produced similar results to that of the Minnesota Study, however the doctors of Warsaw who conducted it were aware that they could not help their patients by curing them of hunger disease and were unable to refeed as with the other studies.[130] Their efforts to add to existing knowledge of starvation on the human body attest to the everyday reality of the Warsaw ghetto, that even prior to the deportations of 1942, the Jewish population were dying *en masse* as a result of a deliberate Nazi policy. The residents of Warsaw were aware of the increasing mortality rate and the reason for this. Brzezińska noted that the hospitals in Warsaw were full but that the doctors working there were powerless to save patients dying of hunger.[131] The study revealed that patients suffering from hunger disease underwent a mental as well as physical change. Dr Israel Milejkowski noted, in his portion of the study, that patients displayed 'a constant craving for food'[132] but that, over time 'with prolonged hunger, these symptoms diminish.' The patient's desire for food has abated to such an extent that 'they do not remember their hunger' however 'when shown bread, meat, or sweets, they become very aggressive, grab the food, and devour it at once, even though they may be beaten for it and have no strength to run away.'[133] The diarists in this study display a longing for food which is ever-present. Their writing on the subject attests to a desire to eat and survive. They were also daily witnesses to the effect of hunger and starvation on the ghetto population through encounters with acquaintances and friends, as well as victims of ghetto disease begging or

[128] Ibid, p. 14.
[129] Ibid, p. 15.
[130] Marta Janczewska, 'Research on Starvation in the Warsaw Ghetto – Ethical Dilemmas', *Holocaust: Studies and Materials: Journal of the Polish Center for Holocaust Research* (2010), p. 447.
[131] ŻIH, 302/21, pp. 4-5.
[132] Winick, *Hunger Disease*, p. 14.
[133] Ibid, p. 14.

dying on the streets. Łódź did not have any similar study, but doctors were likewise unable to alleviate patients' suffering from starvation. The physicians' study shows a keen awareness of the inadequacy of the ration levels to feed the Warsaw ghetto population and even of the smugglers' ability to supplement these amounts, though ultimately it did not reverse the widespread suffering caused by starvation. The physicians' decision to use the situation, caused by external forces and beyond their control to change, to advance medical research shows an agency and resourcefulness which belies the reality of their daily life and that of their patients. It also echoes the diarists' reasons for writing in ensuring the experiences of ghetto inmates were not forgotten.

Smuggling

In his diary on 22nd June 1942, Emanuel Ringelblum wrote about events on 10th June 1942, when smugglers were targeted by the Nazis. Some were dragged from their apartments at night and shot on the street and others were murdered at the ghetto wall.[134] Ringelblum interpreted this action against smuggling as a 'general plan to exterminate the Jews in the larger cities of Poland through a policy of systematic starvation.'[135] The Nazi decision to exterminate the Jewish population had in fact progressed from mass murder through deliberate famine with the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question' which was posited at the Wannsee Conference on the 20th January 1942. Despite this change in extermination policy, Ringelblum was correct in his belief that the Nazi approach to food supply was a deliberate means of killing the Jewish populations of the ghetto. By 1942 the Warsaw ghetto had 'turned the corner' economically and was finally beginning to 'bear fruit' 'despite the starvation of the workers.'[136] Auerswald initially took a lenient view of smuggling into the Warsaw ghetto, however the spread of spotted fever beyond the ghetto led to a tightening of measures against leaving the ghetto and smuggling.[137] Ringelblum noted that the end of smuggling in the ghetto would mean that the Nazis were 'forcing the Jewish populace to

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[134] Jacob Sloan (ed.) *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum* (New York, 1958), p. 293.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Browning, 'Nazi Ghettoization Policy', p. 363.
[137] Ibid, p. 361.

subsist on 7.5 dekos of bread daily.'[138] This would have a disastrous effect on the already weakened population, though Ringelblum recorded that a friend of a friend told him 'that he would keep on smuggling, because if he didn't, he would starve to death. Rather die fast from a bullet than slow from hunger.'[139] Many decided to shoulder this risk, and smuggling was never fully eradicated in Warsaw. It remained a part of the framework of everyday life, crucially providing more sustenance than the authorities. According to Ringelblum at one point the act of smuggling bread into the ghetto led to a shortage on the Aryan side of the city.[140] In the introduction to the Warsaw Ghetto Starvation Study, Dr Milejkowski included an ode to 'the unknown smuggler, who with his own blood and sweat made our scientific work in the ghetto possible.'[141] Havi Ben-Sasson notes that hunger increased during the *Grossaktion* due to the inability of smugglers to continue their activity, showing its continued importance in providing calories to the Warsaw ghetto inmates.[142] After the war, survivor Tadeusz Szymkiewicz concurred: 'it should be emphasized most strongly that the ghetto was supplied with food exclusively through smuggling. Without this, the ghetto would much earlier have been subject to self-liquidation, and General Stroop would have had nothing to do.'[143] As well as executing known smugglers on the ghetto streets, the Nazis created the Office to Combat Profiteering and Speculation, known colloquially as the 'Thirteen,' named after their headquarters at 13 Leszno Street.[144] It was headed by Abraham Gancwajch who believed that collaboration with the Nazis was necessary because they would inevitably be victorious in the war.[145] The organization was under the administrative control of the Sipo and was responsible for eradicating smuggling inside the ghetto. The Thirteen operated from autumn 1940 to July 1941[146] and specialised in persecuting the 'fat cats,' usually by fining them.[147]

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[138] Sloan, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, p, 293.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid, p. 98.
[141] Winick, *Hunger Disease*, p. 5.
[142] Havi Ben-Sasson, '"At the Present Time, Jewish Warsaw is like a Cemetery": Life in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Great Deportation', in Moshe Zimmermann, (ed.), *On Germans and Jews under the Nazi Regime: Essays by Three Generations of Historians. A Festschrift in Honor of Otto Dov Kulka* (Jerusalem, 2006), p. 364.
[143] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 447.
[144] Ibid, p. 218.
[145] Ibid, p. 219.
[146] Ibid, p. 218.
[147] Ibid p. 221.

In Łódź smuggling did exist, though this was an activity which only occurred on any significant level before the ghetto was hermetically sealed in May 1940. Sinnreich attributes the lack of smuggling after May 1940 to the geographical conditions of the ghetto. Łódź's single gate entrance meant stricter control of everyone and everything entering and exiting the ghetto. The ghetto border also made Łódź a more difficult location for smuggling, as it had a wire fence rather than a solid wall as in Warsaw. The Nazi treatment of Łódź as a city also differed from that of Warsaw; Warsaw remained a Polish city, whereas Łódź was transformed into a German city. Ethnic Germans were brought into the area surrounding the ghetto and replaced the local Polish population.[148] This removed a surrounding population that was *potentially* willing and able to aid the Jewish ghetto inhabitants and replaced them with a group decidedly less inclined to help. The majority of food which entered the ghetto did therefore come from official sources, however some of this food was distributed illegally on the black market.[149] Of the diarists featured in this study, few have written about obtaining food illegally. Berg noted that her father, by February 1942 working as a janitor, accepted bribes for allowing 'a dozen bags of contraband flour' in through the courtyard they live on, where the *Warszawianka* bakery also stood.[150] As well as 'a certain sum of money' he also received 'two small fresh loaves as an additional reward.'[151] The Bergs were not starving, but her father potentially felt he was helping the needy in the ghetto by allowing the flour to enter or that he was unable to refuse the smugglers. This does not necessarily mean that none of the diarists engaged in any illegal means of obtaining food, however none of them admitted committing any such acts in their writing. *Beirat* members did have access to additional food, over and above the basic ghetto ration. The vast majority of Łódź inmates could not join the *Beirat*, nor could they engage in smuggling activities, meaning they had little agency in altering their food consumption over their ration allocation levels.

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[148] Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto', p. 157.
[149] Ibid, p. 156.
[150] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 123.
[151] Ibid, p. 123.

The prevalence of smuggling in the Warsaw ghetto was also captured in the writing of Dobrzański. He noted that the Gendarmes guarding the perimeter were aware of the smuggling and tried to stop this, but that the Poles did not cease smuggling, even when strict penalties were introduced.[152] Dobrzański described the exchange behind this smuggling operation, whereby the Poles received clothes and other items which had lost their value in the ghetto, where the only valuable was food.[153] Dobrzański's testimony, as a native Pole aiding the Jewish population, provides a unique perspective on the reality of smuggling in the ghetto. Whether his actions were motivated by humanitarian concerns, or to make profit on the black market, Dobrzański risked his life to smuggle into the ghetto. He was aware of the everyday reality for the Jews incarcerated in the Warsaw ghetto, that their food was greatly restricted by the Nazis and that they were in danger of starvation. He noted that 'people were dropping like flies. Everyday a huge number of people died of hunger.'[154] He was even able to observe the stockpiling of foodstuffs as some ghetto residents prepared for the Warsaw uprising. The building of bunkers took place prior to the beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising on 19th April 1943, when residents realised that the ghetto was to be fully liquidated and chose to resist. Dobrzański noted that some of the richer inhabitants had stockpiled enough food to last them months and even years and that poorer people had bricked themselves into attics or basements and emerged every few days to obtain more food supplies.[155]

Culture

Consumption

A significant component of food consumption lies in its communal nature. Anthropologist R. I. M. Dunbar stipulates the prevalence of sharing food throughout history, though the practice has no 'intrinsic reason (other than the convenience of bulk cooking) that makes

[152] ŻIH, 302/7, p. 3.
[153] Ibid, p. 5.
[154] Ibid, p. 6.
[155] Ibid, p. 7.

communal eating essential'.[156] Dunbar explains this continued practice is potentially because 'eating together may have health and survival benefits both directly and, through bigger and better social networks, indirectly.'[157] Roden demonstrates the communal nature of Jewish eating, especially on the Sabbath.[158] This tradition reached back centuries in eastern Europe and the practice of communal consumption continued in the ghetto. It was significantly complicated by conditions such as lack of fuel, poor supplies, and limited time in which to perform domestic tasks. The pleasures of families and groups eating together was impaired, if not removed altogether under ghetto conditions. Most family units shared or contributed to the processes necessary for consumption. The pressures of feeding oneself and the people they lived with led to tensions or stress between family members or cohabitants. In the crowded apartments, kitchens and workshops of the ghetto preparing and eating in the company of others was commonplace. The process of obtaining food was also often a social experience. Collecting rations entailed leaving one's apartment to visit the shop, often queuing and thus several diarists reported seeing friends and acquaintances while performing this task. Diaries also show that people were willing to help their friends and neighbours by giving them what they could spare or helping with the task of collecting rations, as will be further explored below, when discussing family networks.

Natalia Aleksiun has analysed the 'social networks of support' which allowed Jews in Poland, such as physician Ludwik Landau and his two daughters (one of whom was Ida Fink), to survive through 'a network of sympathetic and devoted individuals, both Poles and Ukrainians: friends, acquaintances, patients.'[159] Aleksiun explains the influence of these networks as combining with 'Landau's own personal determination, vigilance, and initiative that allowed for his survival.'[160] To this she adds the importance of luck and decision making which helped Jews 'to survive by living under an assumed identity, passing as non-Jews, or

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[156] R. I. M. Dunbar, *Breaking Bread: The Functions of Social Eating, Adaptive Human Behavior and Physiology* (2017) 3, p. 199.
[157] Ibid, p. 208.
[158] Claudia Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food: An Odyssey from Samarkand and Vilna to the Present Day* (London, 1996), p. 24.
[159] Natalia Aleksiun, 'Social Networks of Support: Trajectories of Escape, Rescue and Survival' in Simone Gigliotti and Hilary Earl (ed.), *A Companion to the Holocaust* (New Jersey and Chichester, 2020), p. 279.
[160] Ibid.

going underground.'[161] She notes her work is able to analyse 'how some Jews managed to evade capture, deportation and being killed through the prism of social networks… outside of the ghetto and camp system.'[162] These 'complex relationships'[163] which affected survival are explored here too, though from the perspective of Jewish networks operating within the ghetto boundaries. They ultimately were not survivors of the Holocaust though the diarists were survivors at the point of writing their account. The tactics employed in the ghetto to obtain food for one's family and wider circle can be viewed as an act of agency to aid survival. Many familial units developed strategies for food acquisition, preparation, and consumption which maximised their efficiency as much as possible (and was within their control) to enhance the chances of survival.

Many residents participated in informal schemes of exchanging food and goods. On Monday 9th March 1942, the author of diary 86 wrote that their neighbour lent her mum '20 dkg of dumplings and a piece of bread.'[164] In an earlier entry, on Tuesday 3rd March she noted that her mother gave Hania H. and her father shirts, as they had none.[165] There is no expansion on who Hania is, and she is one of the few people mentioned in the diary other than members of the author's nuclear family, but the entries show that the family borrowed food from people as they had none spare, but were willing to help others in ways within their means. Similarly, Hauser wrote, on 2nd September 1942, 'At 1:30 Frau Lukin brings Bubi potato soup with bread, as Leo left us to falter.'[166] The Hausers, refugees from Vienna, had less familial support available through pre-war contacts than those who were native to the city and thus had larger families based in the ghetto. Her husband's lack of dependability meant that she relied, at times, on other people to help, in the form of providing food. Researchers have been unable to determine any more about the identity of Frau Lukin,[167] however the reference to her as 'Frau' using the formal title and surname suggests that she

[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid, p. 280.
[163] Ibid.
[164] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 8.
[165] Ibid, p. 5.
[166] Emil Kerenji (ed.), *Jewish Responses to Persecution, Volume IV: 1942-1943* (Maryland and London), p. 414.
[167] Ibid, p. 414, footnote 18.

is an acquaintance rather than a close friend. It is possible that she was a neighbour of the family. She later notes that she was able to buy some soup and greens from her, after Frau Lilly sent her 3RM.[168] Irene writes of an employment trial with Frau Lilly and Frau Benedikt, suggesting that Frau Lilly was a friend who helped her obtain work. These women are the only three named people in the diary who are in the Łódź ghetto with the Hausers, highlighting the small size of their circle compared to the Polish Jewish diary writers. In a later entry, she further added 'nobody loves us, we have nothing in our stomachs,'[169] indicating her sense of loneliness and abandonment by her husband. Despite this, the help of Frauen Lily, Benedikt, and Lukin was essential to the continued survival of Irene and Bubi. Brzezińska's neighbour 'who had more than her' gave her food.[170] Berg and her family were occasionally able to give their housekeeper, Miss Sala, leftover food.[171] They also regularly fed 'two permanent refugees, compatriots from Łódź, who come every day for their main meal.'[172] Berg's entry from 12th June 1941 also suggests that this altruistic gesture was a common act among the more privileged in the ghetto: 'I see similar respectable beggars with sunken faces and vacant eyes sitting on the stairs of our house and eating the leftovers that charitable and better-off housewives have given them.'[173] This practice of sharing with those who had less was mirrored by poorer families who gave despite having little for themselves. Collecting food was often a shared task. It had to be performed during the working day, and many collected on behalf of others, making it a communal effort. On 13th July 1944, the author of diary 9 describes collecting rations for Renia.[174] 'We collected flour for her and today we took it to her.'[175] The author of diary 191 noted planning a trip to *Szmulewicza* Bakery on Lutomerska Street arising before 7a.m to avoid the bakery running out.[176] On 11th April 1944 Rywka noted that because Chanusia was unwell and took leave

[168] Ibid, p. 415.
[169] Ibid.
[170] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 22.
[171] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 99.
[172] Ibid, p. 61.
[173] Ibid.
[174] In an earlier entry the diarist mentions Renia Kozłowska, this is presumably the same woman.
[175] ŻIH, 302/9, p. 2.
[176] ŻIH, 302/191, p. 2.

from work as a result, 'I had a lot to deal with because of her soup rations.'[177] The author of diary 86 collected the rations for her family regularly.[178]

The behaviours and practices of food consumption altered. Food became intrinsically communal on a daily level, as well as during high holidays. The author of diary 86, as the only non-worker in her family, was entitled to fewer rations than her siblings and parents. On Monday 16th March 1942, she received two loaves of bread for the family.[179] Their division of their bread ration suggests that the family gave the author an equal share. The process of preparation and distribution at home had the potential to disrupt family life when one or more members engaged in acts perceived as selfish by others, such as taking more than their share of food. Sierakowiak was indignant over his sister and mother sharing food with his father. On 30th May 1942 he wrote: 'The "internal situation" at home is becoming extremely tense again. After two weeks of relative calm, during which father divided his bread into equal daily portions, he became spoiled again. Last Thursday and again yesterday he devoured his whole loaf of bread, and today on top of it, half a kilo from mum and Nadzia.'[180] As well as bread being unfairly distributed in Dawid's eyes, he believed 'at home wasteful consumption is being practiced.'[181] The author of diary 86 berated herself for eating 'nearly all of the honey.' She questioned 'what have I done? How selfish I am… I am unworthy of how hard you and how hard you work.'[182] The Lipszyc cousins struggled with food distribution within their unit, due to lack of trust. On 16th February 1944 she wrote in her diary: 'my cousins are almost out of marmalade and brown sugar, but Cipka and I still have quite a lot. This morning we were going to work (Cipka and I), and she told me that on Sunday when we went to get our rations, Chanusia said to Estusia that we'd finish our marmalade and sugar very quickly and they'd have to share theirs with us. Estusia replied, "I surely wouldn't think otherwise." Stupid cousins, you were so wrong! I have my own satisfaction. I haven't thought of being as "generous" as you! I don't even think about it. Ha,

[177] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 176.
[178] ŻIH, 302/86.
[179] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 15.
[180] Ibid, pp. 176-77.
[181] Ibid, p. 204.
[182] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 11.

ha, ha, at the bottom of my heart I'm sneering at them. Anyway, it's not worth pondering over!'[183] These incidents show an erosion of family relations as a direct result of food. Fear for their health or over improper division rations threatened the survival of the unit. Certain members were at higher risk of starvation such as Sura Sierakowiak. The improper use of supplies threatened their survival strategy, much of which was based upon fair distribution of rations to save all members from starvation. Sierakowiak perceived his father as a threat to the entire family's survival because he frequently demanded additional bread from his wife and daughter, much to Dawid's despair.[184] Rywka at times pitted herself and her sister against their cousins, despite being in one family unit.[185] The sharing of food with those who were deemed selfish or greedy was resented by the diarists and raised tensions in the unit.

Cooking methods also underscored social position in the ghetto, where Sierakowiak described: 'people who have either gas in their homes (even though it's rationed) or friendly connections in places where they can cook on gas can consider themselves lucky.'[186] The author of diary 86 described sharing a kilogram of raw parsley with her father and brother before her mother and sister returned from work, as well as the author drinking beetroot vinegar alone during the day. Both incidents allude to difficulties in cooking, caused by ingredient availability and lack of ability to cook. Though the family can cook in their home when they receive fuel rations, she notes that this only occurs once a day, in the evening when the family are all home.[187] By contrast Berg's family had their meals prepared by Miss Sala, Berg's former governess who fled to Warsaw from Łódź with her family and was able to find employment with the Bergs once more.[188] During the deportations Brzezińska recalled that only when they returned home could they eat hot food. The electricity was turned off in the hospital during the day, meaning they could not cook anything.[189] The difficulties of cooking became even more pronounced during the uprising, when some

[183] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, pp. 131-32.
[184] This was a repeated theme in Sierakowiak's diary, which erupted when Sura was deported on 5th September 1942. Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 218.
[185] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, pp. 128-129.
[186] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 200.
[187] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 2.
[188] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 99.
[189] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 12.

hiding in bunkers were unable to cook. In the words of the anonymous diarist 'the reason for this is simple: we have no stoves with smoke outlets.'[190] This caused 'quarrels between people' in the bunker until they resolved the issue with the chimney flue, meaning they could cook and release the smoke. As a result, 'everyone was happy with this development, and went to bed feeling better because they had eaten a little.'[191] As time progressed, the method of cooking came to symbolise survival and, after a hot meal, an improvement in mood, rather than social status. This was achieved through an arrangement to work together and share facilities.

Inequality and Luxury

In December 1939, preceding ghettoization, it was decreed that chocolates and cakes could not be sold to Jews.[192] This ban on items which could be considered special or luxury, did not affect the Jewish population by threatening their health, the way that the inaccessibility of carbohydrates, fat and vegetables did. The ban on these delicacies was an early and symbolic removal of Jews from the economy. However, as the rationing (and smuggling) frameworks developed, so too did inequality within ghetto society. Some inmates displayed agency in creating items such as cakes or sweets, even using chemicals. Berg recorded on 20th February 1942 that 'Jewish chemists in the ghetto have invented new sugar substitutes and artificial syrups that give these sweets a strange taste.'[193] She obviously tasted these cleverly created sweets, though many in the ghetto would not be able to afford them. In both ghettos inequality was ubiquitous in practices of consumption among ghetto inmates and experiences varied widely. Sinnreich quotes Yiddish diarist Leon Hurwitz who, despite never having dined in the wealthy dining rooms of Marysin, described the luxurious consumption enjoyed by Łódź's elite. For this privileged group, Hurwitz wrote, they could expect to be 'fed very well' but also to be 'seated comfortably at beautifully prepared tables. The service and the flowers heighten your pleasure. The atmosphere reminds the guests of the good old times, when they had nothing in common with the Yids, the plebians.'[194]

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[190] Dreifuss (Ben-Sasson), "Hell Has Risen to the Surface of the Earth", p. 37.
[191] Ibid, p. 40.
[192] Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto', p. 71.
[193] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, pp. 125-26.
[194] Hurwitz, quoted in Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto', p. 130.

Hurwtiz's perception of their dining experience serves as a powerful reminder of the division of ghetto society, and it functioned as one of the starkest methods by which they were able to reinforce superiority. Sierakowiak noted that his family had no table at home, and he had to perform his school and tutoring work on the windowsill.[195] From this it can be ascertained that the family had no table for eating, thus inhibiting their ability to eat a meal together. This was commonplace, as Sierakowiak also suggested: 'The less there is to eat, the more people talk about covered tables'.[196] People cared more about decorating their table in the absence of having actual food. Table clothes, flowers, and the act of being waited upon became unthinkable luxuries for most of the population who sometimes ate in homes without power. The *Chronicle* reported a ban on electricity in private homes after 8pm, 'a worker… actually had to eat his modest meal in the dark and go right to bed.'[197] The connection between work and food meant that the types of manual labour performed in the ghetto were no longer viewed as being 'on the bottom of the social ladder,'[198] similar to Hájková's observations on Terezín, but they were coveted positions. However, unlike in Terezín, they were not quite 'catapulted to the top of the social hierarchy'[199] because most inmates were forced to work in such jobs, meaning they were commonplace. The 'top' in Łódź was occupied by the *Beirat* and in Warsaw was filled with the smugglers and other opportunists who rose through privilege, connections, and wealth. The Thirteen in Warsaw were a group led by Abraham Gancwajch and named after their headquarters at 13 Leszno Street.[200] This group was created by the Germans to root out street trade, fraud, and smuggling and they were ill-regarded by ghetto residents. Szpigielman noted how they had 'wine and vodka in glasses and carafes, perfectly arranged snacks on plates.'[201]

As with Hurwitz and Szpigielman, several other diarists describe the privileges of consumption enjoyed exclusively by the ghetto elites. Szac-Wajnkranc described in detail

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[195] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 125.
[196] Ibid, p. 147.
[197] Dobrozycki, *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*, p. 27. This ban was later reversed.
[198] Hájková, *The Last Ghetto*, p. 123.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Agnieszka Witkowska-Krych, The Taste of Life in the Ghetto. Group Thirteen – Leszno 13, Muzeum Getta Warszawskiego: http://1943.pl/en/artykul/the-taste-of-life-in-the-ghetto-group-thirteen-leszno-13/ [last accessed 24.5.22].
[201] ŻIH, 302/195, p. 58.

the *L'Ourse*[202] nightclub on Leszno Street where visitors experience luxury. She noted that the 'chocolates with almonds were made from sugar, but without cocoa and nuts,'[203] showing the limits even inside the expensive club. The privilege extended to the kitchens they were able to frequent, some of which were better than others and not open to all ghetto inmates. Sinnreich notes that Rumkowski's sister-in-law, Helena Rumkowska, helped establish Kitchen No. 2, 'the soup kitchen of the intelligentsia'.[204] Sierakowiak noted the reality that those 'who have connections…even minor ones - get as much soup as they want.'[205] He also observed the breakfast of Moniek Wolfowicz[206] in April 1943, 'which hardly differs from the breakfast of Fuchs or any other dignitary. Those in the ruling class in the ghetto are provided with everything in abundance. The division between classes in the ghetto has become complete. In hardly any respect can you compare the fate of a supervisor with the fate of a worker.'[207] The permeation of hunger and disease in the population by this point (after the *Szpera*, but before the final liquidation) led Sierakowiak to believe that food was the distinguishing factor between the classes as well as between life and death. Lubiński, too, noted how the *Beirat* lived: 'At breakfast, everyone gets 2 strudels, a dish of butter, cottage cheese, 2 eggs, not to mention onions and tomatoes, and get to drink cocoa, coffee, tea and milk, as much as they like. I do not want to write about dinner because my stomach twists at the thought. They eat six times a day. I heard yesterday that they had brought them hundreds of bottles of wine from the city. In a word, this scandal is worse than all other injustice in the ghetto.'[208] This description, likely not based on observation, highlights the perception of the 'top' as engaging in immoral and shameful behaviour, while most inmates starved. Czerniaków described a meeting with beggar children who were starving. He arranged for them to have soup, but he also gave 'a chocolate bar to each of them.'[209] This luxury was beyond the means of most of the ghetto population by the time of this encounter in June 1942 and Czerniaków was aware of this,

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[202] French: The Bear.
[203] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 19.
[204] Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto', p. 130.
[205] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 204.
[206] His exact profession is not stated, but Sierakowiak refers to his mother appealing to Wolfowicz for a job so it can be assumed that he was a ghetto official and a *Beirat* member.
[207] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak,* p. 265.
[208] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 179.
[209] Hilberg, Staron and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 366.

adding 'dammed be those of us who have enough to eat and drink and forget about these children.'[210]

The diarists were very occasionally able to indulge in gastronomic pleasures themselves. Lubiński purchased toffee which he had gift wrapped for a friend's birthday.[211] Gift exchange, a common occurrence in peacetime, continued for Lubiński and his social circle, at least until April 1941. In May 1942 Korczak had a bottle of vodka under his bed,[212] and he later described its consumption: 'Five glasses of raw alcohol mixed half and half with hot water gives me inspiration.' This provided 'a blissful feeling of weariness without pain.' He also added that 'after a busy day' he had 'a taste of sauerkraut and garlic in my mouth, and of the candy I've put in the glass with the spirits to make it more palatable. An epicurean! And that's not all! Two teaspoons of real coffee grounds with ersatz honey… I feel content, calm and safe.'[213] Korczak added an 'apropos of vodka: it was the last half-litre bottle from the old allotment. I did not intend to open it. Kept it for a rainy day. But Satan never sleeps – the sauerkraut, the garlic, the need for consolation, and five decagrams of sausage.'[214] The vodka was likely brought with him when he moved into the ghetto and used by Korczak to escape the ghetto conditions for a brief period. The combination of the alcohol and fatty, acidic food provided him with 'consolation' likely because they echo the *zakąski*[215] dishes traditionally paired with vodka.[216] After receiving a loan, Sierakowiak recorded visiting 'a small grocery shop near our office to get a few candies on the occasion of having received the loan, and to create a bit of joy at home.'[217] This act, buying something perceived as special to accompany a celebratory event is an everyday one which will be familiar to people today. Sierakowiak's entry also highlights how these small acts could bring happiness for a brief period, positively impacting daily life. Though rare, inmates were able to save luxuries

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[210] Ibid.
[211] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 169.
[212] Zeitlin, *Janusz Korczak*, p. 104.
[213] Ibid, p. 116.
[214] Ibid, p. 117.
[215] Literally snack or appetiser, but in this context specifically referring to foods paired to drink with vodka in social settings such as parties, weddings and in some restaurants (similar to Italian *Aperitivo*).
[216] Natalia Mętrak, 'Zakąski Culture in Poland: What to Eat with Vodka?' https://culture.pl/en/article/zakaski-culture-in-poland-what-to-eat-with-vodka [last accessed 24.5.22].
[217] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 249.

such as vodka or buy sweets, which brought some joy through the consumption of something pleasurable and rare.

Some families in the ghetto had a fortuitous privilege which allowed them access to additional food supplies. Having family members abroad gave some the opportunity to be sent packages, known by their German name of *Liebesgaben*[218] as well as letters. Most of the Halperson family lived in Warsaw, while the daughter, Janina, moved to Stockholm to attend a language course where she remained for the duration of the war. Similarly, the Lebenhaft family's daughter Tamara was living in London. The physical separation of these families allowed for postcards, letters, and packages to be sent via neutral Lisbon. Letters frequently begin by noting receipt of a *Liebesgabe*, and a description of the contents. In a letter dated 26th February 1941, Michał Halperson, Janina's brother, began his letter: 'Last Thursday we received your two packages, containing… very tasty, conserved fish.'[219] He added: 'We thank you dearly for this darling, because thanks to you we and our whole family had a festive lunch, breakfast and dinner for a wonderful few days.'[220] Ewa Lebenhaft wrote on 22nd March 1942: 'Your letters and two packages were beyond my gratitude.'[221] As Marion Kaplan states, it is clear in retrospect that these parcels could never have prevented the mass starvation of Jews.'[222] They did, however, give additional calories to those who had the advantage (purely in calorific terms – their separation caused emotional pain) of having relatives abroad to provide goods to supplement their rations.

Taste and Perceptions of Edibility

In describing the introduction of the rationing system, Lubiński stated: 'If meals at the kitchen were made according to the community recipe, it would be worthwhile to take them, but unfortunately it is only water, I'm not sure if it's even boiled.'[223] Over a year later, Sierakowiak commented that 'at work, food is almost the only topic of conversation (the

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[218] German: love donations or gifts.
[219] ŻIH, 363/4, p. 12.
[220] Ibid.
[221] ŻIH, 237, p.2.
[222] Marion Kaplan, *Hitler's Jewish Refugees: Hope and Anxiety in Portugal* (New Haven and London, 2020), p. 201.
[223] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 112.

food we had before the war, naturally).'[224] Food was a much-discussed topic and the food actually given to residents was inadequate. Thus, inmates dreamed of items they ate before the war, of having choice, and of quality produce. The practice of sending rotten and subpar food to the ghetto led to a necessary shift in the parameters of what constituted food to the ghetto population. Items which previously would have been considered unsuitable for consumption became commonplace in rations. Lubiński recorded the inclusion of kohlrabi in the ration received on Thursday 24th April 1941. The editors of his diary note the use of '*kohlrabi*', the German word for the vegetable, instead of the Polish '*kalarepa*' 'as he probably had never heard of it' before receiving it in the ghetto.[225] He believed that 'kohlrabi is also inedible because it has the flavor of raw cabbage.'[226] Ghetto conditions prompted a change in food knowledge, forcing unfamiliar and unappetising produce onto people who, in other circumstances, would have avoided such foodstuffs. Davis' study of everyday life in First World War Berlin also addresses this notion of edibility and its relation to social considerations, with regard to root vegetables. When shortages meant that rutabagas, previously regarded as 'disgusting' were offered to hungry Berliners, notions of 'class respectability and national honor' became criteria for rejecting them.[227] The changing perceptions of edibility were, to an extent, similar to the hardships faced by populations in times of scarcity. However lower-class Berliners were viewed as having legitimate grievances and their support for the government during war was believed to be essential. The ghetto residents had no recourse when provided with inedible food (perceived or actual).

The relatively privileged Berg experienced alterations to her diet, describing the 'hundreds of secret hand mills in which the smuggled grain is milled. The chaff, too, is sold as a special kind of flour which is used for black cakes. They taste like hay.'[228] She continued: 'There are also little factories for canning fish in the ghetto; the fish used are the so-called "stinkies." Recently the smugglers managed to bring in a huge load of dried flounder. When ground,

[224] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 147.
[225] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 168, footnote 185.
[226] Ibid, p. 168.
[227] Davis, *Home Fires Burning*, p. 155.
[228] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 124.

these flounder taste like good herring, which is unobtainable in Poland at present. Various spreads are made of these fish to be used with bread instead of fats.'[229] The reliance of the Warsaw ghetto on smuggling is clear, as well as the adaptability of those receiving and processing the goods inside the ghetto. In commenting on their taste, Berg evidently tried these goods and even mentioned eating the "stinkies" in sandwiches on New Year's Eve 1941 'instead of cake.'[230] Lubiński noted 'for tea, I had a good horse meat chop. Horse meat tastes no different than meat we used to eat before the war.'[231] Prolonged restriction of food meant that ghetto food habits began to alter as tastes changed. Horse is generally considered a companion or working animal, rather than for consumption but this perception has historically shifted during wartime. As well as meat, previously inedible parts of vegetables were consumed. On Thursday 14th April 1942 Sierakowiak wrote: 'A new fashion has developed in the ghetto: potatoes are boiled and eaten in their skins. They say we're profiting both in quantity and in calories. The taste is a bit strange, but we've quickly become used to it. In the workshops the soup is worse and worse, the cutlets are smaller and smaller.'[232] Similarly, on 4th July 1942, he wrote that his mother brought radish leaves home: 'they have come into fashion in the ghetto lately for cooking (they cost 3 RM a kilo). The soup she made with them was quite all right, though I doubt that it has any nutritional value.'[233] Over two years later, the author of diary 9 wrote, on Sunday 23rd July 1944, about an incident in which a truck of rotten cabbage leaves spilled onto the square as it was driving past and 'people swarmed on it like locusts and pounced on it like it was treasure.'[234] What previously would have been considered food unfit for human consumption had, by the fourth year of the ghetto, become 'treasure' to be fought over by residents, desperate to alleviate their hunger. Expectations had fallen, necessitated by years of starvation and malnutrition.

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[229] Ibid, p. 125.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 129.
[232] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 154.
[233] Ibid, p. 194.
[234] 302/9, p. 2.

As well as rotten foods, the outer leaves of vegetables became part of the ghetto diet,[235] enforcing a transformation in the perceptions of edibility. The Łódź *Chronicle* reported on Tuesday 8th February 1944 that a kilogram of potato peels was worth 60 marks, and rutabaga scraps 20-25 marks.[236] As well as vegetables, ghetto inmates adjusted their consumption of the few animal products available. Łaski described eating 'a few coffee-surrogate "cakes" (in bitterness able to compete with our existence).'[237] Berg noted that 'tiny little fish in a state of decay… now constitute the most important article of food in the ghetto.'[238] The change in tastes was partly driven by the administration, which was responsible for creating "honey" and marmalade artificially manufactured in ghetto factories. Berg noted: 'this marmalade is made of carrots and beets, sweetened with saccharine. The "honey" is made of yellow-brown molasses. The only virtue of this product is its natural sweetness. But a piece of bread with such honey is far beyond the reach of most people.'[239] Even the poor tasting, low quality ersatz products created in the ghetto were inaccessible. This stands in contrast with the Berliners of Davis' study, the criteria for rejection of unfamiliar and undesirable items were gradually eroded as starvation intensified, the diarists displayed no concern for class respectability in this regard. The *Chronicle* attested that by the end of the ghetto period food deliveries were grossly inadequate. On 8th February 1944: 'only a few carrots are arriving' and that potato and rutabaga scraps were raising in price.[240] Taste is of lesser importance than the lack of access to any food and therefore starvation. However, the changing perceptions of edibility show the daily degradation of foodstuff in both quantity and quality. Inmates responded with expediency and ingenuity, though this was limited by the ongoing effects of genocide and eventually became impossible.

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[235] Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto', p. 202.
[236] Dobroszycki, *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*, p. 447.
[237] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 5.
[238] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 51.
[239] Ibid, p. 51.
[240] Dobroszycki, *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*, p. 447.

Food in Judaism

Paul Fieldhouse states that 'culture is a major determinant of what we eat.'[241] Simon P. Sibelman summarises that 'Judaism views food as a sacred gift from the Creator.'[242] Renowned Jewish food writer Claudia Roden described the centrality of food in Jewish culture: 'The food of the ancient Hebrews has always been important to Jews, a wandering people who have used their ancient history and the continuity of their culture to define themselves.'[243] The spread of Jewish people across the globe has resulted in a varied cuisine associated with their presence in different countries. Ashkenazi Jews in Poland traditionally ate foods such as 'gefilte fish, chopped liver, pickled cucumber, chopped herring and potato latkes,'[244] brought to Western Europe and America as a result of mass emigration from Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They were the 'peasant food of the shtetl.'[245] They also ate 'carp and salt herring, sausages and sauerkraut.' Similar to Russian Jews, Polish Jews ate 'heavy dark and rye bread, they all made cucumber pickles, chicken soup, thick bean and lentil soups, pancakes and dumplings and also sweet noodle puddings. They all used sour cream, dill, caraway and poppy seed.'[246] Roden also notes that Polish Jews in particular developed a taste for sweet foods, using sugar with pickled herring and bagels.[247] These foods reflect the food available, as well as the particular taste of the consumers. They were firmly part of Polish Jewish tradition by the outbreak of the Second World War and were laid upon the foundations of Judaic tradition, so well established that as Sibelman notes, 'even assimilated Jewish children would have possessed a modicum of knowledge of the symbolic relevance of food.' This transformed during the Holocaust and food 'became the harbinger of death.'[248] Confinement in ghettos not only affected the populations in terms of the amount of food they were able to eat, but also how they could

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[241] Paul Fieldhouse, *Food and Nutrition: Customs and Culture* (London, 1995), p. 1.
[242] Simon P. Sibelman, 'Food as a Harbinger of Death: The Child's Perspective' in Zygmunt Mazur, Fritz H. König, Arnold Krammer, Harry Brod and Właysław Witalisz (ed.), *The Legacy of the Holocaust: Children and the Holocaust* (Kraków, 2002), p. 132.
[243] Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, p. 21.
[244] Ibid, p. 39.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid, p. 45.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Sibelman in Mazur, König, Krammer, Brod and Witalisz, *The Legacy of the Holocaust*, p. 135.

celebrate their culture, both in day-to-day life, as well as on high holidays, several of which in Judaism are inextricably linked to specific food practices.

Passover

Although Jews were limited in choice, dictated by the rations given by the Nazis and distributed by the *Judenrat*, it was still possible to adhere to some customs laid down by Jewish culture inside the ghetto. The high holidays, which are often celebrated by practicing and non-practicing Jews alike, dictated a change in diet over the course of the celebration, such as Passover. During Passover the consumption or possession of any *chametz* (leavened)[249] products is forbidden for seven days to symbolise the Exodus from Egypt, when it was said the Israelites had to flee before their bread had risen. The main days of this celebration are the first and the last, though unleavened bread (usually in the form of matzo) is to be consumed for the entire festival.[250] The first day of the holiday is commemorated with a celebratory meal, known as the Seder. Ghetto rations threatened residents' ability to observance this tradition. Rationed bread, as discussed above, was made primarily with rye flour, a prohibited good during the entire holiday of Passover. In Łódź, Rumkowski was able to obtain matzoh rations for Passover, but it was noted by ghetto residents that these rations became more and more expensive each year, meaning that most of the population could not purchase any. Sierakowiak experienced four Passovers in the ghetto,[251] two are recorded in his diary. Passover 1941 took place from 11th to 19th April.[252] On 6th April he described the 'gorgeous (and expensive) holiday ration'[253] which was beyond the means of the Sierakowiaks and restricting religious observance along class lines. The following day the administration announced the price of matzo as 3 Reichsmark and 25 pfennigs for 2.5 kilos (enough to last one person for the eight days of Passover).[254] Dawid remarked that even this expensive ration was made of rye flour, thus not technically

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[249] Literally risen, when bread is made with yeast or another rising agent (though the ritual prohibits only natural rising agents, rather than modern-day chemical ones such as baking soda).
[250] David J. Goldberg and John D. Rayner, *The Jewish People: Their History and Their Religion* (London, 1987), p. 347.
[251] The notebook for Passover 1940 is missing. He stopped writing in his diary four days before Passover 1943 and died four months later.
[252] 14-22 Nisan, 5071 in the Jewish calendar.
[253] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 77.
[254] Ibid.

permitted during the holiday. He wrote that 'for religious and sentimental reasons, mother would prefer to have matzoth, but can't afford it, so we'll obviously have to eat bread during Passover.'[255] This inability to adhere to Jewish religious observances does not appear particularly troublesome for Dawid, but it is clear that the ghetto conditions have prohibited them observing the traditions of the holiday. Other accounts offer insight into religious consumption during Passover. In his Yiddish diary written by Menachem Oppenheim, 'a religiously traditional Jew, probably of Hasidic background,' described his third Passover in the ghetto and admitted to eating leavened bread.[256] He wrote: 'In 1942 I ate *khomets*[257] for the first time during Passover.'[258] Although he avoided eating leavened products for Passover in 1940 and 1941, he was unable to adhere to this for the third year in the ghetto likely due to increasing costs. At the beginning of Passover 1942 (Thursday 2nd April) Dawid wrote 'on the first day of Passover… potatoes are the main thing [to eat].'[259] No mention was made of matzoh, suggesting that the family was no longer able to consider purchasing extra rations. On Saturday 4th April he compared the rations given to the majority of the ghetto workers: 'one more allocation of vegetables, 10 dkg of margarine, and 10 dkg of meat' with: 'the heads of the workshops and other big shots' who 'received splendid holiday gifts (sardines, white matzoth, sugar, margarine, wine, matzoth flour, briquette fuel, means, and so on and on).'[260] His anger at the inequality of ghetto society had grown over time, particularly as food became scarcer, and he was indignant at the display of privilege under the guise of celebrating Jewish holidays. He was aware that the privileged of the ghetto were able to commemorate the Passover ritual in a way that the poor could not. Dawid made no further references to matzoh until Monday 6th April when he complained that he was 'running out of the last bits of matzoh (Nadzia doesn't have any left, and Father will finish off his portion by tomorrow.) Help! Something to eat! …'[261] Dawid clearly expressed interest in the levels of matzo left in their home for the purpose of satiating (at least some

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[255] Ibid.
[256] Robert Moses Shapiro, *Holocaust Chronicles: Individualizing the Holocaust through Diaries and Other Contemporaneous Personal Accounts* (New York, 1999), p. 96.
[257] Alternative spelling for *chametz*.
[258] Shapiro, *Holocaust Chronicles*, p. 97.
[259] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 151.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Ibid, p. 152.

of) his hunger, rather than for its religious significance. In a year Dawid became more accustomed to the realities of ghetto life, and the increasing difficulties of surviving on inadequate amounts of food. Although his diary ended four days before Passover 1943, his last entry on Thursday 15th April 1943, described preparations for it. An acquaintance, Mrs Deutsch visited with the news that she had been assigned to cook matzoh.[262] Any job involving food preparation meant a higher chance of survival, so Dawid hoped that this would help Mrs Deutsch who, he wrote, 'looks as if she were dead.'[263] Preparations were being made to allow residents to commemorate Passover, though Dawid did not write whether these were affordable.

On 24th April 1943, Fogel wrote 'Those who didn't want to eat bread during the Passover holidays could exchange it for 1.25kg of matzah or 1.50kg of flour! Our chairman and director, D. Gertler, distributed [food] left and right for the holidays, while no rations can be found for the poor working people, those who starve and slave away.'[264] Not everyone would take the option to have the holiday off. He also highlights that the poor were less able to observe the rules of the holiday while the richer echelons were given precedence in holiday rations. Lipszyc wrote, on 19th March 1944: 'Passover is coming… Passover is coming. Unfortunately, I'm not looking forward to it as I did every year before the war (or even during the war). I'm overwhelmed by horror thinking about it, because no doubt we'll be starving. It's a holiday that has always been welcome and yearned for, this holiday... well…?'[265] They did acquire some matzoh and prepared together on 27th March. In 1944, though they were able to bake them 'what a difference between those two holidays! First of all, last year we had more flour, more strength, and even the weather was different!'[266] The decrease in quantity hampered her experience of the holiday. Though diarists record the possibility of buying the correct goods for Passover, the cost meant that they often had to decide whether to observe the instruction on leavened products, a choice in which they

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262 Ibid, p. 267.
263 Ibid.
264 Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, pp. 155-56.
265 Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, pp. 161-62
266 Ibid, p. 166.

ultimately had little agency, given their external situation. For many, purchasing matzo became a financial rather than a religious decision.

The provision of additional rations for high holidays was also practiced in Warsaw, though this is rarely addressed in the diaries. Housing committees offered special rations, supplementary to basic rations, for their residents over Passover and Rosh Hashanah.[267] The Warsaw *Judenrat* also provided matzoh for Passover in 1941, which was given instead of the regular bread ration.[268]

Daily Religion

Chaim Kaplan described the adaptation of religious doctrine inside the ghetto. On February 26, 1941, he noted that pork fat was being consumed by residents (accessed through smuggling) and that 'the religious leaders have permitted us to use it in this time of destruction.'[269] Religious leaders revised their rules on what products were permitted for consumption during the period of the ghetto, due to the extremity of the situation. Starvation and lack of choice in their access to food products meant that for the population to survive rabbis had to alter their interpretation of the laws of Judaism. In Łódź, Sinnreich notes that prayers which were originally to be said on Jewish fast days were used in daily prayer by the ghetto community.[270] This adaptation of the usage of prayers usually reserved for fasting shows the desperation of the religious community in the ghetto, who wanted their prayers to reflect this. Lipszyc described fasting for Yom Kippur 1943: 'It is after the fast – it wasn't so bad – but I was and still am very weak.'[271] Lipszyc previously stated 'it doesn't matter much to me,'[272] reflecting her changing emotions but overall great devotion to observance. Inmates had a dwindling sense of agency regarding food, which could be somewhat fortified by fasting despite the circumstances. Chanusia Lipszyc 'put some sugar

[267] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 305.
[268] Trunk, *Judenrat*, p. 192.
[269] Abraham I. Katsh (ed.), *The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan* (New York, 1973), p. 245.
[270] Sinnreich, 'The Supply and Distribution of Food to the Łódź Ghetto', p. 200.
[271] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 68.
[272] Ibid.

away for *Wielkanoc*.'[273] Their sacrifice of reduced sugar consumption would allow them to commemorate Easter.

In April 1941, Lubiński described the family's attempt to adhere to Sabbath tradition: 'We wanted to make cholent for Saturday. As it turned out, you have to first get a permission from the rabbi and then you can go to the baker. As I was told, the queue to the rabbi was huge (several hundred people), chaos beyond, people pulling one another hair and fighting for real. And when the policeman came, he just started beating people on the heads with a baton. In the end, Nysek[274] did not get a number. In a word, in order to be able to put on the cholent for Saturday, you have to have support from the rabbi and the baker.'[275] The inequality which was prevalent in the ghettos provided an obstacle to adhering to religious consumption. The author of diary 86 noted on Monday 2nd March 1942: 'Today is Purim, before the war the streets would have been full of people, with cakes and tortes in the shop windows. Today no one even remembers.'[276] Purim, celebrated on the 14th of Adar[277] is 'a day of jubilation and a time to exchange edible gifts.'[278] It encourages heavy drinking and 'families sent trays of mixed pastries to each other.'[279] The inextricable connection between Purim and food was impossible to maintain in ghetto conditions, thus the holiday was erased from the present day. Sierakowiak wrote, on Wednesday 20th May 1942 that extra rations were being given for *Erev Shavout*.[280] Berg observed, in May 1941, that 'meat, chicken, and even a real carp for the Sabbath are to be had. The bazaar on Leszno Street has everything one's heart desires.'[281] Money prohibited most from shopping there: 'chicken costs twenty zlotys a pound. Kosher meat and dish are even more expensive; only those who have a large cash reserve can afford such luxuries, and very few such people remain in the ghetto.'[282] In Ashkenazi Eastern European tradition carp was 'the symbol of

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[273] Polish: Easter.
[274] The editors of his diary believe Nysek was Nyson Lubiński, Lolek's uncle. Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 168, footnote 186.
[275] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 168.
[276] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 5.
[277] This usually falls in March.
[278] Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, p. 32.
[279] Ibid.
[280] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 169.
[281] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 51.
[282] Ibid.

the Sabbath,'[283] and though technically the fish could still be enjoyed, denoting the most holy day of the week, most were stripped of the ability to engage in this custom. Life continued to occur around these days and dates, though the ability to observe the accompanying rituals was diminished by lack of resources, as Berg demonstrated.

The relationship between food and Jewish holidays had clearly established traditions. The residents of Warsaw and Łódź responded to the difficulties in celebrating various holidays, particularly Passover, with complaints over difficulty in obtaining unleavened products. Even for those who were not strict in their observance the annual calendar remained entangled with Jewish holidays and the diarists' response to the food ration shows how it remained a vital part of daily life.

Food and the Future

Many diarists from both Warsaw and Łódź interpreted the food situation inside the ghetto as a determiner of the future. They analysed the ration levels readily available to them as an indicator of the overall situation in the ghetto and the wider outside world. The decrease of rations signalled an uncertain future for the ghetto populations, who were already on deliberately low caloric levels as per Nazi policy. An increase in rations was a positive change, meaning that each resident had a better chance of survival, but also possibly that the ghetto population size had significantly reduced (often in the aftermath of deportation actions). A complete cessation of ration allocation heralded immediate danger and a change in ghetto life. During periods of great turmoil such as mass deportations, they sometimes stopped completely.

David Engel analysed eleven Warsaw ghetto diaries to discern the diarists' perceptions of threat from the German occupiers. He describes how 'they watched starvation and epidemic disease induced by German administrative policies and practices claim an ever-increasing number of lives.'[284] Despite witnessing such horrific scenes 'they could never

[283] Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, p. 93.
[284] David Engel, '"Will They Dare?": Perceptions of Threat in Diaries from the Warsaw Ghetto' in Shapiro, (ed.), *Holocaust Chronicles*, p. 72.

confirm their inferences with hard evidence until it was too late.'[285] The situation with the food supply was somewhat different. From as early as 1940 there was an awareness of Nazi policy targeting the Jewish population for destruction through starvation. As well as this awareness, there was also hard evidence, amply available on the ghetto streets of Warsaw and Łódź testifying to the effects of Nazi food policy. By 1942 Dr Israel Milejkowski reported that the sight of corpses lying on the streets was a common part of everyday life in the ghetto.[286] Hasenfuss noted 'bodies of those who died of hunger, covered in newspaper were a common sight on the ghetto streets.'[287] There was an awareness inside both ghettos, if not a concrete knowledge of Nazi plans, that the Jewish population were intentionally being fed rations that were inadequate to sustain human life. Thus, the diarists anticipated that this would eventually lead to their death.

Rations were inadequate and frequently delayed in the ghetto, either by supply or deportations. On 7th March 1942 the author of diary 86 was forced to buy ¼ kg of rye flour as they had no food inside before adding 'everyone just wants to live.'[288] On Wednesday 29th April 1942, Sierakowiak wrote that 'we are eating our May ration of potatoes in April. No one knows what will happen in May. Nothing good, that's for sure.'[289] The impending lack of potatoes signified hunger, something Sierakowiak could not alter. On Thursday 21st May 1942, he 'had a great day today because I received a 20-dkg portion of sausage – prolonging life again for a while.'[290] Residents were only a small portion of sausage away from feeling their death was imminent, and the same amount could help them believe they could survive for longer. Rations were utilised by the Nazis to lure people into voluntarily leaving the ghetto during the deportations of 1942. Fogelman noted how rations were part of the 'fraud' that deported Jews were being sent to Smoleńsk to work, enticed by the '3 kg of bread and 1 kg of marmalade' being offered to starving people.[291] Łaski wrote on 8th July 1944: 'for some time, all distribution of rations has been stopped, which worries me

[285] Ibid, p. 73.
[286] Winick, *Hunger Disease*, p. 4.
[287] ŻIH, 302/157, p 15.
[288] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 7.
[289] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 160.
[290] Ibid, p. 170.
[291] ŻIH, 302/35, p. 2.

enormously… We are now – how to put it – full of hope and despair, full of stoical resignation and, at the same time, full of trusting expectation.'[292] Food availability was interpreted as an indicator of ongoing administrative and political developments, as well as the physical necessity of food for survival. Łaski ended his entry with an assurance: 'One thing is certain: we have stayed alive this far, to see the "black end" of our enemies, although there is still an extremely dangerous road to go before liberation.'[293] The lack of food, combined with the threat of deportation, made Łaski cautious about his own future and that of his family, but regardless he harboured a belief that there would be liberation and the final defeat of the Nazis. The lack of food was redressed with extra rations. Over a week later, on 19th July 1944, Łaski wrote 'regarding the food supply, this is one of the golden periods in the ghetto. We are getting as much as 5kg of vegetables per person. When the future notes what the food in the ghetto was, he will certainly think: Oh, how wretched they were, if 5kg of vegetables could stir them to such a joy.'[294] Four days before Łaski noted the boon in vegetables, on Saturday 15th July 1944, the author of diary 9 reported that 'overdue bread and rations are being released. You can get seven or eight loaves, two rations, each.'[295] This was combined with the joy over the stopping of the deportations, where 'people were kissing on the street. What joy!'[296] Łaski also wrote on 15th July 1944 that there was word inside the ghetto that the deportations had ceased. 'Everyone is overcome with joy. People kiss one another. Jews drink in their imaginations, having nothing to drink in reality.'[297]

The presence of drinking in the ghetto is mentioned with less frequency than food, but several diarists planned to toast the liberation. In Warsaw, Korczak described foods he could 'eat without the slightest difficulty, without forcing myself' and questioned 'what should I have? The answer: champagne with dry biscuits and ice cream with red wine.'[298] He admits

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[292] Alan Adelson and Robert Lapides (eds.), *Łódź Ghetto: Inside a Community under Siege* (New York, 1989), p. 428.
[293] Ibid, p. 429.
[294] Ibid, p. 433.
[295] ŻIH, 302/9, p. 2.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Adelson and Lapides, *Łódź Ghetto*, p. 432.
[298] Zeitlin, *Janusz Korczak*, pp. 122-23

to having only drunk champagne 'perhaps three times in my life,'[299] evidently freedom from the ghetto would demand such a celebratory drink. Fogel envisaged the end of the war with his best friend: 'Let us recollect all those grievances and worries together after the war, with a glass of wine at a good dinner.'[300] The author of diary 86 hoped her friends and family could have their fill of bread and rye flour.[301] Lipszyc envisaged a future where she can make a living from sewing: 'it pays for bread, education, clothes… almost everything. The work I do with my own hands…'[302] The future had one essential component for the diarists: food and drink. In their writing they imagined liberation in culinary terms.

Conversely, food on rare occasion played a role in lulling ghetto residents into a degree of false certainty about their future. Brzezińska noted that some ghetto inmates believed 'if the Germans, whose goal is to destroy the Jews of the ghetto' allowed 'restaurants, garden cafes, dancing halls, theatres, concerts, and in the shops cakes, white bread and fruit' then 'apparently life could proceed as normal.'[303] During the Warsaw ghetto uprising, the anonymous diarist in the bunker noted the change in mood when they were able to eat hot food: 'Those with completely sunken cheeks began to look better, a sparkle appeared in their eyes and some sparks of life began showing. Now everyone believes that he will hold out. All of a sudden we have electricity and light again. Perhaps the sun will shine again for us? It's about time. It's getting brighter.'[304] The ability of food to improve the mood of numerous people in the bunker shows that, even during the violent and turbulent uprising when survival looked doubtful, food ensured immediate survival and the hope of outliving the Nazi threat. This was, however, limited. The diarist finishes the entry with her imagining of the bunker residents as being on 'a very small boat, with many people aboard, with little food supplies… tossed about by the raging sea, and … [with] no rescue [in sight].'[305] Reality could not be escaped, but food (especially hot food) provided a temporary escape into an imagined future.

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[299] Ibid, 123.
[300] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 88.
[301] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 7.
[302] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 148.
[303] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 7.
[304] Dreifuss, An Anonymous Woman's Diary from the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, p. 40.
[305] Ibid, p. 41.

Conclusion

Diarists in Warsaw and Łódź experienced the effects of reduced caloric intake and starvation, and many used this policy information given to them by the Nazis and the *Judenrat* as a signifier of their chances for survival. Tastes began to change in the ghetto period, forced by the poor supplies available, as did the means of celebrating the Sabbath and other (major) Jewish holidays. In contrast to the archive and underground groups, the diarists had little access to information on the wider food situation for other Jews in Poland, though they knew that other ghettos were experiencing some form of food deprivation. Their focus remained predominantly on the food situation of their own families and social networks, as these had the most drastic and visible effect on their lives. They analysed their ration levels and deduced that there was not enough to live on in the long term. They were also aware that unequal distribution permeated ghetto society; those in Warsaw had greater agency in terms of obtaining food above the ration levels, whereas those in Łódź who were not in the elite had very little opportunity to obtain enough extra food. Prices in Warsaw, however, meant that this was also the case for the poor, who could not afford the additional food on the black market. The future manifested itself through food, where diarists envisaged celebrating with food and drink after the war, as the ultimate act of defiance against an oppressor whose plan was to starve them to death. The lack of rations inside the ghetto convinced some to voluntarily join the deportation trains, showing food was a primary lens through which to interpret the future. This chapter demonstrated how food was a constant presence in daily life, with the practices of food preparation and consumption becoming the keystone of each day in the ghetto, as well as hoping for, needing, and fantasizing about food. The lack of food came to impact both physical and mental health and diaries offer a unique insight into the perceptions of this. The diary pages became a common part of the process of food through the recording of practices relating to food preparation and consumption. Diaries therefore offer a personal insight into the realities of hunger which cannot be gleaned from tables of calorific consumption or even tragic photos of starvation victims on ghetto streets. Food was the fault line between life and death, and the social classes which emerged inside the ghetto. It also clearly distinguished the inmates' present lives from both their past and their future. The meals

and relative abundance of the pre-war years were lamented by some diarists, and the future was imagined through food, in particular the sharing of food with loved ones.

Chapter Three: Families

The Jewish family in the ghetto faced challenges which were unlike anything they had experienced thus far in scale and brutality. Daily life is inextricably linked to the family either in the form of the nuclear or extended family, network of friends, and acquaintances who provide (or have the potential to provide) emotional and material support on a regular basis. This support can include, but is not limited to, provision of food and shelter; household and domestic labour; childcare; financial resources to facilitate these needs; as well as emotional connections which fulfil the necessary social requirements of human beings. Prior to the ghetto period, many Jewish families lived in apartments or houses with their nuclear family.[1] Relocation to the ghetto often forced families into smaller spaces and thus worse conditions than they had previously lived in. In the Warsaw ghetto an average of eight to ten people occupied one room.[2] Similarly, there were seven residents to one room in the Łódź ghetto.[3] These were usually occupied by a family or several families which spanned two or three generations.

By the early twentieth century, nuclear family households were the norm in Poland. These consisted of an adult female and adult male, who were usually married, and any children they may have. Strauss explains that 'contrary to nostalgic narratives of prewar Jewish living, older men and women expected to live their last days with a spouse in their own homes… Reincorporation into the household of an adult child was viewed as a last resort and even a travesty.'[4] A small number of Orthodox families had women-only breadwinners while the man studied the Talmud. However, for most Jews in interwar Poland two worker families were the norm. Most Jewish women in Poland were yet to achieve the more middle-class status enjoyed by a bigger proportion of Jewish women in Western Europe,

[1] The majority of Jews from cities such as Warsaw, Łódź or Vienna lived in apartments within the city boundaries. Those who came from the villages and towns outside the cities were more likely to live in houses.
[2] IWM, Daily Life in the Warsaw Ghetto: https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/daily-life-in-the-warsaw-ghetto [last accessed 24.5.22].
[3] Doris L. Bergen, War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust (Maryland, 2003), p. 113.
[4] Elizabeth Strauss, '"Cast me off not in my time of old age…": The Aged and Aging in the Łódź Ghetto, 1938-1944', (Unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Notre Dame, 2013), pp. 103-4.

where women had higher chances of reaching the status of 'creator of a domestic haven.'[5] A combination of circumstances led to an imbalanced gender ratio in the ghettos: Male deaths in the First World War combined with the flight of Jewish men eastwards, fleeing the Nazi invasion in the mistaken belief that only Jewish men, not women and children, would be targeted. Thus, in the ghettos there was a higher ratio of women to men. In Łódź 54.4% of the population was female in 1940,[6] and in 1942 in Warsaw it was 57.33%.[7] However, in the diaries this is less apparent: most lived in a household with one adult male and one adult female for at least part of the ghetto period. Dalia Ofer illustrates the importance of assessing the family through diaries: 'Despite their fragmentary nature, these sources are powerful and evoke a sense of strong empathy for and even an affinity with the tragic protagonists and their efforts to establish a semblance of normality in that chaotic and unprecedented reality.'[8] This is demonstrated by diary writers, the majority of whom who do not display the gender imbalance which was a statistical reality, but do show how fundamental a stable social unit was for not only survival but for a sense of normality in daily life. An exception was the Lipszyc family, which, after being eroded by death and deportation, was comprised entirely of women by 1943, thus providing a contrast with the other diarists within this study.

The family unit, in whichever form this appeared, became important, if not essential, for survival, a crucial component of which was employment of at least some members. Work structured family life and the family member's position in it. In a parallel, noted by Alexis Peri concerning the Siege of Leningrad, the disrupted society 'created two extreme possibilities of being either under- or overworked.'[9] Work affected children's education and ghetto conditions eventually eliminated it. In interwar Poland education was compulsory,

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[5] Paula E. Hyman, 'Gender and the Jewish Family in Modern Europe' in Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman (ed.) *Women and the Holocaust* (New Haven and London), 1998, p. 32.

[6] Leah Preiss, Women's Health in the Ghettos of Eastern Europe, The Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women, Jewish Women's Archive https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/womens-health-in-ghettos-of-eastern-europe [last accessed 24.5.22].

[7] Dalia Ofer, 'Gender Issues in Diaries and Testimonies of the Ghetto: The Case of Warsaw' in Ofer and Weitzman, *Women and the Holocaust*, p. 145.

[8] Dalia Ofer, 'Parenthood and the Holocaust' in Joanna Beata Michlic (ed.), *Jewish Families in Europe, 1939 – present: History, Representation and Memory* (Massachusetts, 2017), p. 22.

[9] Peri, The War Within, p. 25.

lasting for a minimum of seven years.[10] Schooling continued sporadically in the ghetto but was not well attended as adolescents frequently had to work to supplement the family income. The prevalence of work in the ghettos was based on the premise of productivity as a means of survival. The ability to work was also impacted by the lack of food. Energy levels necessary to work were hard to sustain, and the time available to collect rations was limited by long shifts. Aleksiun's research on survival through rescue urges scholars to 'pay attention to Jewish agency within fluid individual and institutionally driven social networks.'[11] This is equally true of the diarists, who also did not survive in a vacuum. Methods were employed to ensure survival, which was often short-term and subject to constant modification. The diaries suggest that a crucial factor in survival was membership of a communal unit, such as a nuclear family or extended social circle, which pooled resources and shared tasks. Men, women, and children's roles were transformed in the ghetto context. Relations were strained between each group and conditions challenged the unit as a collective.

Hájková has noted that in Terezín, 'only men with good access to food had sexual drive,'[12] stressing that 'sex was also a proof of status.'[13] This aspect of life was similarly affected in Warsaw and Łódź, although starvation in these ghettos was more prevalent than in Terezín. The omission of topics such as sex and menstruation from the diaries is perhaps due to the lack of these in daily life, as starvation was experienced by the majority of the diarists in both ghettos. However, this also raises the issue of what is omitted from the diaries. Topics such as amenorrhea or sexual relations are conspicuous in their absence. Berel Lang notes that diarists such as Oskar Rosenfeld in Łódź did not discuss (and therefore, in Lang's words, 'repressed') the key everyday realities of 'sex, shit and status.'[14] An exception to this is Lubiński who, in one of his final entries, on 23rd August 1941, was asked by a friend 'if I had

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[10] Anka Grupińska, Education System in the Second Polish Republic https://sztetl.org.pl/en/glossary/education-system-second-polish-republic [last accessed 24.5.22].
[11] Natalia Aleksiun, 'Social Networks of Support: Trajectories of Escape, Rescue and Survival' in Simone Gigliotti and Hilary Earl (ed.), *A Companion to the Holocaust* (New Jersey and Chichester, 2020), p. 289.
[12] Hájková, *The Last Ghetto*, p. 130.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Berel Lang, 'Review: Oskar Rosenfeld and the Realism of Holocaust-History: On Sex, Shit and Status,' *History and Theory*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (May 2004), p. 285.

been feeling lower sex drive recently because she noticed that husband had become terribly indifferent to his wife with respect to that. She told me he used to be a male-beast and he would not let her sleep at night, and today - nothing. She also said that many girls had lost their periods, and all that is caused by the lack of proper nutrition.'[15] This rare example of a discussion of this nature highlights the effect of starvation on both women and men, relatively early into the ghetto period in Łódź. Other diarists do not mention these issues, nor other topics which could fall under Lang's categories of 'sex, shit, and status' and therefore highlight a silence, a hidden area, which the diaries cannot illuminate as part of the author's daily lives.

The ability to be a cohesive family was seriously challenged by the Holocaust. This chapter will contribute to the work begun by Dan Bar-On and Julia Chaitlin, who posit the question: 'What happens… when parents' capacities are seriously impaired due to external massive destruction, such as the Holocaust?'[16] Fogel described the deportations: 'no one wants to go and leave their mothers, fathers, brothers or sisters, wives and children,'[17] highlighting the lack of choice many families had in keeping their unit together. The chapter will offer insight into the functioning of the family unit based upon the two main familial structures present in the diaries: the nuclear family and the extended family or social network. It also assesses the constituent parts of this; women as mothers; men as fathers; children as the youngest members of the family unit; and extended networks of relatives, acquaintances, and friends. Following the premise of Lenore J. Weitzman, it illuminates that role reversals were not only frequent, but that family members also engaged in role sharing, a constant contortion between the established roles.[18] It will conclude that the social roles of each individual within the family underwent a shift in response to the challenges of everyday life under ghetto conditions, with the effect that the unit itself had best chances of survival if it were able to react with fluidity to their situation.

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[15] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 180.
[16] Dan Bar-On and Julia Chaitlin, *Parenthood and the Holocaust* (Jerusalem, 2001), p. 5.
[17] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel,* p. 163.
[18] Lenore J. Weitzman, 'Resistance in Everyday Life: Family Strategies, Role Reversals, and Role Sharing in the Holocaust' in Michlic, *Jewish Families in Europe*, p. 47.

The chapter will include fifteen of the twenty diaries utilised in this thesis. Of the Łódź diarists, the following are featured here: Lolek Lubiński, Heniek Fogel, Dawid Sierakowiak, Irene Hauser, Rywka Lipszyc, Abram Łaski and the anonymous author of diaries 9, 86 and 191. Of the Warsaw diarists, Zofia Brzezińska, Adam Czerniaków, Noemi Szac-Wajnkranc, Stanisław Gombiński, Stefan Szpigielman, Dawid Fogelman, will be discussed. [19] In addition, the chapter will also draw on letters from the Halperson and Lebenhaft Family Collections and reference will be made to the work of Emmanuel Ringelblum.

Motherhood in the Ghettos

Historically, married women have been expected to provide 'sex, children, childcare, cooking, and housekeeping.'[20] By the twentieth century, Jewish women in Poland had entered the workforce in large numbers. In pre-war Łódź, 35 percent of all textile workers were Jewish women; this figure was 36 percent in Warsaw.[21] Despite employment, their role was primarily considered to be in the home. Since the 1980s there has been a shift in Holocaust research on women and their specific experiences as targets of Nazi persecution. Their ability to bear the future generation of Jews left them vulnerable to gender-specific forms of control and violence through policies prohibiting pregnancy or enforcing abortion. Feminist scholars Dalia Ofer and Lenore Weitzman caution future researchers to avoid studying women purely through the lens of 'motherhood or sexuality.'[22] While a more generalised approach to women necessitates this, the centrality of women in the family is prominent in these diaries. They highlight the integral place of women in the day-to-day functioning of the family unit and individuals within those units. Though Jewish women in the Holocaust must be explored through avenues besides their sexuality and role as mother, the diaries confirm their inextricable link to motherhood and the continued (though disrupted) functioning of ghetto families. Ofer notes 'the voices of the mothers are most rare and, accordingly, it is difficult to present a reliable historical account of their

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[19] For full biographies (including gender, age, and status), please refer to 'the Diaries and the Diarists' section of Chapter One, pp. 21-26.
[20] Marilyn Yalom, *A History of the Wife* (New York, 2001), p. xvi.
[21] Daniel Blatman, 'Women in the Jewish Labor Bund in Interwar Poland' in Ofer and Weitzman, *Women and the Holocaust*, p. 72.
[22] Ofer and Weitzman, 'Introduction: The Role of Gender in the Holocaust' in Ofer and Wetizman, *Women and the Holocaust*, p. 16.

experiences and of the diverse perspectives relating to motherhood held by women during the Holocaust.'[23] Examining women purely as mothers adheres to Waxman's assessment that across Europe 'women's primary roles were as wives and mothers.'[24] The diaries do not contradict this view, but rather add nuance to it, suggesting the reality described by Waxman has value in certain contexts such as through the eyes of children who witnessed and experienced these roles under ghetto conditions. The diaries are rooted in the family unit which surrounds the daily environment of the authors, and women are shown to be mothers and wives through this lens. The combination of the accounts written by mothers (though few) and the accounts written by observers of mothers allows for a previously underexplored insight into the functioning of the family in everyday ghetto life.

Emmanuel Ringelblum pre-empted future investigation into Jewish women under Nazi occupation, suggesting that 'the historian of the future will have to devote a fitting chapter to the role of the Jewish woman during the war. It is thanks to the courage and endurance of our women that thousands of families have been able to endure these bitter times.'[25] Cecylia Słapakowa, a member of *Oneg Shabbat*, conducted interviews with seventeen women across ghetto society in recognition that: 'women are playing an important role in the positive trends of our life.'[26] These diaries strengthen but complicate this viewpoint. As Ofer indicates, mothers were infrequent diary writers.[27] Of the diaries in this study, forty-five per cent were written by females. Three accounts contain specific references to being a mother or having children: the diaries of Hauser, Neuding and Brzezińska. Though sparse, these accounts offer a unique insight into motherhood in the ghetto. In addition, the letters written by Esther Lebenhaft and Luba Halperson to their daughters living abroad supplement the mother's perspective inside the ghetto. [28] Diarists under the age of twenty without children of their own are fitting here for their perspectives as the direct recipients

[23] Esther Hertzog, 'Introduction' in Hertzog (ed.), *Life, Death and Sacrifice: Women and Family in the Holocaust* (Jerusalem, 2008), p. 6.
[24] Zoë Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust: A Feminist History* (Oxford, 2017), p. 13.
[25] Quoted in ibid, p. 21.
[26] Quoted in ibid, pp. 25-26.
[27] Quoted in Hertzog, *Life, Death and Sacrifice*, p. 6.
[28] This correspondence was often written by multiple family members in one letter, though the majority was usually written by the recipient's mother, with postscripts or lines added by fathers, siblings, or other family members.

and witnesses of mothering. Through analysis of these three strands of ghetto writing, it will be shown that the role of the mother shifted under ghetto conditions, leading to an increase in responsibility in and outside of the domestic sphere.

Esther Hertzog warns of the oversimplification of motherhood in the Holocaust and cautions against portraying mothers as a 'symbol of sacrifice' in dying for their children, or guilty of 'desertion or abandonment' when some women saved themselves while their children died.[29] Hertzog's concept of subjugated motherhood, while focusing primarily on women in concentration and extermination camps, is of great use here. The ghettos did not present mothers with the same stark choice as the selection process at camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau.[30] Nevertheless death was a common occurrence in the ghetto which affected the lives of the diarists, both through personal experience of death and by witnessing it in their daily environment. Despite Hertzog's disdain for this 'more palatable narrative,'[31] the diaries attest to many mothers who regularly damaged their own health for their children and several who were willing to literally die with and for their children.

Sacrificial Motherhood

The challenges of being a mother in the ghetto were numerous and led mothers to endanger their own health and wellbeing to provide for family members. Labour became a necessity for many as women between the ages of fifteen and sixty were often employed in ghetto enterprises. This employment entitled the recipient to a higher worker's ration of food, thereby increasing chances of survival. The diaries show that most mothers worked or attempted to obtain work. As an essential worker in the household, women faced long hours outside of the house, followed by completion of domestic tasks such as cooking and cleaning. The author of diary 86 questioned 'what we are going to do if mum doesn't bring the beetroots, I don't want to think.'[32] The level of responsibility on her mother is

[29] Esther Hertzog, 'Subjugated Motherhood and the Holocaust', *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*, 30:1 (2016), p. 17.
[30] Where young women holding babies or with young children were advised by other prisoners on arrival to give the child to an older person in order to save themselves during the selections for the gas chambers.
[31] Hertzog, 'Subjugated Motherhood', p. 16.
[32] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 9.

substantial, and hints at her daily routine of work and then obtaining rations (or vice versa) to bring home to the family. This duty of food provision can also be seen in the account by the author of diary 191. He noted that his children were 'crying to their mother to give them bread.'[33] Despite both parents being present, the request was specifically directed to his wife, suggesting that she was likely the preparer of food. As he highlighted, some children looked specifically to their mother to provide sustenance. This was a common familial reality, however, the ability to perform these duties was seriously hampered in ghetto conditions. The difficulties of obtaining food were further compounded by the poor quantities, leading some mothers to deliberately deprive themselves of food to give their families more. The author of diary 86 worried about her mother's consumption: 'I don't know how my mum lives, she works the hardest and eats the least'.[34] She added, that her mother looked 'like a shadow because she works so hard.'[35] In this, her mother bears similarities with Sura Sierakowiak who only 'has her soup all to herself'[36] when Dawid's sister found employment in March 1942. Similarly, Brzezińska gave her son tea, soup, and bread, meaning that she did not eat for two days.[37] On the day of her removal from their home to await transport to Chełmno, Dawid described his 'tiny emaciated mother who has gone through so many misfortunes in her life, whose entire life was one of sacrifice for others, relatives and strangers'.[38] Through her altruism, which Dawid's entry suggests pre-dated the ghetto period, she degraded her health to the extent that she could not pass the medical examination necessary to remain in the ghetto during the *Szpera*. As she left, his mother agreed with him that 'she had given her life by lending and giving away provisions.'[39] Sura would have realised the heightened risk of illness and death, and during the deportations. Health and employment were two crucial elements of survival. In her last conversation with Dawid, Sura 'admitted it with such a bitter smile that I could see she didn't regret her conduct at all and, although she loved her life so greatly, for her there are

[33] ŻIH 302/191, p. 1.
[34] ŻIH 302/86, p. 13.
[35] Ibid, p. 11.
[36] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 149.
[37] ŻIH 302/21, p. 23.
[38] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 219.
[39] Ibid, p. 220.

values even more important than life, like God and family, etc.'[40] For Sura, her attempt to save her children and family was a considered choice, and worth the damage and destruction to her own life. It is highly likely that other mothers deliberately deprived themselves of food and faced the same fate to give their children more and ensure their survival.

Czerniaków and Brzezińska witnessed mothers who were separated from their children. Czerniaków described, on 15th August 1941, inspecting refugee facilities where he 'discovered the corpse of a child. The mother, who was brought to me, appeared to be demented.'[41] As well as Brzezińska's difficulties in fulfilling her own motherly duties to her child, she noted with great compassion the suffering of fellow mothers. She witnessed an exchange between a young girl and a Jewish police officer trying to take her to the *Umschlagplatz*. The girl pleaded with the policeman: 'I know you're a good man, please don't take me, my mummy's out, she'll be back soon and I'll be gone, please sir don't take me.'[42] Despite her begging 'the police officer's heart could not be moved by this lament, and he carried out his duties in cold blood.'[43] After the deportation, 'two hours later I saw a senseless woman running around the square, desperately shouting "my child - where is my child."'[44] The idea of witnessing, and sharing, in this suffering can also be found in letters sent abroad from Warsaw. Luba Halperson wrote to her daughter Janina that she missed her and wished she could see her.[45] Similarly, Esther Lebenhaft wrote to her daughter, Tamara, that she missed her 'with all her heart.'[46] In addition, she informed Tamara that there was no news of her brother. She wrote, on 4th May 1942, 'Not a word from your brother for three months[47]… it is a small comfort that others don't have news from theirs

[40] Ibid.
[41] Hilberg, Staron and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 268.
[42] ŻIH 302/21, p. 17.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] ŻIH, 363, p. 24.
[46] ŻIH, 237, p. 5.
[47] This was prior to deportations to Treblinka so it could be that he was sent to a work camp, or he fled before the war broke out but managed to write to the family until approx. February 1942. In either instance he would be one of many Jewish men in the same situation so her comment about other people having news fits with this.

either.'[48] The pain at being separated from two of her children is evident. However, Esther was able to take solace in the fact that other mothers were in the same situation. As well as feeling a sense of solidarity in this pain, there was security in the lack of news because it was a shared predicament: no one had news about their sons. Her reference to him in the present tense shows she was hopeful that he was still alive. Brzezińska also found solidarity in other mothers' experiences. As her son's health deteriorated, she felt 'I wasn't the only one who was in this position and I wasn't the only Mum suffering who watched the life of her baby fading away in front of her eyes.'[49] This communal suffering of mothers separated from their children or watching their children deteriorate was a reality of ghetto life for many and, given the frequency of starvation and lack of knowledge about family members outside the ghetto, it is clear that many more mothers who did not write diaries or letters were affected by this.

Mothers with Agency

Anna Hájková assesses the complicated notion of agency in the Terezín ghetto, concluding that: 'there are crucial moments when we need to recognize that the motivation driving the protagonist is genuine agency: when protagonists recognize the weight of their decision, the choice is larger, there is more at stake, and it is more deliberate. Deciding with whom to go on a transport is decisively a moment of agency.'[50] The diaries provide examples of mothers who expressed their agency by remaining with their child. Hauser chose to be irrevocably connected to her son in life and death. On 19th August 1942, Hauser implored: 'May God save us from this torment of hunger. But there are no suicides. We await a miracle.'[51] She later added: 'Anyway I will not end it like this. I lean out the window. But I could not leave my child, who wants to live.'[52] Despite suicidal thoughts, her diary entries exemplify how her son bound her to life. Her love for him, plus her acute awareness of her husband's unwillingness and inability to care for him, rendered her incapable of abandoning her child to what she knew would be almost certain death. Hauser's sacrifice for her son

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[48] ŻIH, 237, p. 5.
[49] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 12.
[50] Hájková, *The Last Ghetto*, p. 227
[51] ŻIH, 302/299, pp. 20-21.
[52] Ibid.

was not the only one she made. Though not recorded in her diary, it is known that she eventually did die with Bubi: they were sent to Chełmno extermination camp on or around 8th September 1942.[53] Her husband Leo remained in the ghetto and survived the war. This offers an insight into a very gendered occurrence in which only the mother and wife accompanied the child to death. Hauser explained in an entry from 7th September 1942, that she tried to convince Bubi to go with her on a transport, believing they would possibly receive more bread to alleviate their hunger. She wrote of Bubi's refusal to do this, again strengthening her adherence to his wishes over her own. It is possible, therefore, that she eventually convinced him to go or that they were rounded up together. In any case, Hauser and her son were murdered in Chełmno. This exemplifies two circumstances in which motherhood could directly determine whether a woman lived or died. Brzezińska was similarly willing to give up her life for her child. During the 1942 deportation she ran home through crowds being fired upon by German soldiers to get hot food to Juliusz.[54] She planned to hide during the next raid because 'in this time if the fate of the adults is determined by chance, the child is even more so.'[55] She shared her hiding space with other mothers and children, because they were often not permitted to enter ghetto hiding places with children due to fear of noise and discovery.[56] During the round ups people were conflicted over whether to hide or not, and noted 'my determination not to go down during a blockade influenced their decision to some extent.'[57] In such frightening circumstances, many were uncertain whether to appear in the courtyards (with or without *legitimacja*) and risk deportation, or to hide, also risking deportation or even execution if discovered. Brzezińska's decision influenced those of other mothers, who were placed in an impossible position, their only objective being to stay with their children.

Like Hauser, Brzezińska recorded thoughts of suicide in her account, stating that 'more often the thought appears of taking mine and my son's life. I cannot see the possibility of

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[53] Wiatr and Radziszewska, *Irene Hauser*, p. 34.
[54] ŻIH 302/21, p. 12.
[55] Ibid, p. 19.
[56] Ibid, p. 20-21.
[57] Ibid, p. 22-23.

survival.'[58] Once more, the fate of mother and child were inextricably tied and Brzezińska became responsible for their child's life and how they might die. Both Hauser and Brzezińska were adamant that they share their child's fate. Brzezińska considered taking her son's life, to spare him dying at the hands of their persecutors. Szac-Wajnkranc experienced mothers who had decided to give their children an overdose of Luminal[59] while they slept, to spare them from death through deportation. Szac-Wajnkranc witnessed a mother crying and shouting, 'I cannot poison my son, I cannot – she sobs – maybe I love him more than others or maybe I am a coward, but I cannot!'[60] The mother eventually decided to place her son in a bunker with strangers who offered him a place on the condition that he always remain silent. Such choices placed mothers in emotional turmoil and often led to separation from the child which, though incredibly stressful for the mothers, was preferrable to killing the child. In May 1942 Fogel witnessed mothers who were transported to Łódź from Pabianice without their husbands or children. These women were 'wrenched'[61] from them and 'asking to be shot, screaming they have nothing to live for without their children.'[62] He described mothers who have 'had no news about their children's whereabouts for the last five weeks, the mothers wander around the streets crying all day, the tragedy is impossible to describe.'[63]

A nuance can be added to Hertzog's notion of sacrificial motherhood when viewed in the ghetto context. Motherhood could threaten a woman's own survival, depending on how they responded to the additional challenges levied at them. These choices were not as stark as accompanying children to the gas chambers. The daily choice mothers faced was in feeding their children, and the examples show women who siphoned off their own food to feed their children. They worked to ensure the survival of the entire family unit. As the ghetto period progressed, their choice came to resemble that which Hertzog describes in

[58] Ibid, p. 30.
[59] A phenobarbital drug, used since the early twentieth century in the treatment of epilepsy. See: World Health Organisation Bulletin 2012 Dec 1; 90(12): 871–871A: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3524964/ [last accessed 24.5.22].
[60] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 52.
[61] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 90.
[62] Ibid, p. 91.
[63] Ibid, p. 97.

Birkenau, with mothers accompanying their children to deportation, or facing this alone in an act of self-sacrifice for the sake of other family members. It is possible to see that the changing role of the mother was an extreme expansion of her previous duties in sustaining the entire family unit, even at the expense of her own health or life. Mothers were forced to show heightened agency in such drastic circumstances with significant consequences and thus their role underwent a 'shift' as described by Weitzman, rather than a reversal.

Fatherhood in the Ghettos

The role of the father in the nuclear ghetto family has been simultaneously oversimplified and less studied than the role of mothers, with historiography failing to adequately discuss the role of men in the ghetto family. Maddy Carey uses Joan Ringelheim's 1985 article pioneering a practice of 'celebrating… women performing traditional roles' to emphasise that no such research has been conducted into men persecuted as men. She argues that they are viewed as the *de facto* victim of the Holocaust. The growing wealth of scholarship on women since the 1980s has, in Carey's view, overshadowed research on men who have become the 'second sex of Holocaust gender history.'[64] In addition to rebalancing the scholarship on Jewish men and the Holocaust, Carey argues that the period prior to the creation of the ghettos, which she dubs 'the deconstruction,' was a time of emasculation, during which masculine behaviours were not able to be practiced because the invasion and initial German rule eroded much of normal life. Following this 'the enclosure' was an opportunity for men to reassert their masculinity in a wholly Jewish micro-society.[65] This research aims to contribute to Carey's work by offering men, specifically Jewish fathers, an equal place when analysing the family structure. Furthermore, Weitzman's premise of 'role reversal' or 'role shifting' will be employed to assess whether diarists recorded fathers adapting their behaviour for their children.

The decision-making abilities of men (as head of house) had already been eroded over several years in Nazi Germany itself. Kaplan reports that women filled the void when men

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[64] Maddy Carey, *Jewish Masculinity in the Holocaust: Between Destruction and Construction* (London and New York, 2017), p. 161.
[65] Ibid, p. 85.

were removed from public life by Nazi decree and changing societal attitudes, and that women were more likely to emigrate because of their weaker connection to public and economic life.[66] The ability to provide for one's family was quickly and severely reduced by invasion and ghettoization in Poland. Carey believes there exists a 'politically influenced representation of men that we find in the conclusions often drawn about masculinity in the Holocaust, which show men as failing to perform the strong, positive roles expected (by historians) and therefore becoming weak and depressed.'[67] This section will contribute to Carey's scholarship by analysing Jewish fathers as portrayed in the diaries of Jewish men, their children, and letters written in the ghetto. By assessing the contemporaneous diaries and writing on Jewish men, this thesis adds nuance to Carey's assertion of the over-reliance on the domestic sphere by historians in their conclusions on Jewish men. Her source base relies heavily on published English-language diaries to draw her conclusions. The use of unpublished diaries (and published Polish ones) in conjunction with these published sources skews her conclusions: of the diaries included in this study, thirty-five per cent were written by Jewish people (of both genders) under the age of twenty (when they began writing their diary), and forty-five per cent were written by females. Women and the younger generation of the nuclear family were typically closer to the domestic sphere than men, therefore it is unsurprising that men are portrayed in their diaries through the lens of the domestic household. The diaries show that, despite Carey's claim of an over-reliance, the lens of the domestic sphere is unavoidable due to its centrality in daily life. However, they also show that we must challenge and add nuance to the typical portrayal of men as 'weak and depressed.'

Fatherly Duties

In physically sustaining the family unit men were expected to perform different roles to women as part of their familial duties. While women were often more closely tied to the domestic sphere in terms of cooking and housework, men were expected to provide for the family and, as the main worker, often received the largest portion of rations, as well as being entitled to any additional portions of food. The author of diary 191 wrote of his response to

[66] See: Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 1998).
[67] Ibid, p. 4.

his children who were crying to their mother for bread. He immediately made plans to arise early and queue for the bakery the following day and, due to an incident occurring there, was beaten and arrested by a Jewish Order Service member who: 'lifted his baton and wanted to hit me but I told him: 'Mister, I left a child at home who has not eaten bread in 3 days, so instead of [giving me] bread, you want to hit me?'.'[68] The author implored the police officer to have more sympathy because he had children at home. In a similar vein to mothers siphoning off their own food for their children, the author of diary 86 described her father returning from work on three occasions with part of his workers' ration for her.[69] She was 'in seventh heaven' thanks to her father's provision of more food.[70] At a later date, following an argument with her father, he returned home with extra turnip that he and his colleagues obtained at their work. He could have eaten this before coming home, but instead he kept it for his family.[71] To his daughter, 'despite everything father remains father.'[72] His self-sacrifice provides an example of a man willing to consume less for his children.

Majłech Sierakowiak was labelled by his own son as a food thief. This directly contrasts with the lack of accounts of mothers as food thieves, noted by Nechama Tec.[73] His behaviour in Dawid's diary depicts a selfish man stealing food from his wife and children. Dawid's impression of his father deteriorated as he witnessed the effects of his father's perceived greed on his mother, whose health steadily declined until she was deported. He accused his father of 'robbing her of food here in the ghetto.'[74] He also recorded his father taking food from his sister Nadzia and criticised him for 'his attitude toward them' which is 'bad and reveals unmitigated egotism, just as it does toward me.'[75] Dawid occupied a protective role towards his mother and sister, prompted by his father's perceived failure to do so. Consequently, Dawid regularly placed the welfare of his mother and sister above his own.

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[68] ŻIH, 302/191, p. 20.
[69] ŻIH, 302/86, pp. 7, 9, 12.
[70] Ibid, pp. 7/8.
[71] Ibid, pp. 12/13.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Nechama Tec, *Resilience and Courage: Women, Men and the Holocaust* (New Haven and London, 2003), p. 62.
[74] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 219.
[75] Ibid, p. 95.

Carey interprets Majłech's food siphoning as 'an active display of masculinity,'[76] rather than as an example of a 'weak and depressed' father.[77] She argues Majłech may have been accustomed to receiving more food as the head of household, thus 'to prioritize his own hunger over that of his family might not be seen as a collapse of manhood but an exercise thereof.'[78] Despite Dawid's outrage over his father's behavior, Carey stresses he may still have viewed it as an expression of masculinity.[79] This is not borne out in the diary. Majłech received bigger rations and, despite this, continued to take additional portions from his wife and children. On Monday 13th July 1942 Dawid described his father as 'becoming greedier and more rapacious for every little morsel; he cheats in a stupid, intricate way everywhere he can, which upsets me terribly.'[80] For Dawid his father is a coward, defrauding his family of their food. In an earlier entry, Dawid noted that his mother reduced the amount she gave to his father, offering him 25dkg instead of 50dkg, which Majłech was unhappy about but ultimately 'calculated that if there is no Mom he will get even less.'[81] Majłech's extreme hunger and desire to have increasingly larger portions of their shared food came at the expense of his family. His son perceived this behaviour as cowardly and not befitting of a father leading his household. While Carey presents this as a display of masculine behaviour, which may have been the case for Majłech himself, Dawid did not perceive his father to be masculine. He believed his father had failed in his most important masculine duty: taking care of his family.

On 17th June 1942, Dawid wrote 'We have money because we can't buy anything to eat with my last pay except dinners and bread.' As a result, his father 'bought socks for Mom, himself, and me for 10 RM. I will finally have something to wear because the clothes I have on now are deteriorated.'[82] His father bought the clothes from a ghetto policeman who was selling items acquired cheaply from refugees from Western Europe. In this entry Majłech still considered the needs of his family when on the streets of the ghetto, buying essential

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[76] Carey, *Jewish Masculinity*, p. 5.
[77] Ibid p. 4.
[78] Ibid, p. 5.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid, p. 196.
[81] Ibid, p. 156.
[82] Ibid, p. 187.

items for them. The Sierakowiak family unit was irrevocably damaged by Sura's deportation, something Dawid blamed his father for. On Friday 11th December 1942 Dawid reported 'we can now have "peace" and normal relations at home' after his father 'almost accepted that he has to work.'[83] His reluctance to do so influenced the entire family and suggests that Dawid was struggling to convince him to work. Despite the strain in their relationship caused (at least partially) by Majłech's behaviour, it was not wholly negative. Dawid's recording of both positive and negative actions from his father shows he was capable of providing a balanced perception of Majłech, and that their relationship was caught in a deeper rift than between teenage son and father.

Like Majłech Sierakowiak, Leo Hauser also grew apathetic to his environment. Irene Hauser complained that 'Leo has two pairs of shoes and tells the child to starve.'[84] As with Majłech, Leo's actions were not wholly negative. On 21st August 1942 'at one thirty, Leo came home with a ration of a few radishes. I made a stew with them.'[85] Despite his hunger, Leo chose to share this much needed food with his family. For Irene, however, this gesture was marred by their overall hunger, for which she blamed Leo. She remarked on the appearance of Bubi, herself, and 'Leo also looks terrible, but everything is his fault, because he doesn't want to be thrifty.'[86] Proper management of the household economy was a crucial skill which Irene evidently felt Leo did not possess. Though acting wastefully was perilous for household food supplies, rations could not alleviate starvation, and additional food prices were exorbitant. Irene was angry with Leo for failing in his duties to his family, and (as with Majłech) taking more than his fair share. Their relationship shattered under the pressure of the ghetto. On 2nd September she wrote: 'Leo has left us to our fate.'[87] In her penultimate entry on 7th September, Irene wrote 'It is now half 12, we have nothing in our stomach, and nobody loves us.'[88] The 'us' referred to Irene and Bubi only. Similarly, by the end of Sierakowiak's diary, Majłech was unwell and relations with his son were strained, seemingly permanently.

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[83] Ibid, p. 238.
[84] ŻIH, 302/299, p. 56.
[85] Wiatr and Radziszewska, *Irene Hauser*, p. 59
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid, p. 62.
[88] ŻIH, 302/299, p. 56.

On 17th November 1943, Dawid wrote: 'Father is still lying in bed. The situation is becoming really irritating. When Nadzia and I are out, he cooks himself a whole bunch of potatoes and uses up a lot of briquettes (which we borrowed). Nor does he have the slightest intention of finding a job. In addition, his thievish old habits (stealing food from our portions) are coming into fashion again. I am terribly upset and will probably explode.'[89] Two days later he added 'I had a fierce argument with Father, who had already managed to buy our allocation. A lot was missing when we weighed it. I told him everything I think of him and why I hate him. He doesn't care. He is still not looking for a job.'[90] Dawid's entries clarify that his father was ultimately incapable of caring for them (or indeed for himself), leaving them to keep their household functioning. The confrontation with his father is depicted as an emotionally charged scene, with Dawid trying to provoke Majłech into acting as a father should and feed his children fairly, obtain a job, and keep himself and their environment clean.

Despite brief moments of showing responsibility for their families, Majłech and Leo became increasingly distant from their partners and children. The strains of the ghetto loosened family bonds until both men were perceived as being more concerned with their own survival than that of their wife and children. This contrasts with the examples of mothers and certain fathers, such as the father of the anonymous author of diary 86, or Lubiński's father. Lolek's father, Moszek, took care of him when he was unwell, informing him that he coughed all night, and visited the doctor to obtain medicine for Lolek, after discovering his temperature was 37.5°.[91] In addition to this fatherly care, Lolek recorded a rare instance of fatherly advice offered to a child in the diaries. They discussed Lolek's girlfriend, Frania[92] while they walked home together. 'Father has not raised this issue, but I expect that he will on some other occasion. I decided once and for all to end it, when he asks, I will tell him how it is and may it be as God wills it.'[93] In another entry he discussed with Frania whether

[89] Adleson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 230.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 109.
[92] Full name Frajda Jakubowicz, born 1923 who lived with her parents, 3 brothers and 1 distant relative in the ghetto, Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 108, footnote 20.
[93] Ibid, p. 150.

she should become a nurse, suggesting that she should 'see what her parents thought'[94] before making a final decision. This highlights that parental guidance remained an important part of the decision-making process in everyday matters like employment. For Lolek and Moszek there was a continuity of intimacy and normality in which they remained able to discuss personal matters. The rarity of these types of conversations is perhaps caused by a lack of recording, rather than a lack of occurrence. In Carey's analysis the advice given from fathers to children during the Holocaust is achieved through the lens of survivors rather than contemporaneous sources. Her findings indicate that survivors received advice from their fathers during the Holocaust which they perceived as crucial to their survival.[95] Emmanuel Ringelblum observed 'the tragedy of families: thousands of men without wives, men who have remained alive and don't know what they are living for.'[96] These men were left to face the harsh reality of the ghetto without their partner or children. Fogelman remained in the ghetto without his family, becoming suicidal when his wife and two young sons were deported to Treblinka. Dawid secured a *legitimacja*[97] for them, only to discover they had been taken from their apartment to the *Umschlagplatz*. He tried to accompany them, thus showing a father willing to sacrifice his life to be with his family. Here we see similarities between Dawid's experience of trying to accompany his family to death and the sacrificial mothers described above. Dawid, unlike many mothers, was denied even the chance to die for and with his children. It was his responsibility to secure the *legitimacja* for the family as the main worker and head of house. He was successful in this but, because his wife and children were left in the home, they were deported before he could save them. His wife was more vulnerable to deportation than he was, and their chances of survival were inherently different.

Other fathers and husbands found themselves in the same situation as Fogelman, as witnessed by Gombiński: 'Sometimes they run, the husbands and fathers, to the *Umschlagplatz*, they beg to be sent as quickly as possible, after all their wives and children

[94] Ibid, p. 121.
[95] Carey, *Jewish Masculinity*, p. 137.
[96] Sloan, *Notes from the Warsaw* Ghetto, p. 321.
[97] Polish: identity card. During the deportations they denoted exemption from deportation as essential workers within certain industries and workshops or relatives of those workers.

are there, they cannot cope in serious, difficult moments, that's what they, the fathers and husbands, are there for, to protect them, to take care of them! If they leave today, or if they leave tomorrow, maybe they will catch up with the transport they are on.'[98] The reasons for the men joining their families, whether real or perceived, were centred around the male as protector of the weaker members. Fogelman was turned away from the *Umschlagplatz*, whereas Gombiński witnessed men being permitted to join transports also reflecting the chaotic, inconsistent implementation of the Final Solution in the ghettos.

Brzezińska's husband, Jakub, attempted to secure *legitimacja* for her and Juliusz. As a doctor he was exempt from deportation and initially, she hid inside the hospital with her son, while her husband tried to obtain an exemption for them. When he failed to do so she and their son were forced to hide elsewhere in the ghetto, but shortly thereafter her husband was successful in securing their exemption cards. She wrote that she would 'never forget the moment when my husband turned up with numbers for me and my son, without which we wouldn't have been able to appear on the street.'[99] Jakub managed to protect his wife and son during the deportation and managed to secure passes which allowed them to stay in the ghetto. Majłech Sierakowiak, unlike Fogelman or Jakub Pinczewski, did not obtain exemption for his wife, Sura. She was earmarked for deportation after failing a medical exam. Dawid noted that his father was 'kind of confused…but he didn't run out anywhere in the city; he didn't go to any friends' connections to ask for protection.'[100] The likelihood of this succeeding was minimal, but for Dawid it the offense was his father's lack of attempt to save his mother. Dawid read this (in)action as reflective of Majłech's distorted and unacceptable behaviour toward his family.

Here the gendered roles expected of ghetto inhabitants is clear. Men, as husbands and fathers were to obtain exemptions. Although obtaining exemptions was not always possible, an attempt was made to save the wives and children by several fathers. Majłech, however, failed to do so, leading to his family's fracture. The cards were not a guaranteed

[98] ŻIH, 302/38, p. 47.
[99] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 24.
[100] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 219.

method of remaining in the ghetto. Brzezińska recorded instances of the Jewish police rounding up women and children with *legitimacja* who should have been 'protected by the exemption certificates of their working husbands and fathers.'[101] During the deportations, police officers had to fulfil daily quotas of people for deportation and, on some occasions, those with *legitimacja* were sent regardless. Despite all efforts of Jewish fathers and husbands to save their family, external circumstances did not allow for their success. Fogel was arrested at synagogue with several others in June 1942, and still more men were ordered to present themselves to the police station. He noted with disdain the tactics of the police: 'whenever they couldn't find someone at home they took wives, mothers, instead to ensure that the missing people would show up.'[102] This use of female family members as hostages highlights the expectation that men evading arrest would turn themselves in to protect female relatives. Fogel described 'the thought of having to leave Mother and Mirka was the most heart-breaking for me.'[103] He further noted 'Mother was crying and saying that she had already lost one son in a foreign land, so she should at least have me to be there for her.'[104] His attachment to his mother, whose need for him increased since the loss of his brother, was one of his main reasons for wishing to stay in the ghetto. To save him, 'the next day Mirka kept intervening everywhere on my behalf' and eventually she presented his workshop employment certificate.[105] Fogel's presence was essential in his family as the head of household, and this was recognised by ghetto authorities through his employment status. Fogel wrote of a friend, Majłech, who was arrested and lost his job meaning he was imprisoned for several days, and 'worst of all, the situation at his home is bad now since he was the sole breadwinner of the entire family.'[106] The provision and protection of female family members was an expected part of male behaviour in the ghetto, and the diaries show that many men were able and willing to adhere to this role. However, on some occasions it was down to female family members to perform this task.

[101] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 16.
[102] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 112.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid, p. 94.

Although ghetto life entailed a myriad of threats and challenges, hunger and safety were the two main lenses through which fathers and husbands were perceived to have fulfilled their duty or not. Maddy Carey's claim that 'the ghetto was able to provide the required conditions for the practice of masculinity,'[107] can only be considered true to a limited extent because all fathers (and men in general) experienced a lack of choices and control over their own lives. As a result of ghettoization men were stripped of many decision-making opportunities which were a key part of their role. Many men were able to perform their role in an adapted manner, providing and protecting to the extent that they could under extreme circumstances. However, some men were unable, for a variety of reasons, to perform their responsibilities to their family and were viewed negatively for this.

Childhood in the Ghettos

Children were often grouped together with the elderly by ghetto authorities who measured ghetto inhabitants by their potential productivity. While children are better studied as a component of Holocaust victims, Strauss stresses the lack of attention paid to the older generation, meaning those who were sixty-five or over when the Second World War began.[108] Only Lubiński appears to have lived with two other generations. He was relocated to the ghetto and 'lived at Franciszkańska Street 38/39 with his father, Mojżesz, uncles Nyson and Szlama, grandfather Dawid and grandmother Estera.'[109] The editors of his diary note that before the war he lived with only his father and his mother Malka at 11 Listopada Street,[110] thus the expansion of members in one family residence was a direct result of ghettoization. As far as can be ascertained, the other diarists lived in a two-generation nuclear family comprised of adult parents and young adult, adolescent, or child dependents. Healy shows the value of studying children in the context of war: 'Historians of France, Britain, and Germany have noted the political and economic centrality of children to the World War I home front. They have documented children's value as laborers, consumers,

[107] Carey, *Jewish Masculinity*, p. 125.
[108] See Elizabeth Strauss, '"Cast me off not in my time of old age…": The Aged and Aging in the Łódź Ghetto, 1938-1944', (Unpublished doctoral thesis), The University of Notre Dame, 2013.
[109] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 107, footnote 2.
[110] Ibid.

and as powerful symbols of the nation and its future.'[111] While the hardship and premature death faced by the elderly in the ghettos came to symbolise the eradication of the Jewish past, the child mortality rate and the prevalence of children smuggling, begging, starving and dying in the ghetto symbolised the destruction of the Jewish future.

Children were forced into ghettos alongside Jewish adults and spent a significant portion of their childhood and/or adolescence inside the ghetto walls. In studies of the Holocaust, the diaries of children and adolescents are often grouped with adults' diaries to highlight a particular aspect of ghetto life such as hunger. Scholars such as Sue Vice and Nicholas Stargardt have convincingly argued that children's experiences of war (including their diaries) have great value for scholars.[112] Stargardt contends that children should be studied coherently as 'the generation… who had been most deeply marked by the Third Reich. The men and women who had carried the swastika across Europe could often look back on childhood memories untouched by Nazi emblems and slogans.'[113] Vice notes the higher mortality rates of children in camps, as well as the range of other persecutions they endured, some of which were child-specific, causing a 'very different' Holocaust experience based on age.[114] Leociak, too, emphasises the importance of children's perceptions of the Holocaust: 'A child sees more, feels more and sometimes understands more than adults. In children's narrations, amazement at the terrible danger of the world around them is linked with a simplicity and naturalness of expression. A child's language seems to stick most closely to reality, and to screen it less. For this reason, Henryk Grynberg claims that it was children who were the most reliable narrators of the Holocaust.'[115] Recent work by Barnabas Balint investigates the agency of Hungarian Jewish teenagers in Auschwitz who were 'no longer protected by their parents. Teenagers were forced to take great risks just to maintain physical proximity to a family member. This new role and increased personal agency on the part of the adolescent is vital for understanding young people's

[111] Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 214.
[112] See Nicholas Stargardt, *Witnesses of War: Children's Lives under the Nazis* (Great Britain, 2005) and Sue Vice, *Children Writing the Holocaust* (Hampshire, UK and New York, 2004).
[113] Stargardt, *Witnesses of War,* p. 3.
[114] Vice, *Children Writing the Holocaust*, p. 2.
[115] Leociak, *Text in the Face of Destruction*, p. 33.

experiences.'[116] Young people in the ghetto usually lived with their parents in the beginning, and were not systematically separated from them, however their survival was partly dependent on their own agency, in confluence with the realities of Nazi policies, as elucidated by Balint.

Children's diaries from the Holocaust offer a unique perspective into both their own lives and the lives of their parents. As the direct recipients of parenting in the ghetto, diarists under twenty reveal an insight into their everyday life as dependents of their parents. They lived with their parents and were the youngest generation of the nuclear family. The environment in the ghetto was subject to rapid change, a facet of their everyday reality. This reality, disconcerting for adults, was an unstable environment for children to grow up in. Their response offers a deeper understanding of family life in the ghetto, as well as their agency as members of the family unit. A ban on Jewish education was quickly implemented in Warsaw, though in Łódź two thirds of educational establishments functioned after the establishment of the ghetto.[117] However, deportations to the ghetto in autumn 1941 strained capacity meaning the schools were forced to close.[118] It is estimated that there were eighty-five clandestine schools in the Warsaw ghetto.[119] Alternate forms of clandestine schooling took place in both ghettos, and youth groups were common. These provided support networks for the young men and women and were an alternate space of learning. While they operated, the groups and schools provided structure for their members. Lubiński was a member of the Zionist *Hazit Dor Bnei ha-Midbar*[120] group. His diary shows that he met with the group nearly every day during 1941 and he reported on their activities, including lectures and readings, as well as the interpersonal relations between the members. Sierakowiak attended school regularly until he began full-time

[116] Barnabas Balint, 'Coming of Age During the Holocaust: The Adult Roles and Responsibilities of Young Hungarian Jews in Auschwitz-Birkenau', *The Journal of Holocaust Research*, 35:1 (2021), p. 35.
[117] USHMM Encyclopedia '"Give Me Your Children" Voices from the Łódź Ghetto' Entry: https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/give-me-your-children-voices-from-the-łódź-ghetto [last accessed 24.5.22]
[118] Ibid.
[119] From the Proceedings of the Women Surviving: The Holocaust Conference, quoted in Susan Berger, Hope, Survival, and Determination: An Informal Curriculum of Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto, *American Educational History Journal*, 33 (1), 2006, p. 152.
[120] Hebrew: Sons of the Desert Generation Front.

employment. In August 1941, when Sierakowiak received his final grades, he reported: 'I got the best in the class: all As and Bs. But what good are they when I'm still hungry and keep feeling so terribly exhausted?'[121] Even Dawid, an intelligent and capable student, struggled to see the value of education in the ghetto context when it did not transfer directly into adequate rations. The brain power and focus required to continue learning outstripped the rations provided in schools, thus further diminishing children's ability to learn. Despite the existence of educational facilities, many children were unable to attend.

In Warsaw many children were able to sneak out of the ghetto perimeter, becoming a crucial part of the smuggling network. The realities of their life render these inhabitants unlikely to engage in diary writing. Joanna Sliwa's work on children in the Kraków ghetto shows the ways in which children were 'pushed by their parents'[122] to smuggle. Accounts of these activities come from a range of sources including survivor testimonies. Sliwa's work focuses on children who performed this act, but the diaries here do not offer information on child smugglers except for Szac-Wajnkranc who watched 'a bunch of children aged 5 to 13 running out and cut through holes in the walls. These children would run to the Aryan market, only to return after several minutes with a bag of potatoes or a loaf of bread. They were the only breadwinners for entire families.'[123] These children were fulfilling a crucial role in their families but were not commonly described in the diaries. Instead, the diaries point to the transformation of roles on an individual level, such as children/adolescents performing adult duties and contributing to the family economy through employment. Children could participate in Rumkowski's policy of 'our only path is work.'[124] Officially, the working age was reduced from eighteen (set in March 1941) to fifteen in April 1942.[125] Children and adolescents formed half of the workforce in some workshops.[126] During the deportations in Łódź, which especially targeted children and the elderly, some of the ghetto

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[121] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 120.
[122] Joanna Sliwa, 'Clandestine Activities and Concealed Presence: A Case Study of Children in the Kraków Ghetto' in Michlic, *Jewish Families in Europe*, p. 37.
[123] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 16.
[124] Trunk, *Łódź Ghetto*, p. 149.
[125] Ibid, p. 169.
[126] Ibid, p.171.

youth who were as young as seven 'poured into the workshops'[127] to save themselves. Of the child and adolescents' diarists included within this study, only three had a job. It is possible that others had jobs, but did not write about them, such as the author of diary 9. She does not write of working, however, her presence in the ghetto in July 1944 would strongly suggest she had a job.

The author of diary 86 was unemployed, and Wiatr estimates she was fourteen or fifteen years old.[128] Her writing shows that she was home for most of the day and left to pick up rations for the family. Her older brother and sister were both employed and were aged sixteen and seventeen in March 1942.[129] She was aware of the difficulties her family members were facing, locked as they were in a vicious cycle whereby work became harder as they ate less, but the necessity of work meant less time and energy could be spent on acquiring food. She noted, on 10th March 1942, that her sister 'looks terrible.'[130] In her first diary entry she commented that her father had lost 30 kilograms from working hard, and only receiving soup and water. She added that her mother, brother, and sister 'also look very bad but there is nothing you can do about it.' In contrast she noted: 'I stay at home all day and look fine, but I don't have more than 20 dkg of bread all day.'[131] She displayed a high level of awareness of the effects of working on her family members, particularly compared to her own appearance which was unmarred by the strains of labouring long hours. The diarist was inside most of the day, likely protecting herself from the cold weather. She also seems to have had very few places to go, she was not attending school and only collected rations according to the cycle. She wrote on Wednesday 11th March 1942, about eating almost all the family's supply of honey. She questioned 'what have I done, how selfish I am, what are they going to have with bread? What will Mama say, how I am unworthy of you and how hard you work.'[132] Her remorse stemmed from her mother's working, contrasted with her own lack of work, thus perceiving herself as undeserving of

[127] Ibid.
[128] Wiatr, *Oblicza getta*, p. 37.
[129] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 1.
[130] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 9.
[131] Ibid p. 2.
[132] Ibid, p. 11.

additional food, particularly at the expense of her mother. Though she supported the family unit by obtaining rations and performing household tasks in the home, she perceived her contribution as insufficient.

For adolescent and young adult diarists Lubiński, Sierakowiak and Fogel, work became a desirable, necessary, and inevitable reality in their lives. Dawid wrote of his desire to obtain a job, writing, on 12th October 1941, 'Being deported [for hard labour in Germany] is not too nice a prospect. I'd like to settle myself in some workshop or in an office position as soon as possible.'[133] The replacement of school with employment offered Dawid structure once more. On 23rd October he started his new job 'as a saddlery apprentice. My student career has been suspended, at least for a while.' He wondered, doubtfully, whether he would ever resume studying but realised 'the main thing now is to make an income and survive poverty.'[134] Nadzia also tried to obtain employment in the same workshop. Their desire to obtain jobs (one of several they both had in their time in the ghetto) was driven by knowledge of the security of being a worker in the Łódź ghetto and the necessity of contributing to the family, as an adult would. Despite Dawid's love of learning, he displayed great maturity in realising that work must be his priority for the time being. Even before the deportations of the *Szpera*, Dawid was aware of the security of a job, as well as the rations which accompanied this. Dawid and Nadzia wanted to contribute to the family economy, lessening the pressure on their parents. Fogel, as the head of the family, realised the importance of working was connected to health and ultimate survival: 'as long as we are healthy and have jobs, we might live through this!'[135] Similarly, Lubiński made great efforts to obtain a job after he received his school leaving certificate. He initially struggled before visiting an acquaintance, Warszawski, 'because I can see that on all other fronts my efforts to get a job are failing.'[136] In an interview he was asked 'if I was receiving any support benefit, if someone in the family was working, and how many people there were in our family. He also asked how old I was, if I'm healthy and if I could speak German.'[137] For each

[133] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 139.
[134] Ibid, p. 143.
[135] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 129.
[136] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 158.
[137] Ibid, p. 163.

of these young men, knowing a certain person within the appropriate department could be the key to obtaining employment. Young adults in the family were obliged to contribute to the family economy in a way they likely would not have before the war, often giving up education prematurely. Regardless, the choice did not exist in the ghetto, without an additional workers ration family member's lives were at greater risk, leading many youths in the ghetto to obtain jobs. The youngest generation of the family were required to adapt to more adult roles earlier and with more consequences than before the war.

Role Reversals/Shifts

Survivors who experienced the Holocaust as children have been dubbed the '1.5 generation' by scholars. As a proponent of this, Susan Suleiman explains that 'Paradoxically, their "premature bewilderment" was often accompanied by their premature aging, having to act as an adult while still a child; this was yet another form of trauma specific to the 1.5 generation.'[138] Suleiman's premise can be expanded to diarists who never became survivors, but endured the trauma of the Holocaust as children, adolescents, and young adults. The diaries here share similarities with survivor testimonies investigated by Suleiman. They highlight a significant change in the position of children within the family unit during ghettoization. This was largely promoted by the change forced upon adult roles, as analysed by Judith and Milton Kestenberg who explain that: 'Aging psychologically is based on the recognition of the loss of adult protection.'[139] The inability of adults to fully protect children from their situation was a definitive feature of ghetto family life. Lenore J. Weitzman has researched diaries, memoirs, and testimony to investigate role reversals among family members in the ghettos. She describes the 'complicated role shifts' of individual members including sharing which 'was often cyclical or reversible or inconsistent and might move in one direction and then in another.'[140] The shifting parameters of these roles are evident in the diaries, revealing an accelerated maturity in the youngest

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[138] Susan Rubin Suleiman, 'The 1.5 generation: Thinking about child survivors and the Holocaust' *American Imago*, (Fall 2002), 59:3, p. 277.
[139] Judith S. Kestenberg and Milton Kestenberg, 'Aging of Children in the Holocaust', Judith S. Kestenberg and Ira Brenner (eds.), *The Last Witness: The Child Survivor of the Holocaust* (Washington and London, American Psychiatric Press, Inc., 1996), p. 140.
[140] Weitzman, 'Resistance in Everyday Life' in Michlic (ed.), *Jewish Families in Europe*, p. 50.

generation of the family unit. For many the reshaping of their position in the family began with their loss of education. Earlier accounts, such as Sierakowiak's first two notebooks (covering until 23rd October 1941 when he started his job as a saddlery apprentice)[141] and Berg's early entries, show that forms of education continued for some ghetto inmates. Lubiński was able to complete his final year of schooling inside the ghetto by January 1941. The author of diary 86 does not discuss her education, but it is clear she was not attending school during the period of her diary.

Barnabas Balint's research recognises that Jewish teenagers were not 'passive victims' but rather adopted a variety of 'mechanisms more commonly associated with adults' to survive.[142] He further elucidates the importance of age in surviving Auschwitz-Birkenau, and that it remains undervalued as a category of investigation in Holocaust research. As with Neiberger and Weitzman's work, Balint's conclusions stem from survivor memoirs and testimonies. The diaries were written in situ and show young people and their families employing similar survival tactics as the teenagers in Auschwitz, such as displaying 'creativity' in attempting to avoid deportation, gaining access to certain work and remaining with key family members or friends.[143] These support networks and the need to maintain them 'marked a step-change in young people's lives, as they took on responsibility for these networks and contributed to them as adults, not as children.'[144] An accelerated maturation was present in ghetto families, whose youngest generation were forced to become contributors to the family economy. On 14th June 1942 Czerniaków spoke to children who were 'living skeletons from the ranks of the street beggars. Some of them came to my office. They talked with me like grown-ups – those eight-year-old citizens. I am ashamed to admit it, but I wept as I have not wept for a long time.'[145] The children, observed indirectly here through Czerniaków's eyes, were forced to beg to obtain food and their experiences prematurely aged them. Gombiński, too, noticed that children in the ghetto had shed childlike behaviours. 'Only the privileged children go to the gardens, play. Not all children

141 Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 143.
142 Balint, 'Coming of Age During the Holocaust', p. 20
143 Ibid, p. 30.
144 Ibid, p. 33.
145 Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków,* p. 366.

play… the Jewish child knows he must work, must earn, that sometimes he must take care of the whole family. The Jewish child of the ghetto does not laugh. He has no time for it, has no desire for it, he has forgotten how to laugh. On his face the grimace of maturity – the bitterness of the aggrieved, it has much knowledge – and no childhood.'[146] Szpigielman also described a 'little Jewish smuggler' sneak across to the "Aryan" side and endure the 'hardships of return' to bring a bunch of carrots home. This was 'lunch, dinner, and tomorrow's breakfast for you and your family. What is left you will sell. And tomorrow your mother will accompany you to the gate and will wait for you there until you return with new loot… and so every day.'[147] Children, observed here by adults, participated in the provision of food and goods for their family, and in the process were growing up quicker as circumstances demanded.

In some families, the 'role shifting' began with small occurrences, as in the case of Lubiński who bought his father a gift in June 1941. 'Today, for the first time in my life I used the money I earned to buy my father a summer cap. I was happier about it than my dear father was about his cap.'[148] Lolek's excitement is evident, and this act of kindness and generosity denotes a continuation of a close relationship with his father which is reaching a stage of companionship. The normality of this event belies their ghetto reality and shows that Lolek was becoming a young adult, able to spend his own money on treating the person he was closest to. Lipszyc actively cared for her younger sister Cipka. On 7th February 1944 she wrote of an upcoming time at work in which she could make clothes: 'I'll make a pinafore for Cipka, or a different kind of dress.'[149] There is a glimpse of normal sibling behaviour when Rywka describes the sisters reading a damaged copy of *Les Misérables* together.[150] However, the death of both parents forced Rywka to grow up prematurely to care for her siblings, and this occupied the majority of her daily life after her mother's death in July 1942. On 26th January 1944 she recalled the effects of losing her mother: 'After her death I got closer to my siblings. (Abramek appointed me as mother. "You are our mother," he used to

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[146] ŻIH, 302/38, p. 16.
[147] ŻIH, 302/195, p. 82.
[148] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 175.
[149] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 113.
[150] Ibid, p. 153.

say). I wanted to fill in, but… it wasn't meant to be. I was left alone with Cipka…'[151] As a result of the *Szpera*, Rywka was denied the chance to be a surrogate mother to her brother, as she was for Cipka. When she recalled the loss of her siblings, she was 'always full of remorse that I did something one way instead of another.'[152] Similarly, the author of diary 86 also began to display the awareness required to judge her family's situation, rather than being shielded from reality by her parents. She felt responsible, at least in part, for her mother's suffering.[153] Rywka tried to take on adult roles. She felt she was performing this inadequately, however, which added to her anguish. On Wednesday 19th January 1944, she lamented 'God, let me take the place of my mother. Let me suffer for my siblings!'[154] Her selfless wish to take the place of her deceased relatives was a constant presence in her life. Rywka occupied the role of a parent for her siblings before her mother died. Lipszyc recalled that she cooked potatoes for the family: Mommy would get the potatoes and we would drink the boiled water and each of us would receive a piece of potato just "for taste."'[155] This suggests that Lipszyc's new role was a permanent change, which began when her mother was alive but unwell. Łaski, too, adopted a parental role over his sister, but after eating her bread, he felt 'terrible remorse of conscience' and 'still greater care for what my little one would eat for the next 5 days.'[156] His guilt over taking her bread was compounded by his worry for her survival. Even when siblings became parent-figures, the conditions of the ghetto led them to feel they were inadequate in this role.

Szac-Wajnkranc observed an exchange between a mother and her son during the *Grossaktion*, when the mother asked her son to hide in a basement to wait for her, promising him she would bring sugar if he kept quiet. He was convinced to go by the promise of the food, pressing his mother: 'you won't forget the sugar?' Szac-Wajnkranc's conclusion from this scene was that 'even in the worst hell, a child remains a child.'[157] Contrasting directly with Gombiński and Czerniaków's observation of ghetto children who matured into

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[151] Ibid, p. 107.
[152] Ibid, p. 73.
[153] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 11.
[154] Ibid, p. 100.
[155] Ibid, p. 123.
[156] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 3.
[157] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 54.

adults too quickly and shed childlike behaviours, Szac-Wajnkranc's view aligns with those who perceived Rywka as a child. The contradictions of ghetto life are evident here, in the environment where children matured at an accelerated speed but, as Szac-Wajnkranc's experience suggests, some still occupied the role of the child, even when their parents' role in protecting them was rendered impossible by ghetto life. She also noted an incident of a 5-year-old boy who stuck his tongue out at a German solider. 'A moment later the tongue belonged to the SS-man, who cut it out with a small, common pocketknife. Blood as thick as cream spurted from the boy's mouth.'[158] Having witnessed this abhorrent act, Szac-Wajnkranc questioned whether the boy was joking or whether he had stuck his tongue out deliberately. She concluded: 'Our children understand that as they must eat and sleep, the same they must hide from the Germans, that they sit on the dark stuffy stairs, not free to cry or shout, but they must breathe quietly, our children know they must stop hunger, thirst and they know they could hate. They imbibe hatred of the enemy with their mother's milk. A 5-year-old boy showed his tongue deliberately. He was too weak to throw himself at the enemy and in this way, he was able to express his hatred and contempt. Look, German! Jewish children show you their tongue, hating your cruelty and your strength!'[159] This childish but dangerous action could have far-reaching consequences in the ghetto. Regardless of the child's intention, the knowledge described by Szac-Wajnkranc was crucial for children to possess – being fearful of Germans and the suppression of their own needs (at least temporarily), was a survival tactic employed by adults and children alike. Szac-Wajnkranc's contrasting examples symbolise the nuance of children in the ghetto. On rare occasions they remained children, and doubtless their parents wished this to be the case for them, but children predominantly were forced to grow up and comprehend (as much as possible) the danger they were in.

Dawid and Nadzia Sierakowiak experienced an interchanging of roles. Dawid wrote, on 26th May 1941 that due to his mother working long hours 'all our housekeeping falls on Nadzia's shoulders; she takes care of all the food lines, cleaning, etc., and she performs all these

[158] Ibid, p. 46.
[159] Ibid. Underline in original.

efforts, having only one soup and 30 dkg of bread a day.'[160] This continued, with Dawid writing in March 1942: 'I worked like a horse today. Mom can hardly walk, so all the work fell to me and Nadzia. In the evening: general washing up, and my clean, fresh bed.' By the end of the year, on 25th December, Dawid received a loan and planned how to spend it: 'I will be able to buy shoes for myself, for Nadzia, too, and some clothes, possibly underclothes for father.' As with Rywka, Dawid made a permanent shift into an adult role, providing for his sibling and, increasingly, his father. Earlier in the diary, Dawid remarked upon his father's behaviour toward the family – in what Dawid viewed as shirking his duties as a father – and reassured himself: 'we will settle accounts with father after the war.'[161] Written in April 1942, before Dawid's belief in survival had diminished further, this statement demonstrates his transformation into head of household. He exercised the agency required to make choices benefitting the family unit (prioritizing his mother and sister above his father). He shared responsibility with Nadzia but, from his perception of events, he was the *de facto* head of the household by the end of their ghetto period. This is exemplified by Dawid's entry on 17th November 1943: 'The conditions we live in are becoming more and more despicable. The bedding has been without linen for four months, and there aren't even any clean underclothes. With difficulty, I can have hot water and clean clothes every two weeks. Of course, Father can't get rid of his lice and doesn't care about them anymore anyway.'[162] Dawid was forced to assume responsibility for these domestic tasks alone, as his father had abandoned any attempt to keep himself clean.

In July 1942, Fogel began work in the vegetable workshop. This would bring additional food and higher earnings, a 'priority, since Mother doesn't earn much, and I have to make enough money to provide for her and buy her rations - because what Mirka brings home is not enough.'[163] A single wage in the ghetto was insufficient to support a family, and Fogel's priority was supporting his mother and sister. Łaski recorded in his diary: 'When I look on

[160] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 94.
[161] Ibid, p. 155.
[162] Ibid, p. 230.
[163] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 128.

my little sister and my heart is melting, hasn't the child suffered its part? She who fought so heroically the past five years.'[164]

A role reversal of the parent-child relationship occurred in the Lebenhaft and Halperson letters from the Warsaw ghetto. On 22nd March 1942, Luba Halperson thanked her daughter for the package she sent and asked her to send another to her uncle, also living in the ghetto.[165] Her mother was 'beyond grateful' to be receiving these. Similarly, Esther Lebenhaft wrote to her daughter Tamara to thank her for the packages on numerous occasions and to reassure her not to worry about the family.[166] Typically the role of parents, the Halperson and Lebenhaft families had so few opportunities to acquire food that their daughters became a crucial lifeline.

The children and adolescents of the ghetto experienced an accelerated development, being forced to make decisions, care for other family members, and adopt parental roles (temporarily or permanently). They were aware that their parents could not fully protect them from the realities of ghetto life. As such, they adapted to their environment by shouldering adult responsibilities and, as a result, matured quickly, shedding many childlike behaviours. Some diaries attest to brief glimpses of joy and childlike behaviour, though these became increasingly infrequent as the period progressed.

Extended Families and Networks

Daily interactions reached beyond the nuclear family unit, and many came to rely on a wider network of extended family members or friends and acquaintances. Prior to the war, Jewish life in Eastern Europe was based on traditional nuclear family units, occupying a hierarchy based upon gender. This was dictated by 'economic necessity and social hardship' which 'modified those gender ideals in practice.'[167] Paula Hyman argues: 'Although the nuclear family was the predominant form of family structure for Jews in the nineteenth century,

[164] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 34.
[165] ŻIH, 237, p. 3.
[166] Ibid, p. 28.
[167] Paula Hyman, 'The Modern Jewish Family: Image and Reality' in David Kraemer, (ed.) *The Jewish Family: Metaphor and Memory* (New York and Oxford, 1989), p. 181.

the extended family was not only available, but it was also often nearby.'[168] Many ghetto residents created new families from surviving relatives. This formation was often dictated by necessity over want and created fragmentary patchworks of family units comprising cousins, aunts or uncles, and other extended family members. This section will also cover networks of friends and acquaintances mentioned by the diarists and the significance of these in the diarists' lives.

Extended social networks offer significant glimpses into the agency of the diarists and those around them. Aleksiun has investigated the factors which led to Jews surviving in hiding, noting that they were different from those who survived in camps as 'they had a broader set of strategies to consider and came into contact with different kinds of organizations, networks, and social relations: hiding out of sight with the support of a non-Jewish individuals or networks, pretending to be a member of a non-Jewish family, living under a false identity, hiding in a monastery or convent, living with partisans, hiding in a bunker, identifying as forced laborers, or pretending to be a *Volksdeutscher*.'[169] These potential means of survival were, for the most part unavailable to those in the ghetto. Hiding was possible, to a limited extent inside the ghetto walls or (more commonly) after escape from the ghetto. Survival tactics were predominantly employed through familial and extended networks which engaged in life-sustaining practices such as the sharing, borrowing, and lending of food, or the utilisation of connections to obtain jobs. Individuals' decision-making was often influenced by those around them. Those with surviving family members tried to remain together, even if relations were strained between members. Inmates did not wish to remain alone and isolated. This applied to the wider, extended family as well as the nuclear family, as individuals could be split from their spouse or children. Brzezińska discovered, on the second day of the *Grossaktion*, that some ghetto inhabitants had volunteered to join the deportation transports to accompany their 'relatives in the east.'[170] The lure of joining family members led many to volunteer for deportation, believing it was

[168] Ibid, p. 185.
[169] Natalia Aleksiun, 'Social Networks of Support: Trajectories of Escape, Rescue and Survival' in Simone Gigliotti and Hilary Earl (eds.), *A Companion to the Holocaust* (New Jersey and Chichester, 2020), p. 280.
[170] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 9.

safer to be with a wider family unit than to remain and face an uncertain future in the unstable ghetto environment. This choice, mirrored in Terezín and described by Hájková as 'decisively a moment of agency,'[171] contributed to an inmate's daily life and was not entirely beyond their control. The external policies of the authorities dictated a great deal of the ghetto environment, but the individual choices contributed to sustained survival through food and living arrangements, as well as emotional support.

New Families

Those living in ghettos had, in most cases, extended family members also living in the ghetto, in other areas of Nazi-occupied Europe, or in neutral or Allied countries. Both Lubiński and Lipszyc had extended family members within the ghetto. Lolek's diary contains references to various family members, including his cousin Jakov Lubiński, whom he met often. He also witnessed the deportation of another cousin, Josek Lubiński.[172] Prior to the war, Rywka's extended family had lived in close proximity, especially her father's family who had been natives of Łódź for generations.[173] By 1943 the once-large Lipszyc family had been diminished by disease, starvation, and deportation. After the death of their parents, her two youngest siblings, Abramek and Tamarcia, stayed with an unnamed uncle.[174] Saving them from the ghetto orphanage, Rywka and Cipka were taken in by their uncle Yochanan, aunt Hadassah, and their three daughters. They also looked after another Lipszyc cousin, 3-year-old Esther.[175] Their situation lasted only two months before again being destroyed by the *Szpera*, which resulted in the loss of Abramek, Tamarcia, and Yochanan. Hadassah died of illness in July 1943, leaving only the Lipszyc cousins with Rywka and Cipka. Rywka's diary was written after her prewar nuclear family had been reduced from six members to two. Each loss of a family member would have forced a reorganisation and renegotiation of roles, not always explicitly described in diaries. These self-chosen family units often became an alternative support network in the absence of the original unit. A comparison can be made

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[171] Hájková, *The Last Ghetto*, p. 227.
[172] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 113.
[173] Jewish Family and Children's Services Holocaust Centre, 'The Diary of Rywka Lipszyc': https://holocaustcenter.jfcs.org/diary-rywka-lipszyc/teaching-diary/ [last accessed 24.5.22]
[174] Alexandra Zapruder, 'A Polish Girl Comes of Age in a Jewish Ghetto' in Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 5.
[175] Ibid.

here with Auschwitz and the 'little families' created from the remnants of familial groups such as 'blood-related sisters, cousins, acquaintances, and even unrelated strangers.'[176] These provided a form of protection in the camp and aided survival. When the original nuclear family was separated in the ghetto, the amalgamation of different family units into a new one had the potential to fulfil both the physical and emotional needs of members. The creation of a new group generally meant the sharing of food, rations, and cooking responsibilities, as well as the need to heat only one apartment. Not only was this a survival strategy but, as Neiberger notes for Auschwitz, the sharing of food 'confirmed the commitment of the group's members to each other.'[177] Rywka's eldest cousin, Estusia, was nineteen years old when her mother died, resulting in her shouldering 'the extraordinary responsibility of caring for her two siblings and the Lipszyc daughters.'[178] Despite the benefits in combining families with her cousins, Rywka did not receive much emotional sustenance from her extended family. Her diary is littered with instances of disagreement and tension between the cousins. On 24th November 1943, she wrote of 'these never-ending grudges of my cousins.'[179] She further expanded: 'when they (but not Chanusia) offer something that is theirs, they do it as if it were just an obligation, as if they had to.'[180] So, although Estusia was responsible for the four other Lipszyc girls, as the head of their household, Rywka felt this was borne of an obligation toward her and her sister, rather than a strong familial love. Rywka felt great protectiveness towards Cipka but not her cousins. Despite the animosity between the Lipszyc girls, they were able to remain together as a newly formed family unit until they were deported to Auschwitz, on the same transport, in early August 1944.[181] From research conducted for the publication of the diary, it is known that Esther and Mina Lipszyc survived. Their testimony shows that the girls tried to remain together, separated only by selection at Auschwitz-Birkenau in the case of Cipka, and death through illness in Channah's case.[182] Family disagreements and ill-feeling were secondary

[176] Neiberger 'An Uncommon Bond of Friendship' in Ruby Rohrlich (ed.), *Resisting the Holocaust*, pp. 133-4.
[177] Ibid, p. 137
[178] Zapruder, 'A Polish Girl Comes of Age', in Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 8.
[179] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 76.
[180] Ibid, p. 87.
[181] Fred Rosenbaum, 'A History of Łódź' in Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 64.
[182] Hadassa Halamish, 'The Family Remembers: More Than A Name' in Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 190.

to their survival. It was, if possible, preferrable to remain with one's arguing relatives than to be alone with strangers.

In Warsaw, Fogelman became part of a newly formed family unit when his wife and children were deported. After this horrific event, Dawid's sister insisted he live in her apartment with her husband and children because he 'couldn't bear to be in the apartment alone.'[183] Dawid 'didn't have the will to live because I lost the dearest and closest in my life.'[184] His sister admitted she was fearful that he would attempt suicide. While in her apartment, they 'grieve together,'[185] over the loss of his family, suggesting a close relationship and the immediate emotional support provided by his new family unit. Dawid believed he would never recover, admitting that 'the first few days I was like a lunatic.'[186] With the help of his sister he was able to return to work and 'begin to live again.'[187] His account shows his dependence on his sister who helped him survive the most traumatic event of his life. She worried when he did not return from labour duty when expected. Dawid also contributed to their unit, obtaining extra bread for the family (and specifically earmarking some for her children) and offering advice in the form of 'warning her to stay on high alert'[188] to protect them from further deportations. Their new family unit, however, only lasted until January 1943 when his sister and her children were deported in a further round up.[189] He wrote of his devastation at the loss of 'the last of my closest people, she replaced my mother and was taken away.'[190] Their mother had died when Dawid was twelve, therefore his strong relationship with his sister as a replacement mother-figure long predated the war and was only strengthened by their ghetto experience. Dawid recognised the significance and his explicit recording of their relationship as more than siblings, emphasising her importance especially in the provision of emotional support. Of their family, only his brother-in-law

[183] ŻIH, 302/35, p. 4.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid, p. 5.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid, p. 10.
[189] Dawid does not specify the dates.
[190] Ibid, 14.

remained, and the two men cried together, expressing happiness that the other was spared, and mourning their lost family.[191]

The author of diary 9 wrote that by July 1944, half of her family remained in the ghetto, while the other half had left.[192] Sierakowiak mentioned that there were 'relatives hiding in our apartment.'[193] He did not expand on this or the family members in any entries. It is likely they were only hiding for the duration of the deportations, but his comment hints at a wider family circle than he described daily, but whom they helped when they could. Lipszyc's neighbour also hid friends in their apartment, to protect them from the police.[194] Hiding someone in these circumstances was dangerous and potentially life-threatening, thus the connection of friendship and kindness beyond immediate family members is evident here. Brzezińska mentioned her own parents only when they were deported. When they were caught up in the deportations during the summer of 1942 she mourned for them, with the realisation that she 'wasn't the only one who survived that pain, not the only one who experienced that powerless despair.'[195] It is likely that her parents were deported due to their age, as middle-aged and elderly people were at particular risk of deportation in both Warsaw and Łódź.[196] She also witnessed the police taking the elderly and children to the *Umschlagplatz* on rickshaws.[197] These examples highlight the danger for older people in the ghettos, and the risk posed to the older generation of the family. Lubiński lived with his paternal grandparents, as well as his mother and father, and two uncles. This was a situation dictated by ghetto conditions; prior to the war Lolek had lived in a two-generational nuclear family with only his mother and father.[198] Lolek only mentioned his father and grandfather in his diary, but his interactions with them portray a caring family. He fed his 'very weak'[199] grandfather and retrieved his medication.[200] He was also able, through correspondence, to

[191] Ibid.
[192] ŻIH, 302/9, p. 2.
[193] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 219.
[194] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 70.
[195] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 16.
[196] Strauss, The Aged and the Aging the Łódź Ghetto, p. 176.
[197] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 17
[198] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 203, footnote 2.
[199] Ibid, p. 108.
[200] Ibid, p. 134.

communicate with his maternal grandparents in Lublin. He wrote to his grandfather there to inform him that he 'finished vocational school and that I'm now applying for a job.'[201] This highlights that, at least in 1941, it was still possible to share these moments with extended family members, and to communicate with others outside the ghetto. The Lubińskis were informed via correspondence by another family member in Lublin that they had been deported (likely for labour as deportations to death camps began in 1942).[202] By contrast, Fogel was unable to communicate with family beyond the ghetto. He expected some family members to arrive in the ghetto, but later reported: 'My aunt, uncle and cousin from Zelów must have been expelled to somewhere else, because they are not here in the ghetto! No one can give us any news!'[203] The lack of access to information frustrated many and severed communication between family members. Hauser, as a deportee to Poland, did not have a wide network within the ghetto. Her other relatives emigrated or were deported to Terezín and other locations.[204] Irene began her diary by writing: 'This book should be given to my sister in England.'[205] The following seven pages contain the names and addresses of several relatives and friends, who lived in Vienna, Strasbourg, Milan, and England. Listing those she knew from her former life signifies a connection between her and the outside world. She identified herself with her diary and, in the case of discovery, insisted that it be sent to her closest relative: her sister, Josephine. Not only did she wish to associate herself with her extended circle of friends and family but, in the event of her death she wished for the last item she owned, and likely the most personal one, to be returned to her relatives. In these connections with the outside world, there is a clear desire to preserve their memory with family members. Irene also relied heavily upon connections she had in the ghetto. On several occasions Irene and Bubi were left hungry by Leo, and were bolstered by neighbours Frau Lilly and Frau Benedikt who, as well as giving them food, 'dropped in to see me, they were worried about me.'[206] Two days after their visit, they returned, this time

[201] Ibid, p. 117.
[202] Ibid, p. 159.
[203] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 140.
[204] Wiatr and Radziszewska, the editors of Irene Hauser's published diary have researched the fate of those they were able to identify from Irene's list. The majority of them were deported to Łódź, Theresienstadt, Riga, Mały Trostenets (among others) and did not survive. For more information, please see Wiatr and Radziszewska, *Irene Hauser.*
[205] ŻIH, 302/299, p. 4.
[206] Wiatr and Radziszewska, *Irene Hauser*, p. 59.

with another neighbour, Bobby, who 'came up' with 'a little bit of sewing work.'[207] Help from these neighbours could not ameliorate Irene and Bubi's acute suffering but they offered some material help as well as companionship to a neglected mother and child. The regular company and material help offered by these acquaintances was invaluable to Irene, who felt that 'no one loves us'[208] due to her husband's neglect. Though it is impossible to assess whether friendship networks functioned differently from family units in most respects, it is evident that friendship networks were self-created. Thus, during deportations whole or partial family units were deported together, inmates were wrenched from family members, or one workers' ID card could spare the entire unit from deportation. Unless living with friends, friendship groups could choose to go to the *Umschlagplatz* together, or would see friends there, but generally the family was the foundational unit which affected deportations.

In Warsaw, the Lebenhaft and Halperson family letters mention both immediate and extended family members. For the members safe in neutral or Allied countries this was a rare chance to help family stuck behind Nazi lines. For those trapped within the ghettos they could receive comfort that loved ones were safe, as well as receiving much-needed sustenance. A letter from Esther Lebenhaft to her daughter Tamara, reminded her that now 'the niece should look after her uncle, like she looked after her aunt' by sending him a *Liebesgaben*, and that by doing so 'she will rejoice in his joy' over being cared for.[209] In her letter, she also informed Tamara that she was concerned over a lack of news from her grandmother, and asks if she has written to her.[210] This communication highlights the worry over family members not within the ghetto and recognises that her daughter may be better informed than she is. In the letters to Janina Halperson in Sweden her family also reassured her of their wellbeing and begged her for news from her life. As well as the information being passed from inside the ghetto to family members in the outer world, those inside the ghetto were keen to hear of life outside. The Halpersons did not waste any space in their

[207] Ibid, p. 60.
[208] Ibid.
[209] ŻIH, 237, p. 3.
[210] ŻIH, 237, p. 20.

letters, with up to four people cramming their message onto one or two sides of paper. In a letter dated 20th April 1941, mother, father, brother, and sister-in-law wrote to her, each asking her to please write to them. The family offer an example of a three-generational nuclear family living together in one apartment.[211] This collaborative event of writing a letter to their daughter and sister highlights the importance of the letters as their link to the outside world. As well as enquiring about Janina's life in Sweden, it was their chance to send messages with their own words, signed with their names to the outside world as proof of their existence. This was an important line of communication for some families in the ghetto, who otherwise would never have heard from their relatives again.

The authors mention many people by name in their diaries, often without context. In some cases, it is possible to discern the identity of these people and in others it is not. The number of individuals mentioned goes some way to highlighting the people within each diarist's network. The editors of Lubiński's diary established more than seventy ghetto inmates are named in the diary, many of whom have been identified.[212] This exemplifies the multitude of acquaintances, friends, and family members one individual could connect with daily. His diary hints at his position in the ghetto as a young man who engaged regularly with numerous people. The author of diary 9 mentions fourteen other ghetto inhabitants by name (without further elaborating on their identity) during her twenty-nine entries. In one of her earliest entries, on Friday 7th July 1944, she took flour to Renia Kozłowska. She does not elaborate on who Renia is, but the sharing of food with her suggests that she was a friend or acquaintance. It is unknown whether the author received food from Renia (or any of the other people mentioned in the diary) but her offering of food to another was a generous and potentially a life-preserving (or life-prolonging) act. Brzezińska's neighbour 'who had more than her' gave her food.[213]

Sura Sierakowiak also engaged in neighbourly sharing of food. As she was deported, Dawid described her as a woman 'whose entire life was one of sacrifice for others, relatives and

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211 ŻIH, 237, 'Inventory', p. 2.
212 Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 20.
213 ŻIH, 302/21, p. 22.

strangers.'[214] Dawid reveals the other side of this sharing of resources; where the giver has been depleted by their generous actions and their family knew it. Lubiński was sent by his family to 'get firewood from the neighbour, because there is no coal.'[215] The sharing of food and fuel, a literal lifeline, was a practice shown in several diaries, highlighting the hospitable relations which existed between people, despite the desperation of their circumstances. Brzezińska took comfort in the shared plight of other parents during the deportations. In hiding with other families, she reminded herself that they faced a 'collective destiny.'[216] During this time, they had to use the toilet in full view of everyone. She noted: 'embarrassment was forgotten. We were one big family, united awaiting a shared, common fate.'[217] They were unified by their experience, hiding with the collective goal of escaping their Nazi predators, and Brzezińska appeared to take solace from this communal experience. Szac-Wajnkranc noted the shared fate which awaited family units: 'People are dying, whole families expire.'[218] When ghetto inhabitants lost their nuclear family, they sought out replacement members, both as a survival tactic and, in some cases, an emotional support system. This, as with many issues in the ghetto, was tied primarily to food as the key to survival.

Conclusion

The role of each individual family member within the unit was altered by ghetto conditions as normal relations became unable to function properly in such circumstances. Concurring with Lenore Weitzman's premise of 'role shifting,' the diaries here show examples of mothers, fathers, and children who adapted to differing degrees. These individuals played a significant role in selecting members of family units when the original, nuclear family was inevitably injured by deportation or death. Agency was also exercised through daily decision making upon which survival often depended. The diaries portray mothers as flexible in their role, shouldering additional tasks, involving themselves in support networks, as well as performing their duties in the home and at work (if employment could be found). The

[214] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 219.
[215] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 107.
[216] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 28.
[217] Ibid.
[218] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 11.

fathers exemplified here present a more nuanced response to fatherhood in ghetto conditions. Some adapted similarly to the mothers, while others became so devastated by their daily life that they appear unable to perform their fatherly or husbandly roles as they were expected to. Children experienced accelerated maturation in the harsh environment of the ghetto, often shouldering roles or displaying awareness beyond their years. The creation of extended networks was commonly practiced and aided survival. Each component was, however, dependent on external Nazi policies which regularly and relentlessly circumvented their ability to express their own agency.

Chapter Four: Time

For the historian analysing the Holocaust today, time is simultaneously of crucial importance yet easy to overlook as being 'banal in its obviousness.'[1] Historians have imposed a chronology upon the experiences of Jews in Europe, beginning with the exclusion from daily life in Germany and eventually resulting in emigration, deportation, and finally, mass murder. A key stage of the Holocaust in the *Generalgouvernement* was ghettoization, regarded as a precursor to the concentration and death camps established in Poland. Though this frame of analysis is crucial to our understanding of Nazi policy and persecution of the Jews, it does not explain how the Jews themselves understood the passing of time under Nazi occupation and, in turn, how they viewed their potential to survive.

The development of time as a branch of historical study has influenced researchers of the Holocaust. Lawrence Langer emphasises that 'the Nazis and the Jews inhabited different universes of discourse.'[2] He elaborated: 'it took the victims a long time to admit this; when they realized it, it was for most of them too late,'[3] suggesting that the crucial importance of time during the Holocaust lies at exactly when Jewish populations became aware of the unfolding genocide. Wolfgang Sofsky in *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp* (1997), devotes two chapters to the concept of time in the camp system: 'Camp Time' and 'Prisoner's Time'.[4] He highlights the use of time (as well as space) as a mechanism of control and power exerted over the prisoners. Barbara Engelking wrote the first full-length study of time in the ghettos, focusing predominantly on Warsaw, but also utilising accounts from Łódź and other ghettos. She argues that war alters perceptions of time for all who experience it. This took on a more extreme form in the ghettos, where time was 'deformed'[5] from previously normal time into 'time at the abyss.'[6] In an important addition to the

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[1] Engelking, *„Czas przestał dla mnie istnieć…"*, p. 12.
[2] Lawrence L. Langer, 'Memory's Time: Chronology and Duration in Holocaust Testimonies', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1993), p. 270.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp* (New Jersey, 1997).
[5] Engelking, *„Czas przestał dla mnie istnieć…"*, p. 23.
[6] Ibid, p. 12.

scholarship on time and the Holocaust, Michael Marrus argues that ghettos were 'a laboratory for the study of time, with their teeming populations of Jewish inmates cut off in some sense from the non-Jewish world.'[7] He notes the connection to 'daily routines, amusements, and interpersonal relations' in diaries from the ghetto. These routines and leisure activities formed the diarists' daily life while they were 'cut off' from the rest of the world. He further describes them as 'strategies for living, practiced by people who realized that there may be little time left.'[8] Marrus suggests that the diarists considered there may not be a future, rather than presupposing it was a certainty in their minds. In contrast, David Patterson suggests that writing the date in a diary 'indicates not a day lived but a day of death and dying time.'[9] Kaufman, too, states that 'the future… became death or a "living death".'[10] Though these pessimistic and oversimplified conclusions were true for some, it is an overstatement to suggest that all of the time lived in the ghetto was wholly connected to death and not life. Such a claim relies on hindsight: using contemporaneous diaries, this thesis shows that an attempt was made to live a life, and the diarists' reality emphasises this.

Recently, Guy Miron investigated time within Nazi Germany itself.[11] His comprehensive analysis of German Jews' experiences of time under the Nazi regime highlights the swift and pervasive nature of the Nazification of the calendar. Jews who had previously participated in Hannukah and Christmas celebrations were excluded from the Christian holiday. Miron also analyses different sources for investigating time, concluding that: 'As real-time sources, newspapers and diaries do not as a rule offer an overarching retrospective narrative of the events they describe. While the press may well serve as the best source for examining public time concepts, diaries illuminate the "lived time" of individuals.'[12] A key finding of Miron's is the centrality of 'the traditional Jewish year cycle… in the preservation of Jewish identity

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[7] Michael R. Marrus, 'Killing Time: Jewish Perceptions during the Holocaust' in Shmuel Almog, David Bankier, Daniel Blatman, and Dalia Ofer (eds.), *The Holocaust: History and Memory, Essays Presented in Honor of Israel Gutman* (Jerusalem, 2001), p. 22.
[8] Ibid, p. 27.
[9] Patterson, *Along the Edge of Annihilation*, pp. 71-72.
[10] Kaufman, By Chance I Found a Pencil, p. 50.
[11] See: Guy Miron, 'The "Lived Time" of German Jews under the Nazi Regime', *The Journal of Modern History*, Issue 90 (March 2018).
[12] Ibid p. 117.

in the era of emancipation.'[13] The diarists of this study observe, to differing degrees, the Jewish calendar and show that this was threatened and modified, but not erased by the Nazis. Alan Rosen aligns with, and further develops, Miron's emphasis on the Jewish calendar and its crucial role in perceptions of time during the Holocaust. Rosen offers a deeper understanding of the role of time for religious Jews during the Holocaust, while stressing its importance for all Jews. Rosen is critical of the widely held assumption that 'the subject can be studied without reference to the Jewish calendar, which is deemed meaningful only for those conversant with it.'[14] He explores the efforts made by individual Jews living in ghettos and camps to keep a semblance of Jewish time, specifically by making calendars and tracking sunsets, fast times, and holy days, often without confirmation from an official calendar or source. Rosen analyses several diaries in his book, all authored by religious Jews who actively observed the Hebrew calendar year-round, concluding that the creation and use of calendars was an attempt at 'continuity in the midst of the Holocaust.'[15]

This chapter aims to add to the growing corpus of work on time in the Holocaust, and specifically aligns with Rosen's goal of viewing time through the eyes of the Jewish people who experienced it, in addition to the constraints and oppression utilised by the Nazis in their control of time. As Marrus points out, 'Curfews and other temporal restrictions made clear distinctions between Jews and non-Jews for example and required Jews to reorganize their lives accordingly.'[16] All Jews in the ghetto had to re-evaluate their lives and though this was a result of Nazi control, they were able to determine many facets of their own time. Thus, the ways Jews in the ghetto viewed time greatly affected their perceptions of their daily lives and, significantly, their past and future. This chapter will analyse topics which continue to affect daily life worldwide such as routines, sleep, and weather. The diaries show that these were of great importance in the ghetto as well and played a crucial role in aiding understanding of their situation. The celebration and commemoration of birthdays, Jewish festivals and holidays continued to occur, but were drastically altered from their pre-

[13] Ibid, p. 129.
[14] Alan Rosen, *The Holocaust's Jewish Calendars: Keeping Time Sacred, Making Time Holy* (Indiana, 2019), p. 4.
[15] Ibid, p. 226.
[16] Marrus, 'Killing Time', Almog, Bankier, Blatman, and Ofer, *The Holocaust*, p. 18.

war form. It also shows how diarists perceived the passing of time and, despite the trauma and horror they experienced, moments of boredom also existed in the inmates' lives. This chapter will demonstrate how the past, present, and future was assessed by diarists to inform their decisions on their daily life which was affected by rumours, atmosphere, and mood. This contributed to how diarists interpreted their current situation and, subsequently, how they viewed their own survival. Though the diaries demonstrate that each element of their time (past, present, and future) was subordinated to varying degrees by their Nazi occupier, they retained their agency by envisaging a future in which the Nazis, not the Jews, were obliterated.

This chapter will include sixteen of the twenty diaries chosen for this thesis. From the Łódź ghetto, Abram Łaski, Irene Hauser, Dawid Sierakowiak, Lolek Lubiński, Rywka Lipszyc, Hersz Fogel, and the anonymous author of diaries 9 and 86, will be featured. From the Warsaw ghetto, Adam Czerniaków, Mary Berg, Noemi Szac-Wajnkranc, Dawid Fogelman, Janina Neuding, Stefan Szpigielman, Zofia Brzezińska and Stanisław Gombiński will be discussed.[17]

Present

A curfew was enforced upon the Jewish population in Poland within months of occupation. In Łódź, Jews could not leave their residence between 5p.m. and 8a.m. the following morning from 14th November 1939.[18] In Warsaw, a curfew was imposed on 17th November.[19] These controls affected daily life severely, effectively detaining Jews in their homes from the late afternoon until morning and drastically reducing the time available to complete any task outside the home such as work, attending school, and shopping for food and necessities. The establishment of the ghettos in both cities further encroached upon Jewish people's ability to control their own time.

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[17] For full biographies (including gender, age, and status), please refer to 'the Diaries and the Diarists' section of Chapter One, pp. 21-26.

[18] Gordon J. Horwitz, *Ghettostadt: Łódź and the Making of a Nazi City* (Massachusetts and London, 2008), p. 23.

[19] Jewish Virtual Library, Anti-Semitic Decrees Against the Jews of Warsaw: https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/anti-semitic-decrees-against-the-jews-of-warsaw [last accessed 24.5.22].

Łaski began his diary in May 1944 with the words: 'I decided to write a diary, though it's a bit too late. To recall past events is quite impossible so I will begin with the present.'[20] By May 1944 Łaski had lived in the ghetto for four years. Evidently the thought of writing the entire history of his time in the ghetto was overwhelming, aggravated by a present which continued to be fraught with danger. The structure of daily life inside the ghettos regularly oscillated between the mundane and the traumatic. Inmates usually awoke early; ate breakfast (if they had adequate food); left home for work which lasted the majority of the day (or school, when this was possible); queued to receive rations (of either fuel or food, usually distributed in a seven or ten day cycle); returned home to cook and/or eat an evening meal; engaged in leisure or domestic activities (such as seeing friends, reading, or cleaning the apartment); and slept. These activities were subject to constant change, and depended on the individual inmate's circumstances, for example, those who were unemployed spent more time inside the home. Interspersed with these repetitive tasks were religious activities which occurred weekly (the Sabbath), or less frequently (other Jewish festivals), or significant events prompted by ghetto or Nazi authorities such as labour roundups or deportations. The daily occurrences of the ghetto shaped people's lives and affected crucial elements such as sleep and leisure time, the Jewish festivals (Sabbath and others) as well as being affected by external circumstance such as work and the weather.

Work

Work provided the basis of daily life because time spent at work accounted for the majority of inmates' waking hours. Shifts began at 7 or 8a.m. or 6 or 7p.m. for evening shifts.[21] The *Chronicle* reported on 7th December 1943 that special rations were to be allocated to those who worked a minimum of fifty-five hours per week and designated as '*Langarbeiter*' on their ration card.[22] Workshops were open six or seven days a week at various times during the ghetto period. Ewa Wiatr notes that the Sabbath was a day of rest in the Łódź ghetto until the end of 1941, when the workshops and factories began to operate without break.[23]

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[20] YVA, 03/1032, p. 54.
[21] See: Engelking and Leociak, 'Economic Life' Chapter in *Warsaw Ghetto*, pp. 381-411.
[22] Dobroszycki, *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*, p. 413.
[23] Wiatr and Radziszewska, *Irene Hauser*, pp. 59-60, footnote 94.

Time inside the ghettos was based upon and shaped by work. Only workers were able to reap higher levels of rations (than non-workers, children, and the elderly) thus the time spent at work was inextricably linked to chances of survival.

Slave labour, though difficult to endure, offered many a framework through which to view their survival. This was endorsed by Rumkowski, whose slogan became 'salvation through work.' When the deportations began, specific groups were exempt and this was determined by privilege but also employment in certain industries and factories, thus re-enforcing the idea that employment status was one of the most valuable attributes in the ghetto and a survival tool to save oneself and one's family. Once an inmate was employed, they spent the majority of their waking hours at work but before employment was found, a great deal of time and energy was required to meet with employees and managers in order to secure a position in a workshop. The closed environment of the ghetto made this a semi-mandatory pursuit that few could opt out of. Lubiński, Sierakowiak and Lipszyc detailed their initial struggles to find or change employment in the Łódź Ghetto. Sierakowiak reported a visit to his: '"protector" in the carpentry workshop, but I got nothing. The workshop commissioner insists that he won't hire me without the form from the School Department. I haven't succeeded at the saddlery workshop either. Of course, there's been no answer to my application to Rumkowski [asking for a job] … It'll probably be harder to get a job now because transports from Berlin, Vienna, Prague, and Luxembourg arrive daily.'[24] Five days later, when he found a job, he wrote 'my student career has been suspended, at least for a little while.'[25] He also tried to find his mother a job, but this was unsuccessful as she was deemed too weak.[26] Lubiński's signposting of his activities allows for a clear picture of his daily life and shows that, prior to obtaining a job, he spent several hours a day visiting people (sometimes suggested through acquaintances of friends and family) to try and obtain work, only to be told to return again the following day at a new time.[27]

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[24] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, pp. 141-2.
[25] Ibid, p. 143.
[26] Ibid, p. 153.
[27] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 124.

When individuals did not work, their time was defined by their lack of employment. The author of diary 86 did not have a job, but her older siblings did, labouring in workshops the same long hours as their parents.[28] She noted 'waiting until seven in the evening' to be able to eat when her family returned home.[29] Work therefore determined when family members could eat together and some preferred to wait to ensure this happened. On 4th March her 'mama and brother returned late today, I could not wait on them for dinner because I had no more than 20 dkg of bread to eat today, I had to take the food myself.'[30] Sometimes she was unable to wait. She was forced to wait hours for rations during the day, and this was her main contribution to the family economy.[31] Lubiński noted that his visit to his girlfriend, Frania, at 5pm, was cut short because she had to queue for rations.[32] As with the author of diary 86, Frania was assigned the task of collecting their rations and this had to take precedence over her social engagement with Lolek. The demands of ghetto life affected Rywka too, who read a book which made her feel emotional and wished: 'to be on my own or alone with a person who would understand me. I was visiting Fela Działowska. I told her about it but neither I nor she had any more time. Time, this awful lack of time… It takes its toll on me (not only on me but on everybody).'[33] Despite being able to see friends and acquaintances, there was rarely adequate time to discuss personal issues in depth. Time to devote to personal matters, such as deliberating emotions arising from a book (which delved into matters of faith) was extremely limited and subordinate to work and other daily tasks essential to ensuring survival.

After securing a new job, Lipszyc's time was further inhibited. On 23rd October 1943, she had 'neither patience nor time'[34] to update her diary with recent events, highlighting the lengthy process of writing diary entries which was not always available to them. At this point Rywka was both working and continuing her classes. She later finished an entry: 'But I have

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[28] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 1.
[29] Ibid p. 9.
[30] Ibid, pp. 5-6.
[31] Ibid, p. 12.
[32] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 108.
[33] Freidman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 69.
[34] Ibid, p. 71.

to finish now. It's almost five thirty. They'll be coming back from the workshops soon…'[35] Even when she was not working, she had to be aware of the work patterns of her family as the author of diary 86 was. This determined when she had free time, alone, to write in her diary undisturbed. Korczak penned his diary entries at night, providing a means of processing his day. Each ghetto resident's time was dictated their actions and interactions with others, where they should be and what they should be doing, but this was largely outside of their control. Work consumed most of their day. Those who did not work lacked the structure of working shifts though they were subject to the working patterns of their family members. Their time spent at home consumed most of their day, unless they were queueing for rations which could take multiple hours.

Sleep

Sleep is an essential part of daily life. Seven to nine hours per twenty-four-hour period is a requirement for human survival.[36] Despite its centrality in human life, this area of research is largely unexplored in Holocaust historiography. It is worth exploring in the context of ghetto society as the effects of sleep deficiency have a myriad of consequences for the human body, a crucial consideration in a society which demanded productivity. Those who regularly suffer from sleep deficiency often experience cognitive impairment (such as problems with thinking and a deterioration of memory capacity), a lack of energy and mood changes such as anxiety or stress. In the long term, it is known that a chronic lack of sleep impairs the function of 'nearly all systems of the body' leading to 'significant risks to physical and mental health' including increased risk of cardiovascular disease, immunodeficiency (which the poor diet in the ghetto already significantly contributed to), mental health disorders, and hormonal abnormalities.[37]

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[35] Ibid, p. 110.

[36] Max Hirshkowitz, Kaitlyn Whiton, Steven M. Albert, Cathy Alessi, Oliviero Bruni, Lydia Don Carlos, Nancy Hazen, John Herman, Paula J. Adams Hillard, Eliot S. Katz, Leila Kheirandish-Gozal, David N. Neubauer, Anne E.O'Donnell, Maurice Ohayon, John Peever, Robert Rawdin, Ramesh C. Sachdeva, Belinda Setters, Michael V. Vitiello, Catesby Ware, National Sleep Foundation's Updated Sleep Duration Recommendations: Final Report, *Sleep Health*, Vol 1, No. 1 (2015), p. 236.

[37] Eric Suni, Definition of Sleep Deprivation: https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-deprivation [last accessed 24.5.22].

Engelking broached the subject of sleep through the related topic of dreams. Bypassing the 'historical, anthropologic, or psychological analysis' which can be applied to dreams, she instead endeavoured to 'treat dreams from the Holocaust period as literally as possible', assessing them as sources for 'their content, influence on the dreamers, and their consequences.'[38] Several diarists within in this thesis featured in Engelking's study, which assesses their entries on dreams and sleep in order to provide an insight into their sleeping behaviour and, therefore, the impact this had on their daily lives. She noted that dreams of loved ones and dreams of leaving the ghetto both provided a chance to 'regain strength, experience positive emotions, and break free from the nightmare of everyday life.'[39] Here, dreams offer an insight into time as a period of being in limbo. The diarists were stuck inside the ghetto, prohibited from the rest of the city, Poland, and the world. Dreams provided a chance to overcome the walls which divided them. Engelking describes Korczak's dream of escaping the ghetto by flying, but he still could not eat the 'tasty pre-war supper' offered to him by a farmer. Engelking ties this frustrating and unsatisfactory dream to his everyday reality, suggesting that 'in the end the ghetto catches up with Korczak even there, forbidding him to satisfy his hunger.'[40]

Rywka, too, perceived sleep as a means of escaping reality. 'Sometimes I want to sleep and forget everything in my sleep, or I want the night to be long.'[41] Fogelman wrote, on 3rd November 1944, that his dreams each night featured 'someone shouting and crying.' He noted that 'I get up each morning feeling even more depressed'[42] and later added 'if this goes on much longer, I will not be able to endure it. The most difficult thing to bear is the inactivity, the waiting and the uncertainty.'[43] There was literally no escape from the monotony of life in the ghetto or in hiding. Fogel wrote of the entire family's sleep being

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[38] Barbara Engelking, 'Dreams as a Source for Holocaust Research', *Holocaust: Studies and Materials, Journal of the Polish Centre for Holocaust Research* (2013), p. 223.
[39] Ibid, pp. 230-1.
[40] Ibid, p. 231.
[41] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 103.
[42] ŻIH, 302/35, p. 52.
[43] Ibid.

disturbed by fear. On 7th September or October 1942[44], he wrote that 'We did not sleep a wink all night. There was a storm, rain was pouring all night, the sound of thunder and lightning, and we could hear the screams of mothers and their children, the sick and the elderly, all those sounds blending together, and we were overcome with terror!'[45] The effect of their insecurity is apparent, and fear left the Fogels alert and awaiting their deportation. It also hints at an element of ghetto life which can hardly be grasped: noise. A constant barrier to sleep, overnight roundups for forced labour or *Aktionen* which took place overnight in the small and overcrowded ghetto areas meant many inmates were disturbed. Hauser was awoken during the night by a loud alarm and shooting at the ghetto walls. She recorded this in her second entry for 20th August 1942, the subject of which was the alarm waking her and continuing to sound from 1.30am until 1.45am. She also wrote about a strange dream she had about being told to board a train.[46] Irene's sleep was disturbed by violence on the streets and her fear of deportation manifested itself in her dream.

The pressures of work impacted upon sleep as well, especially for Czerniaków who described his discomfort: 'Late in the evening I went home to go to bed fully clothed just in case I have to get up again in the middle of the night.'[47] His state of constant readiness meant that 'toward evening I feel extremely tired.'[48] On 11th March 1942, the author of diary 86 wrote about her mother, and the effect that poor sleep, combined with hard physical work was having on her. 'My mum looks completely dreadful, like a shadow, she works very hard. Whenever I wake up in the night at 12 or 1 o'clock I always find my mum pouring over the sewing machine and by 6 o'clock she is already on her feet.'[49] She previously noted that her mother left for work at 7.30am, hinting a regular wake-up-time of 6am. Factory shift timings were fixed, meaning she likely left for work every day at the

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[44] This is the date as Fogel records it, though the editor of the diary, Helene Sinnreich, notes that it should likely be 7th September, given the preceding and succeeding entries, as well as the context of events occurring at the time.
[45] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 148.
[46] ŻIH, 302/299, p. 58.
[47] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 217.
[48] Ibid, p. 243.
[49] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 11.

same time and arose at the same time in order to complete pre-work tasks. In an apartment her mother's late night/early morning activities were noted by the diarist, hinting at sleep disruption being experienced by the author and, potentially, other family members. Gombiński also noted 'the ghetto wakes up early, at 5am, one hour before we are allowed out.'[50] People arose early in order to carry out certain tasks before work shifts began. Sleep, an integral part of daily life and survival, was to a limited extent under the control of ghetto residents, though, as with every aspect of their lives, it was ultimately under constant subservience to Nazi whim. When their oppressors chose to, they were able to disrupt this essential facet of daily life. The other demands of ghetto life impacted upon their ability to get enough sleep, as well as the quality of it. Sleep could only occur once these other tasks were complete and thus it suffered greatly in the ghetto. Fear and anxiety would have contributed to poor sleep, but diarists do not focus on this.

The Sabbath, Other Holidays, and Birthdays

Shabbat, or day of rest, marks the end of the week in the Hebrew calendar. The precise time of Shabbat begins at eighteen minutes before sunset. The Hebraic year number is a continuous sequence to the year 6,000, believed to be when the Messianic Age will begin. This reflects the six days of toil and seventh day of rest undertaken by God and is transmuted to millennia as well. The seventh millennium will be the period of Shabbat for the six preceding millennia of toil. In the areas where Nazis enforced concentration on the Jewish population, namely the camps and the ghettos, there were differing degrees of control on time. In the camps it was forbidden to possess or wear a watch, meaning the inmates had no perception of the time including the length of their working day.[51] In the ghetto the inmates were forced to share the Nazi view of time, rather than having full autonomy to follow their own calendar, observing the weekly Sabbath as a day of rest and annual Judaic festivals. A broad spectrum of Jewish people, from Orthodox to secular Jews, would adhere to and commemorate at least some of these festivals. The reservation of Saturday as a day for rest and worship was disregarded by the occupier, who abolished this from practice in the Warsaw ghetto between 1940 and 1941. It was reinstated, as

[50] Ibid, p. 77.
[51] Sofksy, *The Order of the Terror*, p. 77.

celebrated by Czerniaków on 3rd May 1941: 'today was the first day of general Sabbath rest.'[52] The Nazi authorities at times permitted Saturdays to be free of work, but this was not a consistent policy.

Lipszyc was happy when she could observe Shabbat. On 21st January 1944 she exclaimed: 'Friday! Every week I wait impatiently for Friday evening and Saturday… I don't know, I can't imagine at all what would happen if we didn't have this one Saturday (and Friday evenings) … I feel so good. I can think and dream (I have time then). Oh, dream, dream and forget.'[53] Her ability to observe offered Rywka a chance to process as well as escape her situation. When she was unable to observe, on Sunday 20th February 1944, she lamented having to work on the Sabbath, which greatly upset her: 'Oh, God! I'll never forget this feeling, I felt so bad, I was suffocating, I felt like crying! Crying… crying… I watched people going to the workshops as usual. This day, this holy, sacred day is for them an ordinary and normal weekday. God, and I'm among them? And I'm like them? (Maybe nobody thought about it). For me, going to the workshop on Saturday was a terrible agony. I thought involuntarily: if I have to do it again (I wish I wouldn't), will it become commonplace for me, will I get used to it?'[54] Despite being unable to rectify her situation, writing about this incident it offered the chance to commit in writing her true intention.

The Jewish calendar's annual festivals and celebrations were at times commemorated with days off from work, though at other times the occupiers marked holy days with additional violence and persecution. Berg, when describing Yom Kippur of 1942, remarked on 22nd September: 'Yesterday was the Day of Atonement, and on this sacred day the Nazis, as is their custom, chose to blockade Ostrowska and Wolynska Streets. Out of the 2,500 policemen, they singled out 380 for continued service, and more than 2,000 others were deported, together with their families.'[55] Berg believed this was a 'custom' to wreck violence on Jewish holidays. Alan Rosen, however, notes that: 'In a strange twist, the Jewish

[52] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 229.
[53] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 101.
[54] Ibid, pp. 136-7.
[55] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 181.

calendar most often comes into view in relation to the Holocaust through the perverse use made of it by the perpetrators. In a number of cases, the Nazis methodically carried out murderous actions on days of special sanctity in the Jewish calendar.'[56] He warns against viewing time as solely controlled by the Nazis and an accompanying over-emphasis on the creation and implementation of a Nazi calendar. Nazi disregard for Jewish festivals affected even those who did not follow the Hebrew calendar and were less religious than those in Rosen's study. Their festivals and holy days must be viewed through their lived experience which included impressive endeavours to maintain their Judaism.

As Jewish printing houses were forcibly closed by the Nazis even before ghettoization occurred, some individuals resorted to creating their own calendars.[57] Rumkowski had official calendars created in the Łódź ghetto. A calendar for 1942 shows they were printed in German and Hebrew and provides an example of Jews trying to maintain control over their own time. The calendar would have allowed them to know the official times and dates of Shabbat as well as other festivals and holidays. Rosen also notes the amalgamation of both Hebrew and Gregorian dates in some entries of the diary of Moshe Flinker, living in Brussels.[58] None of the diarists featured here adopted such a 'multicalendar dimension of European Jewish culture,' emphasising their more assimilated reality (consistent with their written language). The need to assess a Jewish perception of time in the Holocaust is applicable to Jews across the religious spectrum. The ability to celebrate Jewish holidays has been discussed above in the context of food and its significant presence in many Jewish festivals. The analytical framework of time, however, can provide further nuance to our understanding of these holidays during the ghetto period, and how diarists perceived them within the context of their daily lives. On *Erev Rosh Hashanah*[59] 1941, Sierakowiak recalled 'When I remember what these days meant three years ago, I just get furious.'[60] At the end of Rosh Hashanah, four days later, he sarcastically added 'the last day of the incredible

[56] Rosen, *The Holocaust's Jewish Calendars*, p. 4.
[57] Ibid, p. 2.
[58] Rosen, *The Holocaust's Jewish Calendars*, p. 174
[59] Hebrew: Eve of Rosh Hashanah.
[60] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 130.

“holidays”.’[61] Similarly, Rywka recalled previous Passover celebrations. ‘Three years ago the holidays fell on the same days. It was the last holiday, the last Seder with my daddy.’ She remembered how he was in hospital and returned home for Passover, but that his behaviour was different, ‘he didn’t even smile, didn’t respond to our greetings.’ Days later he eventually ‘regained his cheerfulness and good spirits’, but that was the final Passover they had together. ‘Oh, it’s so tragic! If only Abramek were here! Oh God, precisely on *Pesach*, at the Seder, Daddy will be missed most. Oh, he’ll be missed so much…’[62] Dawid and Rywka both lamented the celebrations they were once able to have with their loved ones and, though young, were nostalgic for their past which the cruel ghetto reality had taken from them. They used their diaries to express their pain over how the holidays had transmuted into pale versions of their former selves and emphasised their missing family members.

Christmas provided Szac-Wajnkranc with an event to look forward to, rather than a religious celebration. While in hiding in Sławek she exchanged gifts, cooked a traditional meal, and enjoyed herself with Jurek, other hiding Jews and those who hid them. Szac-Wajnkranc noted that, apart from one member of the group, ‘no one is thinking about the meaning of the holiday. It is a day for gifts and of a strange calm.’[63] She also noted that the children of the group, Frania, Eryk and Stasiek, ‘looked forward to Christmas all year’, despite being Jewish.[64] Their utilisation of Christmas as a break from the continual hardship of life was a significant part of the calendar for them. They indulged in a way which was beyond their means and impossible within the Nazi constraints of time in the closed district. Szac-Wajnkranc truly appreciated the chance to indulge in the peacefulness of the countryside.

Few diarists offer information on how birthdays were marked in the ghetto, likely because few felt there was cause for celebration. Czerniaków described how he spent his birthday in 1941: ‘In the morning at the Community. Delegations from the staff. Receiving the best

[61] Ibid, p. 131.
[62] Friedman, *Rywka’s Diary*, pp. 171-174.
[63] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 72.
[64] Ibid.

wishes all day long. I would not care to be born a second time. How tiring all this is!'[65] Lubiński provides a remarkable exception, writing of sorting and giving birthday gifts to three people. For his friends Hanka and Frania, Lolek wrote on 27th April: 'Yesterday evening, before I fell asleep, I was thinking what to buy Frania for her birthday. I came up with nothing. But I came up with an idea what to give Hanka for her birthday on May 3. Namely, I should buy her toffee for 5 fen. And have it elegantly wrapped in nice paper. The paper and its contents I will put into a box, that box into a larger box, and so on until the largest box. Once this is done, I will wrap it properly in paper, put a stamp on it and write her address. If I can do it properly, it will be an original ghetto gift.'[66] As well as providing detail on what gift he chose for Hanka and even the cost of the gift, Lolek also provides an insight into the time he spent deciding what to gift his friends, in a thoughtful gesture for their birthday. His wish to provide 'an original ghetto gift' also extended to Frania, whose present was a 'ring with a commemorative inscription "Ghetto 1941"' ordered a week before her birthday on 24th June.[67] The ring commemorated the time and place in which they celebrated her birthday. It was also a permanent gift, not consumable like toffee, thus suggesting that it was planned to be a memento of their time in the ghetto, perhaps when they were free and able to reflect on their experiences there. Lastly, he writes of buying his 'dear father' a present for his 45th birthday: 'For several days I have been wondering what gift to buy for him. And finally, walking down the street, I noticed pocket watch pendants in a shop window. After seeing the whole selection I left the shop, because I found nothing to my liking. in the end, I bought a chrome-plated pendant made from white metal. whether father will like it, I do not know... Here in the ghetto, you cannot buy what you want, but what you can.'[68] Again, Lolek pondered over what to give his father and settled on an item, though useful, which could be considered an unnecessary purchase in the reality of the ghetto context. Though options were limited, Lolek made it clear that he wished to show his feelings for the people close to him and thus spent time planning how to demonstrate his affection. The time spent preparing for and buying these gifts was an escape from the

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[65] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 303.
[66] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 169.
[67] Ibid, p. 175.
[68] Ibid, p. 120.

misery of daily life. Rywka provided a later example of marking birthdays in the ghetto when she noted in November 1943 that the girls have been preparing for Estusia's birthday: 'Tomorrow Estusia is going to be twenty. Chanusia (through Lola) was to buy her a present but they won't manage to do it for tomorrow. Cipka was the most thoughtful and bought her a card. I have no patience…'[69] As well as a fraught relationship with her cousins, Rywka's entry displays the increased difficulty in obtaining gifts by 1943, compared to Lolek's searches in 1941. She does not write on Estusia's birthday nor provide an update on what they were able to obtain for her, but evidently Estusia's sisters and cousin tried to celebrate her day. The somewhat difficult relationship in the Lipszyc family did not prevent them from at least attempting to mark the occasion of a birthday. Celebrating birthdays evidently provided a sense of normality and echoed their pre-war lives. The indulgence in Christmas and birthdays could provide a distraction from the hardship of life as something to plan for and look forward to. They also allowed for the imagining of a future life.

Passive Time

Sociologist Norbert Elias describes 'passive timing' as that which 'requires no decision', in contrast to active timing.[70] Miron also describes German Jewish men under the early Nazi regime who were suddenly forced to passively experience time when they became unemployed.[71] Ghetto inmates passively experienced time, limited as they were regarding which activities they could participate in, however, they often actively and regularly made decisions. Despite the pressures of ghetto life, there were brief periods where inmates were not engaged in work, obtaining rations, sleeping, or even commemorating Jewish festivals. They had time to spend which was within their control and there was a myriad of activities they could chose to participate (or not) in.

Anthropologist Carolyn Nordstrom's work on Mozambique's civil war emphasises the destructive effect war has on the lived time of those who experience it: 'Worlds are destroyed in war; they must be re-created. Not just worlds of home, family, community,

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[69] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 76.
[70] Norbert Elias, *Time: An Essay* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA, 1992), p. 51.
[71] Miron, The "Lived Time" of German Jews, p. 139.

and economy but worlds of definition, both personal and cultural. As people look out over a ruined landscape that was once home—now shorn of life and livelihood, humanity and hope—they cannot simply "reconstruct society as it was before." For in the violence and upheaval, it cannot be, may never be, the same as "it was before."'[72] The destruction wreaked by war upon time made clear to inmates that "before" had vanished and their future was increasingly uncertain. The ghettos existed in what Engelking dubs 'an abyss of time – abysmal, infinite, fathomless situation.'[73] This distinguished them from the rest of the world: '"There" things happened, were determined; people's activities there had meaning for what happened "here", where time stands still, waiting for solutions from the outside. Universal time is open time of total possibilities, activities; local time is closed time, passive, deprived of the possibility to act and influence the future.'[74] The separation in time from the world outside of the ghetto boundaries was evident to Szac-Wajnkranc, who awoke 'after a sleepless night, it is a cloudy morning. In the world, morning brings life, work, brings happiness, but what does it bring us? New suffering, new death.'[75] Whereas the progression of time on the outside offered opportunities, for ghetto inmates it remained locked into a cycle of suffering which traipsed the boundaries of night and day. She felt she was no longer in the world. Only liberation would see their reunification in time and space with the world.

There was a sense of lost opportunity for ghetto inmates, especially those who were young, either those enrolled in school or recent school graduates. They acutely felt themselves ageing physically while their plans and chances stalled. Sierakowiak surmised in April 1942 that: 'Time is passing, my youth is passing, my school years, my power and enthusiasm are all passing, only the Devil knows what I will manage to save from this pogrom.'[76] Prior to the deportations of 1942, a sense permeated that the ghetto inmates were living in a kind of limbo. Their lives were suspended, and they awaited the resumption of their regular,

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[72] Carolyn Nordstrom, 'War on the Front Lines' in Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius Robben (ed.), *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Culture* (California and London, 1995), p. 147.
[73] Engelking, *„Czas przestał dla mnie istniec…"*, p. 19.
[74] Ibid.
[75] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 55.
[76] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 161.

daily activities, a reality only possible via the end of the war. As Nordstrom's work reminds, the longer the war continued, the less likely this appeared.

Wolfgang Sofsky argues the present was a significant casualty of persecution in concentration camps: 'absolute power is not subject to time. Rather, it manipulates time by expansion and acceleration, sudden incursions and attacks, and the torment of duration. This multiple time destroyed the security that cyclical time structures otherwise guarantee. The camp forced its inmates into an eternal present, a constancy of uncertainty and horror.'[77] Sofsky's perceptions on time in the camps have important parallels as well as differences with the ghettos. The feeling of an 'eternal present' is evident in the diaries, and some authors noted feeling lethargic or being bored and thus time crept by slowly. Sierakowiak found himself unable to read. 'Unfortunately, hunger is the real reason for my "laziness".'[78] His use of inverted commas affirms his awareness that this was not true laziness, but rather that he was deprived of sufficient energy to function properly. Lubiński similarly called himself lazy and offers this as a reason for a longer than usual gap between entries: 'Two months have passed since I list touched the pages of my diary. The reason for this is work in the first place, meaning essentially lack of time, but another reason is perhaps my own laziness. Today I have nothing better to do because I am lying in bed, so I began to write.'[79] Fogelman, hiding in Warsaw, was also motivated by boredom to write his account. He explained that 'Once again boredom has set in. I began my diary.'[80] Though he was subject to constant fear of discovery, there was a great deal of time and very few activities which could be performed while remaining hidden and quiet. The recording of personal experience occupied the empty time with an important task, in Dawid's words, to tell 'of my greatest tragedy, and of the tragedy of the Jews of Warsaw.'[81] His account of himself and his family is long and detailed and would have provided a focus for his mind during his time spent in hiding. Some diarists were suspended in time, bored though constantly surrounded by danger and a constant threat of further persecution or death. Generally, any

[77] Sofsky, *The Order of the Terror*, p. 81.
[78] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 155.
[79] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 180.
[80] ŻIH, 302/35, p. 50.
[81] Ibid, p. 1

excitement was negative and linked to acts of violence. Ghetto inmates were greatly restricted in what they could do with their time, thus leading them to record information they believed to be banal. This often illuminates rarely mentioned facets of everyday life such as boredom.

Leisure

By contrast, inmates' lives featured rare times of leisure, entertainment, and even joy. It must be noted that these were not the predominant experiences of ghetto residents and that struggle and trauma were much more significant and commonplace. However, to overlook moments of leisure that ghetto diarists were able to spend would be to discount any time they were (somewhat) in control of. Guy Miron and Ofer Ashkenazi have analysed the impact of Nazi power on Jewish leisure time in Germany after 1933. Though the concept of holidays is a modern pursuit, they note that 'taking regular breaks from one's daily routine was an integral component of modern Germany's emerging urban society.'[82] After 1933, and increasingly throughout the decade until the outbreak of war, the choices for German Jews to enjoy holidays were constricted and eventually eroded while they were deliberately expanded for the non-Jewish population. They were excluded from resorts, hotels, and transport options, meaning that the choice of destination became focused on the past, rather than the future. Many now chose to travel to places of significance to Jewish history and their own family history in Central and Eastern Europe. Miron and Ashkenazi ultimately conclude that 'vacations offered a necessary detachment from the Jewish time and place under Nazism and thereby facilitated a (re)connection with an age-old time and place perceived as genuinely Jewish.'[83] The ability to leave their regular environment and holiday in another part of the country or further afield were limited in pre-war Poland, and non-existent after the Nazi invasion. However, even inside the ghettos, individuals and groups made efforts to claim leisure time where possible. The levels of this varied between ghettos and segments of each ghetto population, and access to leisure opportunities was

[82] Ofer Ashkenazi and Guy Miron, 'Jewish Vacations in Nazi Germany: Reflections on Time and Space amid an Unlikely Respite', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Volume 110, Number 3, Summer 2020, p. 525.
[83] Ibid, p. 552.

heavily influenced by social position. Favoured members of the *Judenrat* administration and other officials were permitted to use the vacation homes in Marysin, Łódź, for example.[84]

Lubiński provides an insight into attempts at leisure activities in the early ghetto period. He described a Saturday afternoon in July 1941, when he and his friends met and walked to Marysin, 'we settled there, then we played volleyball and time passed.'[85] The young group were able to spend time together and entertain themselves on a summer's afternoon like typical teenagers. He also noted, throughout his diary, attending meetings of the Zionist group *Hazit Dor Bnei ha-Midbar* of which Lolek was later a board member. Lolek wrote of attending meetings, assemblies, talks and board meetings of the Hazit group daily at times, and at least four times a week. Lolek's diary has preserved some of the inner workings of the group such as what they were reading, the lectures given, and the relations between various members. Though he later became frustrated with the group, and its leader, Aron, the regular events occupied much of his time and provided a focus which many in the ghetto did not have. Lolek often recorded in his diary what he was currently reading, noting that he spent time in bed reading his novel before arising at 6:45am which was his 'usual' wake up time.[86] One day in April 1941, unwell in his bed and off work, he wrote of reading a book entitled *The Fugitive* 'from morning till evening almost without a break' before adding 'it's nothing special, but it will have to do.'[87] Escapism was the key purpose of his book so it was preferable to have any book than none at all. In a similar fashion, Sierakowiak noted spending his time with his school groups. He too spent his time translating text into various languages. On 29th September 1941, he wrote 'I study English and French again, read, and slowly arrive at the conclusion that school will not begin that soon, if it will ever begin again in the ghetto.'[88] These activities began to erode as the situation in the ghetto became more difficult. The ability to escape through reading and engagement with groups of contemporaries was important for the diarists, but these opportunities were limited by worsening starvation, deprivation, and death in the ghetto. The strains of daily life

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[84] Podlska, *Traces of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto*, p. 98.
[85] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 178.
[86] Ibid, p. 167.
[87] Ibid, p. 168.
[88] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 134.

(including lack of sleep) impacted mental capacity as well. Łaski described how he was 'quite unable to write, let alone to concentrate my disturbed mind as to be able to produce any literary description of what I feel at the present moment.'[89] Similarly, Dawid became unable to focus on reading. On 6th December 1942 he lamented that 'recently I've been possessed by a wish to forget myself in intensive reading, but I can do it for only brief moments.' At work he could only read if the office was empty, but at home it was impossible due to cold and lack of light,[90] showing how basic survival concerns overrode the ability to engage in leisure activities, even if they could muster the energy. Rywka and Cipka read *Les Misérables* together, but Rywka complained she was unable to read it while her sister slept. 'This is what reading in the ghetto is like.' She added that the book 'has fallen apart.' The sisters reading together shows they are engaging in a shared and recreational activity. It also emphasises their lack of material wealth as they only have one (damaged) copy between them. Reading allowed a limited means of escapism for inmates, though the realities of the ghetto complicated the activity. There was limited time in the ghetto which could be devoted to non-life-sustaining activities like work and obtaining food, though time was not free of the effects ghetto life could wreck on inhabitants mental or physical conditions.

Other diarists were forced to experience time passively as they were trapped in hiding. Accounts written in hiding do not rely on the daily entry structure typical of diaries, but nevertheless adopt a chronological narrative to tell the story of their experience, and most begin their account with the Nazi invasion and occupation, or with the creation of the ghetto. The perception of time of those in hiding was altered by their circumstances. They were able to write, predominately in chronological order, about the experiences they had had during their time in the ghetto. This chronological freedom led Gombiński, Hasenfuss, and Szac-Wajnkranc to begin their narratives from the creation of the ghetto – a choice which few diarists writing in real time chose to do, many started writing their diaries after the establishment of the ghetto. Fogelman, however, began his account with the deportation of his wife and children during the *Grossaktion* (following a brief introduction

[89] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 15.
[90] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 236.

of his biographical family information).[91] They wrote this after the events occurred, with the knowledge of the deportations and their likely destination and meaning, but they remained close to events, separated from them by only days, weeks, months and, at the longest, a year. Their ability to recall life in the ghetto is evident in the diaries written in hiding, which are clear and detailed. The loss of immediacy is clear, those in hiding are less likely to provide repeated daily information such as waking up time, schedule information and other small matters of daily life which are often excluded in retrospective accounts as they paled into insignificance compared to other events (usually instances of trauma such as loved ones being deported or murdered).

Weather and Seasons

The impact of weather on mood is, similar to that of sleep, well researched by scientists who have shown that 'pleasant weather (higher temperature or barometric pressure) was related to higher mood'.[92] Bad weather, such as rain, low temperature and wind, can have a negative impact on mood. The weather can appear to be an unimportant or even dull topic which is irrelevant in the tragedy of the Holocaust. However, the impact of weather and temperature can change daily and be far reaching, especially in the period prior to widespread and affordable central heating, double glazing and other modern comforts which better equip societies to endure the effects of (extreme) weather. In the ghetto period, efforts to combat weather's effects relied on fuel such as coal and food, both of which were in short supply and, though sometimes part of the ration allocation, were not otherwise readily accessible to inmates. In concentration camps, it is well noted that prisoners were given clothing inappropriate for the biting cold winters frequently experienced in continental Europe. Inmates at Auschwitz were given a single jacket and confined to barracks without heating, in a location where winter temperatures were frequently below freezing.[93] The situation in the ghetto was somewhat different, as a

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[91] ŻIH, 302/35, p. 1.

[92] Matthew C. Keller, Barbara L. Fredrickson, Oscar Ybarra Stéphane Côté, Kareem Johnson, Joe Mikels, Anne Conway, and Tor Wager, 'A Warm Heart and a Clear Head: The Contingent Effects of Weather on Mood and Cognition', *Psychological Science*, Vol 16, Issue 9 (2005), p. 724.

[93] Auschwitz State Museum, 'Christmas Eve in Auschwitz:' http://auschwitz.org/en/museum/news/christmas-eve-in-auschwitz-as-recalled-by-polish-prisoners,47.html [last accessed 24.5.22].

uniform was not imposed by the Nazis and people lived in private (though overcrowded) dwellings. However, access to clothing was impaired by ghetto reality, and so inhabitants had fewer options to buy the clothes they required once inside the ghetto.[94]

Adam Czerniaków was the keenest weather observer of the diarists in this study. He often commented upon the weather and, even more so, on the temperature. Jacek Leociak compares this with the diary of Chaim Kaplan, who also noted the weather in winter 1942, discussing the frost and the resulting fuel shortage. Leociak, however, believes that for Kaplan, the 'harsh frost becomes a sign of the anathema that has been passed on the Jews, and is another kind of torture, a further link in the chain of misfortunes.'[95] In contrast with Kaplan's metaphorical response, Leociak believes Czerniaków was recording temperature 'as though by force of habit' and rooted in the Chairman's attempt to be objective while the reason for this activity ultimately remains 'unanswered'.[96] He questions whether this was 'a view of a tiny crumb of reality that has been objectivized in the extreme?'[97] Leociak's work is rooted in literature and from a purely historical standpoint, rather than viewing Czerniaków's temperature updates as 'shrouded in mystery' it can be argued that Czerniaków was attempting to increase our knowledge of daily reality in the ghetto. This is indeed a 'tiny crumb of reality' but one of much significance in an everyday life which often necessitated waiting for long periods outside, living in rooms which required scarcely available fuel to heat them adequately and being forced to walk to any destination due to lack of public transport options. Snowfall could seriously impact the ability of inhabitants to wait outside or walk to their places of work, particularly if this was compounded by inadequate winter clothing and footwear. Czerniaków's recording of temperature and weather offers a backdrop to each entry, and indeed the entries of other diarists and other accounts, which provides a contour for a particular day.

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[94] It must be noted that the Jews coming from Western Europe to the Łódź ghetto did sell many of their items after arrival in order to make money to eat and live off of, however purchasing these items was only an option for those with enough money.
[95] Leociak, *Text in the Face of Destruction*, p. 139.
[96] Ibid, pp. 139-140.
[97] Ibid, p. 140.

The weather could determine how easy or difficult an activity could be, or it could affect mood and perspective, as several diarists show. Rywka was 'shaking at the mere mention' of the word 'cold!' in February 1944.[98] In March she directly addressed 'Dear little sun! I miss you so much! … but you're hiding. It's rotten weather. Wind, wet, snow, mud… and obviously when there is mud, your shoes are soaking wet. I don't remember any winter in my life when my shoes were soaking wet. This pair is from Juvenile Protection.'[99] The weather revealed her donated clothes to be inadequate, an experience which Rywka had never experienced before, living a comfortable existence as she did with her parents before their death. On another, metaphorical level, the bad weather is a reminder of the lack of growth and even death. Spring, thus, became a symbol of a time of renewal, when the weather becomes warm, and nature is reborn. It also expanded the activities possible within the ghetto. Warm weather could brighten the mood and offer chances for outdoor recreation. Lubiński and his friends, in summer of 1941, took advantage of the warm weather by sunbathing in Marysin. The author of diary 86 concurred on 7th March 1942, noting 'it is a beautiful, sunny day today. When the sun shines it is lighter on the soul.'[100] She added 'the days are getting prettier. Already the sun is shining just for us.'[101] She continued 'how I long for my freedom, especially on days when it is sunny and hot, this excites in me such longing.'[102] Hauser noted the good weather on 21st August 1942: 'The weather is perfect, and man is a pavilion of hunger, a skeleton with swollen feet.'[103] Here, she presented a great contrast between the weather and the reality for those in the ghetto by the end of summer 1942. The weather invited reflection in Hauser, on the insignificance of the weather. Enjoying the present became impossible under the deportations of the present, and the cloud of an uncertain future. In addition, colder days had a clear, negative impact on several diarists. Both Fogel and Sierakowiak note the frost on the first day of spring, 21st March 1942, as Sinnreich notes,[104] though they offer little more than the bare fact of this. The author of diary 86 noted on 12th March that 'outside it is cold, I lay in until

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98 Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 131.
99 Ibid, p. 157.
100 ŻIH, 302/86, p. 7.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid, p. 14.
103 Wiatr and Radziszewska, *Irene Hauser*, p. 59.
104 Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 68, footnote. 8.

9.30 then cleaned the apartment.'[105] This suggests that the cold made her stay in bed later than usual, demonstrating the direct effect the weather could have on daily routine. The seasons induced a feeling of hope for Rywka. On 3rd April 1944 she thanked God 'a thousand times for this miraculous change of weather! Yesterday we opened the balcony. Oh, one wants to live!'[106] As a result of this weather change 'I got up earlier… I simply couldn't stay in bed. Young blood flowed in my veins. Youth!'[107] Within the same entry she worries 'I'm afraid that it may disappear soon. But I'm driving this thought away… Oh, I want to live! … Spring! Beloved spring!'[108] Rywka's youthful entry here shows the optimism that pleasant weather could bring, in her case potentially heightened due to her associating this change to God. This meant that for her this sign was doubly positive; God was listening and protecting her. The seasons connected to the diarists' time by offering parallels with nature which diarists connected to their situation. The abundance, renewal, and perseverance that spring and sun represented could help diarists feel optimistic in their own survival. Given the circumstances, however, it did not always provoke optimism.

The Past and the Future

The diaries show that the constant barrage of change and disruption led the diarists to reinterpret their past and future, as well as their present. Roma Sendyka, in her work on art in the Holocaust, notes that victims present at execution sites, as a 'potentially witnessing artist… had very little time to react visually unlike the victims who created art under prolonged circumstances of entrapment in concentration camps, in ghettos, or while in hiding.'[109] Sendyka offers examples of 'cuts on trees, dropped pieces of paper with hasty sketches, maps or notes; marks on walls or stones' in contrast to 'traditionally valued grand genres of artistic production (oil paintings, sculptures)' which those at execution sites were unable to produce. As with other aspects of daily life, witnessing and response varied between execution sites, concentration camps and ghettos. Sendyka's premise highlights

[105] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 12.
[106] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 170.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid, p. 171.
[109] Roma Sendyka, 'Holocaust by Bullets: Expanding the Field of Holocaust Art', European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (hereafter EHRI) Blog: https://www.ehri-project.eu/holocaust-bullets [last accessed 24.5.22].

the importance of time in responding to events and experiences. As she indicates, those in ghettos had time to respond artistically and the same premise can be applied to writing as a witness to events. Similarly, Engelking suggests that dreams were a time for ghetto inhabitants to process the present and the future, and that this was the only possible time they had in which to do so.[110] The writing of a diary also required time and offered the diarist a chance to process events, at least to the extent of formulating their thoughts on paper. The diarists often used the present to interpret their future, assessing their chances for survival based on Nazi activities and policies and, less often, invoked the past to assess the present situation and how this might impact their future. Here, Patterson separates Holocaust diaries from other diaries, postulating that: ‘while other diaries are projected toward a future yet to be realized, Holocaust diaries are written in the shadow of a doom that is certain to come.’[111] Scholars must exercise caution and resist analysing diaries through the lens of hindsight. Though we now know that the majority of those in the Warsaw and Łódź ghettos did not survive, and very few of the diarists included here survived the war, the diaries themselves were written without this foreknowledge. It cannot, however, be argued that the spectre of ‘doom’ is not present in the diaries, though there is a nuance which has escaped Patterson’s analysis of the future. In contrast to Patterson’s assertion and Kaufman’s belief about the ‘living death’[112] lived by ghetto inmates, Löw’s approach of using diaries not for ‘an objective picture of the ghetto, but a picture based on the interpretations and perceptions of as many different individuals as possible’[113] highlights the value of contemporary sources in showing that an everyday life was lived under ghetto conditions. Löw contrasts this with ‘‘In later accounts, written after people knew what the end meant, when the danger is so great that the events acquire a different meaning in retrospect which suggests that people in the ghetto knew the aim of the transports earlier than was actually the case.’[114] The diaries express a complicated

[110] Engelking, 'Dreams', p. 249.
[111] David Patterson, 'Through the Eyes of Those Who Were There', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall, 2004), p. 278.
[112] Kaufman, By Chance I Found a Pencil, p. 50.
[113] Löw, *Juden in Ghetto Litzmannstadt*, p. 510.
[114] Ibid, p. 50.

amalgam of hope and despair, and often an individual diarist would repeatedly alternate between these perspectives.

History

The utilisation of historical narratives as a message or lesson relevant to the present is common in times of war. Peri summarises that in Leningrad during the siege: 'diaries suggest that such public discussions of history prompted many *blokadniki*[115] to consider their plight in light of Russia's past and to integrate the blockade into developing narratives of Russian and Soviet history.'[116] History could provide hope that if Germans or other invaders were defeated in the past, then this could be repeated in the future. In the context of the ghettos in Poland, there was little continuity in terms of government rule compared to those living through the Siege of Leningrad who, despite dramatic changes in governance, remained under Soviet rule. For Jews in the ghettos, the use of history was not state-mandated. It reached further back into the depths of Jewish history to show the survival of the Jewish people, and as recently as the First World War, in order to obtain an example of German defeat. Simon makes a convincing case for the role of history in the diaries of Yiddish writers. She details how they utilised the Jewish past to interpret Hitler and the Nazis, predominantly through invocation of Haman, Pharaoh, and the Egyptians. These ancient narratives provided a narrative of survival; the Jewish people had survived such historic and brutal persecution before, and therefore would be able to endure the persecution they were experiencing in the ghetto. Thus, until the deportations the Nazis were perceived as part of a long line of oppressors and persecutors of the Jewish people, giving the diarists continuity and precedent, and thus hope. The deportations and reports of mass extermination did alter this impression and reframed the Nazis as the biggest challenge ever faced by the Jewish people. Simon's study focuses on writers, including Ringelblum who Simon notes was 'a historian at the height of his career'[117] when war broke

[115] Russian: Blockaded people.
[116] Peri, *The War Within*, p. 202.
[117] Amy Simon, Imperfect Humans and Perfect Beasts: Changing Perceptions of German and Jewish Persecutors in Holocaust Ghetto Diaries, *Journal of Jewish Identities*, Vol. 13, No. 1, (January 2020), p. 90.

out, and therefore was well poised to analyse events through the lens of history. Patterson highlights Ringelblum's attention to history in his diary, where he recorded:

> 'To a Jew who had lost his armband, a German police chief cried: '*Sie, Jude, Sie haben das zwanzigste Jahrhundert verloren!* [You, Jew, you have lost the twentieth century!]'. The armband that labels the Jew as a Jew marks him precisely as one who is lost, without time or place; for the Jew, to bear the sign of the twentieth century is to be locked into a history that removes him from history. Time and history are torn asunder, so that the Jew is rendered absent not only from this century but from all of history, all of time. For the Jew, this is the century that erases the centuries. Remember Amon Goeth's remark in Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*: commenting on a day that was a "great historical occasion," he declared that by the end of the afternoon the six hundred years of Jewish presence in Cracow would be nothing more than a rumor.'[118]

Here, Patterson emphasises the importance of the past for the Jewish people and the Nazi attempt to erase this historic presence. Their uncertain present and future also had the potential to destroy their past, a goal the Nazis made clear in their actions destroying Jewish artefacts, books and synagogues across Poland and Europe. The loss of this history was evident to Ringelblum and others in the *Oneg Shabbat* archive, and their efforts helped save some facets of Jewish history in Poland.

Those beyond the archive group were not 'historians by trade,' nor were they educators or intellectuals in the same sense as *Oneg Shabbat* members were. Their perspective on history is therefore somewhat different, both in content and in frequency. The majority of diarists here do not invoke or discuss Jewish history with any regularity, though several make reference to one historic narrative, that of slavery. Sierakowiak and the author of diary 86 both likened Jews living and working in the ghetto to slaves. On 27th August 1942, Dawid wrote of 'German firms and work camps that employ Jewish slaves from our

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[118] Patterson, *Annihilation*, pp. 69-70.

ghetto.'[119] The author of diary 86 questioned 'how meagre is the life of man, who endures slavery for a few years as he struggles with his fate.'[120] The likening to slaves is an invocation of ancient Jewish history, when the Jewish people were slaves in Egypt. Such analogies chime with Ringelblum's reference to Haman, asserting their historic ability to survive the persecution they have endured for thousands of years. Gombiński called the ghetto workshops 'modern colonies of slaves.'[121] The use of 'modern' emphasises the link between the ancient slavery in Egypt and that which is forced upon the Warsaw ghetto in the twentieth century, it is not something new, nor something which cannot be borne. Fogel gained confidence and reassurance from Jewish history in the face of their treatment by the Nazis: 'That's how they torment us, the innocent and the helpless. And it's just because we bear this name: "JEW." "Jews, the eternal wanderer," "Jew, the eternally damned." And yet, not all Jews will perish, some of them will stay alive no matter the torment. the Jews have always existed and will exist no matter the time and place!!! This is how we'll win in the end!!!'[122] Fogel, writing this entry in May 1942, had experienced and witnessed starvation, deprivation, and death, and yet found strength in reminding himself of the survival of the Jewish people. Here, Fogel invoked the ancient trope of Jews wandering in the desert, eventually reaching the Promised Land after forty years of struggle. By writing about their present situation, they were resisting the German attempt to erase them, their written accounts providing hope as well as a testament to Jewish survival, if not of the individual themselves, at least of their written account, in turn weaving it into the thread of Jewish history and survival in the face of persecution affirming that along with a past and a present, there would be a future.

Lipszyc and Łaski both assessed their immediate ghetto past with sorrow. Lipszyc lamented on 9th March 1944: 'Oh, this life! Oh, if only we had known then (in 1940) that it wasn't the worst, that something far worse for us was waiting, then, who knows, maybe we wouldn't have been able to stand it.'[123] Łaski on 18th June 1944 wrote: 'Oh if it is to turn out this way

[119] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 211.
[120] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 8.
[121] Ibid, p. 32.
[122] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 91.
[123] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 156.

why didn't we die 5 years ago?'[124] Both diarists were tired by their present, terrified by their future, and it prompted a reassessment of their past where they questioned the reason for their own survival.

Future

Lawrence Langer forewarns scholars 'to suspend the privilege of having a future in order to enter sympathetically into the daily ordeal of human beings who could not share it.'[125] Langer's point, while important, discounts the nuance in visions of the future held by Jews during the Holocaust. It overlooks the fact that the diarists expressed complex and even contradictory opinions on what the future held, for both themselves and the wider Jewish community. Though the genocidal nature of Nazi policy became clearer in the ghettos the longer they existed, the notion of the future was not simultaneously or permanently erased for every diarist. Many displayed a flexible and frequently shifting view of the future based on interpretation of events occurring in and outside the ghetto boundaries. Those reading Holocaust diaries cannot share the notion of the future held by the diarists, but further complicating Langer's view, the perception of the future can differ in each diary or even from entry to entry. The author's frame of mind played a significant role in determining his or her perception of the future.

Events beyond the diarists' control such as lack of military progress, political developments or the deportation of friends and family could lead to depression and a seemingly permanent loss of hope in the future. On 31st August 1942, Sierakowiak noted the date: 'The last day of the third year of the war. I don't think I will be noting any more war anniversaries because it will be either me or the war…'[126] Dawid no longer viewed it important to mark the passage of time, believing as he did that the duration of the war was crucial to his survival and his chances of outlasting it were reducing with time. In his final entry, on 15th April 1943, he described the news: 'In politics there's absolutely nothing new.

[124] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 5.
[125] Lawrence Langer, 'A Tainted Legacy: Remembering the Warsaw Ghetto' in Lawrence Langer, *Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays* (Oxford, 1995), p. 33.
[126] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 212.

Again, out of impatience I feel myself beginning to fall into melancholy. There really is no way out of this for us.'[127] Perceptions of the future are especially prominent in longer diaries. Fogelman, for example, wrote of the deportation of his wife and two young sons, and how he initially could not imagine being able to live without them. Though written in hiding, Dawid presented his feelings as he experienced them, noting that he 'didn't have the will to live, having lost the dearest and closest in my life.'[128] As his account progresses it is clear, however, that through the help of his sister and brother-in-law he was slowly able to envisage his future, albeit vastly different to prior expectations. His account closes with his celebrating the Red Army liberating Warsaw and acknowledging that he was 'now a free person with a completely different life. After these experiences I look at life in a different way than before. I am broken from my old life and starting a new life.'[129] Dawid acknowledged that his circumstances irrevocably changed, and he was cut loose from history and tradition.

In the immediate term, Lubiński took note of items brought to his work, the Purchase Office of the *Judenrat*, by 'our Jews'.[130] While he encountered them selling their belongings he described: 'Standing there makes you sick, just to see all those tragedies but lately become so hardened when it comes to those things that I already do not care. Lately have become quite knowledgeable about prices, and if there is no one else, I buy the stuff myself.'[131] Lolek's proximity to fellow Jews afforded him useful knowledge essential for his work, but also led him to grow accustomed to the suffering which he witnessed daily. His resourcefulness in acquiring the leftover items was a method in preparing for the future. Obtaining additional goods at a price lower than usually found in the ghetto meant the Lubińskis could either save money by purchasing them for their personal use or offered the option of selling them in the future, should they require a quick influx of capital. In Warsaw, others were also practical in preparing bunkers after the *Aktion* in summer 1942 until the

[127] Ibid, p. 268.
[128] ŻIH, 302/35, p. 4.
[129] Ibid, p. 57.
[130] By mentioning 'our Jews' he was differentiating between the western European Jews from Germany, Czechoslovakia and Luxembourg who had been deported to the ghetto, and the Polish Jews who had been there since its establishment.
[131] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 181.

beginning of 1943, when some ghetto residents began readying themselves for resistance such as installing bunkers and stockpiling food depending on wealth. Fogelman noted this trend and added that he and his brother-in-law found this a pointless endeavour.[132] As well as practically preparing for future events through access to capital and goods, practical benefits which increased chances of survival, diarists pondered what their life might look like outside of the ghetto. Neuding wrote of the deceptive stability of her present situation, and how little she was able to foresee their future: 'the dining room doesn't change and nor does our appearance every day, nothing announces tomorrow's bleak tragedy.'[133] Though their present was terrible, the 'bleak tragedy' of the future could not be divined from it. Neuding worried about finding her husband Jerzy's grave after the war, showing her belief in the future and her need to show their daughter her father's resting place and thus remember him. Szac-Wajnkranc reassured her cousin's daughter, Joasia that she would see the end of the war and her father once more. She added 'maybe mummy will come' to which Joasia replied 'you know she won't.'[134] Whether or not Szac-Wajnkranc herself believed in this future, her attempt to comfort Joasia invoked a world without Nazi rule over Poland and its Jewish population and suggests that even children lost hope in this vision. Szac-Wajnkranc also wore a watch given to her as a graduation gift. Since receiving it, she noted that the watch 'showed me all the happy minutes.'[135] When Szac-Wajnkranc was forced to offer the watch as a bribe to escape the ghetto, she bade farewell to it: 'Goodbye watch! Some Lithuanian or German woman will wear it. I don't believe in superstition or curses, but I press the watch to my lips and whisper: bring bad luck to the new owner, bring him a quick, terrible death!' Despite the benefit of having this valuable item to barter with, it was not a neutral transaction. She considered the future and how this would be used by the new "owner". The misfortune she wished to bestow upon them is rooted in revenge for that which was stolen from the Jews; material goods, happy times and often life itself. The future, for Szac-Wajnkranc, must contain vengeance for these thefts.

[132] ŻIH, 302/35, p. 18.
[133] ŻIH, 302/159, p. 2.
[134] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 41.
[135] Ibid, p. 60.

The author of diary 86, in Łódź, was upset by 'the trams in the distance which dash to freedom.' She questioned 'whether I will always be behind barbed wires? Will there always be a great plaque saying '*Wofugiebit Ver Juden betretten ferbotm!* [sic]? Will Germans always guard us in this box with rifles on their shoulders?'[136] Her questions were neutral, free from doubt, scepticism, or pessimism over the possibility of being free of the German occupiers, nor do they express a hope in German defeat. They are instead the questions of a young girl longing for the freedom she lost through no fault of her own.

Deportations

The series of deportations of thousands of people daily during the summer of 1942, tested the perception of the future for many, suggesting as it did that labour and productivity were no longer logical arguments for permitting all able-bodied workers to remain in the ghettos. Thus, the deportations further impaired the notion of the future held by diarists. Survivor Ida Fink wrote 'this time was measured not in months but in a word – we no longer said, "in the beautiful month of May," but "after the first 'action,' or the second, or right before the third." We had different measures of time, we different ones, always different, always with that mark of difference that moved some of us to pride and others to humility. We, who because of our difference were condemned once again, as we had been before in our history, we were condemned once again during this time measured not in months nor by the rising and setting of the sun, but by a word – "action," – a word signifying movement, a word you would use about a novel or a play.'[137] For Fink, time was divided by the *Aktionen* and thus controlled entirely by the Germans. Garbarini, too, emphasises the deportations as a crucial turning point in the ghettos. Indeed, Szpigielman described the 'first deportation *Aktion*' he declared: 'The clock strikes 12 on the historic Warsaw Jewry.'[138] There remains scope for further analysis into diarists' understanding of this turning point and, specifically, how this in turn impacted their perceptions of the future. In addition, the diarists who wrote after the period of intense deportations in summer 1942, had a different view of the future to those who, at the time of writing, had survived the deportations. The witnessing and

[136] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 14.
[137] Ida Fink, *A Scrap of Time* (New York, 1987), pp. 3-4.
[138] ŻIH, 302/195, p. 150.

interpretation of daily events during the deportations has a strong correlation with the diarists' view of the future. Several diarists from Łódź wrote about the final deportations in 1944 and this also tested their notion of the future.

Adam Czerniaków's diary ends less than an hour before he ingested cyanide,[139] as a direct result of the instruction from the Nazi authorities to deport the people of Warsaw *en masse*. As well as several diarists noting and interpreting this seminal event and its implications for the ghetto population left leaderless, it undoubtedly offers an insight into Czerniaków's own view of the future, or lack thereof. Though poorly perceived by some of his contemporaries, most notably Ringelblum and other *Oneg Shabbat* members, and in post-war literature, Czerniaków, faced with the Nazis' 'demand that with my own hands I should kill my nation's children. There is nothing for me to do but to die.'[140] Czerniaków was, of course, in a rare (indeed unique) position among the Warsaw ghetto inmates, but nevertheless his proximity to events and knowing the German plans for deportation (to a greater extent than the general population) led him to commit suicide, rather than presiding as *Judenrat* chairman as the events transpired. Though the deportation order was issued 'irrespective of sex and age,'[141] to Czerniaków the deportation of the children heralded the end of the Jews of Warsaw. The future without them was inconceivable and immediately left him bereft of reason to witness and experience the events. His suicide also suggests that a future beyond the deportations was unimaginable, and that he perceived this as the end of Warsaw Jewry, as many did. Ultimately, for Czerniaków the deportations were the end, a tragic decision which made Gombiński question: 'What does his suicide mean? Not a word, sir? You couldn't tell us or didn't want to tell us? You're gone and we are left with nothing – no thoughts, no advice, no warnings, no guesses? Mr President, Mr President – what should we do?'[142] Gombiński writes without anger or malice toward Czerniaków, only correctly realising that Czerniaków knew something about the future which led him to suicide.

[139] Polin Virtual Sztetl, 'There is nothing for me to do but to die': https://sztetl.org.pl/en/news/they-demand-that-with-my-own-hands-i-should-kill-my-nation%27s-children-there-is-nothing-for-me-to-do-but-to-die [last accessed 24.5.22].
[140] Ibid.
[141] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 384.
[142] ŻIH, 302/38, p. 46.

Gombiński's account described life until July 1942, 'and then, thunder! DEPORTATIONS!'[143] The turning point of the deportations shattered the life that had been created and lived by inmates in both ghettos until summer 1942.

The author of diary 86 is likely to have been deported to Chełmno sometime in 1942.[144] In her first entry, written before 24th February,[145] she described the 'benefit recipients' who were being deported.[146] Of her family, only the author was unemployed, so it is likely that the family believed themselves exempt from deportation at this stage. Deportations to the extermination camp began in January 1942 and continued sporadically until the culmination of the *Szpera* in September. The diary of Hauser ends on 8th September 1942, and the last entries of the diary offer an insight into life in the ghetto during the deportations, as well as Irene's experience and how this affected her view of the future. In her last entry she wrote 'Let us rely on God. People cannot help us because they are not there.'[147] It is unclear whether the 'people' who cannot help are her family and friends listed at the beginning of the diary, or the people she came to rely on for help in the ghetto itself. It is likely an amalgamation of both, Irene felt abandoned and lost to an uncertain future. She had already been removed from her home and those she knew and was now deprived of her connections in the ghetto as well. In the same entry Hauser noted on 7th September 'No resort has worked this week. Only the police and firemen are allowed to go out on the street.'[148] Similarly, Sierakowiak corroborated this on 4th September. On this day 'nobody's working anywhere; everyone's running to secure work assignments for those in their family who are unemployed.'[149] The scramble for work cards was rooted in the belief that work was the only hope of securing a future in the ghetto. Despite being in hiding, Brzezińska was convinced 'the deportations must end in death' for herself and her son.[150]

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[143] Ibid, p. 32.
[144] Wiatr, *Oblicza Getta*, p. 37.
[145] This is the first dated entry, though the diary begins mid-way through an entry, likely written before the 24th, further strengthening the case that the existing diary is a fragment and earlier entries are lost.
[146] ŻIH, 302/86, p. 1.
[147] Wiatr and Radziszewska, *Irene Hauser*, p. 63
[148] Ibid.
[149] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 215.
[150] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 12.

For those who remained after the deportations the future underwent a transformation in light of the new and terrifying realisation that work and productivity would not be placed above ideology. Gombiński commented on the change: 'the ghetto takes on a new form.'[151] They were able to return to a form of normality, though several had lost their belief in the ability of productivity to save them and grew bleak over the future. Gombiński noted that there was 'joy and elation' over the announcement that the deportations were over, and that the streets looked as though it was 'after a battle'. He added that 'from the rubble and ruins, life is emerging again.'[152] Those writing in hiding after the deportations, such as Gombiński had experienced the entirety of the ghetto and the deportations. From their vantage point they were able to assess the deportations and their destination of 'the East' with more clarity than during the events themselves,[153] such as Brzezińska, who noted reports that the deported had been murdered by electrocution or gassed by poison.[154] Sierakowiak, Lipszyc, Abram Isaac, Fogel and the author of diary 9 all wrote after 1942 and therefore had experienced the chaos and terror of the *Szpera*. The ideology-driven decision to exterminate a workforce while fighting a war on several fronts belied logic and meant that the deportations confirmed the unprecedented threat the Nazis posed, as an enemy intent on extermination, as well as the exploitation, starvation, and violence they had previously meted out. The diarists utilised their knowledge of the deportations, both explicitly and implicitly, to interpret the future. In her apartment Lipszyc 'involuntarily reached for the pouch filled with photos' after the sudden realisation that her sister Tamarcia 'was [now] six, going on seven years old. At her age I was going to school! …Oh, it would be so wonderful if all the children could go to school!'[155] Rywka briefly considered the future which was taken from her family, lamenting what her sister should have experienced. She asked 'What's waiting for us in the future? I'm asking this question with both fear and youthful curiosity.'[156] It is apparent that she knew her future would

[151] ŻIH, 302/38, p. 74.
[152] Ibid.
[153] It must be noted that the *Oneg Shabbat* archive group had information about the death camps as the destination of the trains as events transpired, this knowledge did not necessarily filter to all segments of the population, though rumours were rampant during the event.
[154] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 7.
[155] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 99.
[156] Ibid, p. 120.

potentially evoke fear, but the fact that she was also curious about what might happen shows retention of a modicum of hope. She wished to leave Poland and go to '*Eretz Yisrael*… how much longing I have for this land!... Actually, this longing, this attraction has diminished since the *szpera*, but the longing for Abramek and Tamarcia has increased.'[157] Rywka's dream of immigrating to Palestine diminished after the loss of her siblings, exemplifying how the future could be reimagined as family members disappeared, options and plans were no longer possible or simply became less desirable in their absence. For Sierakowiak the future of his family was destroyed by the deportation of his mother: 'nothing will fill up the eternal emptiness in the soul, brain, mind, and heart that is created by the loss of one's most beloved person.'[158] In his final entry seven months later, he had come to believe 'there really is no way out of this for us.'[159] His pessimism had grown more intense following his mother's deportation, and he struggled to regain any form of hope for the future. Łaski, on 15th May 1944, pondered: 'I shall go to Palestine or remain where I am. I want to go… dear old Hebrew, and ancient Palestine, has an irresistible fascination for me'[160] but added on 18th June 1944 that 'truly it is difficult to believe that we shall escape!' as 'friends are resettled and taken away from their ghetto "homes" … ten hours after they departed the trains come back quite empty'.[161]

The deportations left the ghetto residents in no doubt of the fate of those on the trains, even if the exact place and manner of their death was unconfirmed. Fogel, writing in March 1943, reported that despite Germany being bombed, 'we have already lost any hope, since they will finish us off, if not today, then tomorrow! Only those who can still walk keep believing in some sort of miracle!!! Let us hope it will happen!'[162] Fogel expresses a complicated mix of hope and despair that many experienced. The importance of work and being physically able is displayed: the deportations taught ghetto residents that physical capability, though not a guarantee of survival, was an extremely desirable trait for

[157] Ibid, p. 112.
[158] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 226.
[159] Ibid, p. 268.
[160] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 3.
[161] Ibid, p. 59.
[162] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 155.

remaining in the ghetto. The author of diary 9 wrote of the 'joy of people on the streets because people are being released from Czarnieckiego' rather than being deported from the prison, though she added 'how uncertain the future is.'[163] She knew that joy was often short lived, and that even those people spared from deportation were not necessarily safe. She did not celebrate, but rather regarded the future wearily.

Taken at any specific day of the Holocaust, the future could be perceived and interpreted in a myriad of ways, often dependent on changeable Nazi polices and actions toward the ghetto population. Hindsight and ultimate knowledge of the outcome of events can lead to an illusory belief that the future was consistently perceived as hopeless. Even for catastrophic events such as the deportations the aftermath could bring the contradictory hope that the deportations had ceased and the remaining population were safe, though there was little question over the ultimate fate of those deported. Despite lack of concrete knowledge over their destination, many became dubious over their safety. A semblance of daily life returned for those who remained, though many were sceptical and could no longer believe that work could save them, instead realising that their death was the primary goal of the occupiers. The significance of the turning point of deportations thus often severed any individual hope in the future, though most diarists retained their faith in an eventual Nazi military defeat, believing their time to be limited as the persecutor of the Jews.

Conclusion

Ghettoization caused inmates to look back into their past to search for hopeful examples of Jewish perseverance and German defeat. It led them to interpret and reinterpret their future based on the likelihood of survival, both for individuals and for the Jewish people as a whole. The present became, as Engelking elucidates, 'deformed' inside the ghetto, separated from those beyond the walls. Time stood still and people had little free time to engage in activities of their choosing. The weather provided a spark of joy, especially during the coming of spring with its symbolism of new life, warmth, and hope. Daily life in the

[163] ŻIH, 302/9, p. 2.

ghetto was defined by the occupiers though the constant pressure of work, obtaining food, and the difficulty in obtaining adequate sleep. Significant events such as deportations shattered the notion of a stable daily life and impaired visions of the future and past as well. The Nazi persecution included abusing Jewish time, but Jewish inmates resisted this as much as possible, both by attempting to live their daily lives and by envisaging an inevitable world free of Nazi oppression.

Chapter Five: Place and Space

The concept of space is an important and developing frame of analysis within the study of the Second World War, the Holocaust, and the ghettos. In addition, the application of spatial theories has proven fruitful for scholars. Doreen Massey's work on the UK, broadly speaking, aims 'to formulate concepts of space and place in terms of social relations'[1] as well as how gender can be used to reframe our thinking on geographical concerns such as architecture and other spatial analyses.[2] Within the context of the Holocaust, buildings were generally not erected in the ghettos, meaning design was not impacted in the manner of London in Massey's study. However, the space which was utilised underwent serious modification in usage in the ghetto. Nazi occupying forces controlled the spaces which Jewish people were and were not permitted to occupy, thus having a severe impact on the social interactions practiced within these permitted spaces. This space was subject to 'a spatiality of process – concentration, deportation, dispersal, dislocation' which requires analysis into and beyond the 'obvious geographical components involved in the implementation of the Nazis' genocidal policies' such as 'mass exodus' and 'forced migration of millions.'[3] Using geographic tools such as Geographic Information Science, scholars Beorn, Cole, Gigliotti, Giordano, Holian, Jaskot, Kelly, Masurovsky, and Steiner seek to expand the current dearth of knowledge in the field, where 'scholars know surprisingly little about the tangible places that where created, altered, or destroyed by the Holocaust'.[4] Though it is beyond the scope of this study to implement primarily geographical tools, this thesis stands in agreement with the need for further investigation into the physical space occupied by Jewish people in the Holocaust. Indeed, some residents of the Warsaw and Łódź ghettos experienced the creation, alteration, and destruction of their city during the period. Others experienced a removal from their usual and self-selected place of residence to a foreign and unfamiliar city, thus a deviation of their space, which further served to

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[1] Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Chichester, 2013), p. 2.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Waitman Beorn, Tim Cole, Simone Gigliotti, Alberto Giordano, Anna Holian, Paul B. Jaskot, Anne Kelly Knowles, Marc Masurovsky and Eric B. Steiner, 'Geographies of the Holocaust', *Geographical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (Oct 2009), p. 563.
[4] Ibid.

amplify their difficulties in daily life as they knew few people and often did not have a common language with which to communicate. This thesis argues that the concepts of space explored by geographers and other scholars can be utilised to add nuance to the field, offering the perspectives of diarists who, both explicitly and implicitly, describe the space within which they lived, the 'microgeography and experience' of the diarists, as echoing the 'captive spaces of the transport trains' analysed by Gigliotti.[5] In her 2009 study, *The Train Journey*, Gigliotti stresses the importance of exploring the 'sensory dimensions of experience and memory during the Holocaust.'[6] She notes that the perpetrators' bureaucratic policy and implementation has received far greater attention in the scholarly literature,[7] an argument which is also applicable to the experience of space within the Jewish ghettos. This chapter will discuss Nazi enforced ideas and realities of space including: the concept of *Lebensraum*, the creation of ghetto districts, the ghetto walls, the Germanisation of spaces (focusing on streets), workshops and the *Umschlagplatz*, before addressing Jewish spaces and resistance of the Nazification of space such as in their living spaces, gardens, and other spaces of leisure.

This chapter features fifteen of the twenty diaries within this study. Of the Łódź diarists, Dawid Sierakowiak, Hersz Fogel, Lolek Lubiński, Abram Łaski, Irene Hauser, Rywka Lipszyc and the anonymous author of diary 9 are featured. From Warsaw Noemi Szac-Wajnkranc, Mary Berg, Zofia Brzezińska, Chaim Hasenfuss, Stanisław Gombiński, Adam Czerniaków, Stefan Szpigielman and the anonymous author of the bunker diary are included.[8] The chapter also features the writings of Witold Dobrzański, a non-Jewish Pole who aided the smuggling of goods into the Warsaw ghetto via the sewage system.

[5] Ibid, p. 566.
[6] Simone Gigliotti, *The Train Journey: Transit, Captivity, and Witnessing in the Holocaust* (New York and Oxford, 2009), p. 3.
[7] Ibid.
[8] For full biographies (including gender, age, and status), please refer to 'the Diaries and the Diarists' section of Chapter One, pp. 21-26.

Lebensraum

The ideology of *Lebensraum*[9] originated in the late nineteenth century and was used by geographer Friedrich Ratzel from the 1890s. He 'defined Lebensraum as the geographical surface area required to support a living species at its current population size and mode of existence.'[10] This concept of *Lebensraum* stipulated that the German nation required additional territory, and thus resources, in order to be self-sufficient.[11] Neighbouring Eastern Europe was believed to be a logical choice for this expansion, occupied as it was by supposedly sub-human, *Untermenschen*, Slavs. This became a crucial justification for the Nazi invasion of Poland in September 1939 and, two years later, the impetus for Operation Barbarossa. The policies implemented on various regions of Poland represented the Nazi worldview and their plans for the future. Spaces were only deemed worth saving if they met with Nazi approval. The city of Kraków was perceived as worthy of preserving, and thus Hans Frank took up residence in its medieval Wawel Castle. Much of the city's historic buildings remain today, in direct contrast to Warsaw, which was almost entirely destroyed during the course of the war. Warsaw was not viewed as a worthy capital (hence the move to Kraków as the hub of the *Generalgouvernement*) and was partly destroyed in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943, before being further decimated in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. An exception to this is Belweder Palace, which remains a rare surviving pre-war building in Warsaw today. It was used as Frank's residence when he stayed in Warsaw, thus further highlighting the structures, historical royal residences, that were deemed worthy of preservation in Slavic Eastern Europe. Łódź, eventually designated as a city within the boundaries of the Reich itself, was Germanised with rapidity. Piotrkowska, the main thoroughfare of the city (and one of the longest in Europe) was initially Germanised to Petrikauerstraße and then renamed Adolf-Hitler-Straße.[12] This two-and-a-half-mile thoroughfare was a crucial shopping and business area of the city, and the Jewish

[9] German: Living space.

[10] Woodruff D. Smith, 'Friedrich Ratzel and the Origins of *Lebrensraum*', *German Studies Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Feb. 1980), p. 53.

[11] USHMM Encyclopedia Entry '*Lebensraum'*: https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/lebensraum [last accessed 24.5.22].

[12] Gordon J. Horowitz, *Ghettostadt: Łódź and the Making of a Nazi City* (Massachusetts and London, 2008), p. 32.

population was forbidden to frequent the street from 14th November 1939. This directive severely restricted Jewish movements across the city and imposed curfews forbidding Jews to leave their place of residence between 5p.m. and 8a.m.[13] Szac-Wajnkranc described the Germans as demanding: 'your health, strength and later, later when there is nothing left to give, you give your life. We Germans need it all, we want to win the war with your workshops, your pennies, later your blood and your life. We need all of this.'[14] Despite these sacrifices, however, they still 'will not be indebted to you. We will generously give you "*Lebensraum*" for this. You live in the space of a dozen streets and two squares. What, impossible? You say that you have four people living in one square metre. You, the lowest of the human race, have demands for comfort too?!'[15] Sarcastically adopting the role of the Nazis, she highlights the absurdity of the Nazi attempt to gain supposedly crucial living space for Aryans and the German nation, while simultaneously forcing the Jewish population to live in a terribly overcrowded district with little infrastructure. Szac-Wajnkranc uses the German term for *Lebensraum* rather than a Polish translation, further emphasising that this policy is a German creation, unfairly forced upon the Jewish population, using illogical justification. The ghetto walls were the meeting place of Jewish, German, and Polish police. This collision of identities was a result of the segregated nature of the populations and reflected who was on either side of the wall.

Creating Ghetto Districts

Jewish residents in Warsaw and Łódź before the war had no boundaries placed on their movement, they were free as Polish citizens to live and work in the country. They were predominantly concentrated in urban environments, in and around several neighbourhoods in the cities such as Bałuty (Łódź)[16] and Nalewki, expanding into Muranów (Warsaw),[17] though they were by no means only present in these localities, and many lived in central areas such as Piotrkowska in Łódź and Krakowskie Przedmieście in Warsaw. In each city, the ghetto location was situated in lesser developed areas of the cities which had poorer

[13] Ibid, p. 23.
[14] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 15.
[15] Ibid, p. 16.
[16] Horowitz, *Ghettostadt*, p. 5.
[17] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 15.

sanitation facilities and electricity than other parts of the city. The population of the ghettos greatly outweighed the space available, adding overcrowding to the problems in the already ill-prepared districts. The Nazi authorities purposely chose spaces within the cities that were of little practical or cultural value to them. The consignment to the ghettos removed the Jewish population of each city from the newly designated "Aryan" city and segregated them into an area where they would (only theoretically in Warsaw's case) have no contact with those beyond the Jewish space. The leading figure on spatialities of the ghettos of Hungary, Tim Cole notes that this process served a dual purpose: 'ghettoization was both an act of creating spaces of Jewish absence— literally making parts of the urban and rural landscapes *judenfrei*—and an act of creating spaces of Jewish presence within the walls of the ghetto.'[18] Stephen Kern, in his discussion of time and the Jewish heritage of Sigmund Freud, Marcel Proust and Henri Bergson, noted: 'the experience of the Jews, who did not have a space of their own except in the cramped ghettos. Their spatial existence was always a tenuous and painful reminder of their isolation from the surrounding world and was far less important to them than their existence in time. Thus, the Wander Jew is at home only in time. The Jewish religion also eschewed all spatial representations of the deity whose reality and goodness became known through his action in history.'[19] This emphasises the collusion of space and time within the Jewish experience in the ghettos of the Holocaust. The ghettos were Nazi-created spaces, but Jewish experience of this space shows the agency they possessed in creating a daily life within the confines of the ghetto walls. They utilised the past to help them, a past in which Jews were frequently separated from Christians in Europe, in order to inform their perceptions of survival. Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt further develop this, emphasising that "the inhabitants of east European ghettos were connected to the history of the place in which they were now compelled to live. These streets, synagogues, and markets had grown over centuries to meet the Jewish community's needs; they now suggested that life could go on.'[20] Though not all ghetto inmates were native to the city in which they were imprisoned, the history of Jewish life in

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[18] Tim Cole, 'Geographies of Ghettoization: Absences, Presences, and Boundaries' in Paolo Giaccarioa, Claudio Minca (eds.), *Hitler's Geographies: The Spatialities of the Third Reich* (Chicago, 2016), p. 266.
[19] Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2003), p. 51.
[20] Debórah Dwork and Robert van Pelt, *Holocaust: A History* (2002), p. 217.

both Warsaw and Łódź initially made the ghettos appear to be a sign of survival through separation. Berg admitted: 'I feel a strange and utterly illogical feeling of satisfaction when I see a Jewish policeman at a crossing – such policemen were completely unknown in pre-war Poland.'[21] Berg's gratification at seeing a Jewish policeman stemmed from the unfamiliarity of the sight, providing an example of an opportunity which was previously beyond reach of Polish Jews before the war. She knew they were largely powerless over Germans, even when directing traffic, 'Gestapo cars rush by, paying no attention whatsoever to Jewish policeman's directions and perfectly indifferent as to whether they run people over or not.'[22] Still, it is clear that some initial hope was felt over the presence as police and indeed governed by Jews inside their own space.

The Walls (and beyond)

The ghetto walls were a physical manifestation of the separation of the Jews from Poland and indeed the world, and they excluded them society itself. They were constructed haphazardly and were altered over the ghetto years. They were made with wood, brick, barbed wire, and sometimes topped with broken glass to prohibit jumping over the top. Gates and barriers were interspersed at regular intervals along the walls, to facilitate entrance and exit for those with passes. Justyna Kowalska-Leder states that 'the wall becomes […] a kind of curtain, behind which the first stage of the Holocaust takes place. […] The wall would have been […] a physical obstacle, preventing direct contact with the reality of the Holocaust, and a partition behind which a genocide was happening, invisible to the Poles.'[23] The idea of the walls providing an insurmountable barrier was echoed by Sierakowiak who noted: 'even if there is something happening out there, we know absolutely nothing here. Complete silence'[24] Berg was able to observe across the wall from her apartment. In May 1941, she writes: 'On the other side of the barbed wire, spring holds full sway. From my window I can see young girls with bouquets of lilac walking on the Aryan part of the street. I can even smell the tender fragrance of the opened buds. But there is no

[21] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 34.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Sławomir Buryła, 'A Wall Across the Street' https://mur.1943.pl/en/esej/wall-across-the-street/ [last accessed 24.5.22]
[24] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 160.

sign of spring in the ghetto. Here the rays of the sun are swallowed up by the heavy grey pavement.'[25] Her contrast between the ghetto and the 'other side' show not only her views on how dull and sad ghetto life is, but how bright and positive she perceives life outside the walls to be. Berg experienced three Decembers in Warsaw during Nazi occupation, two of which were in the ghetto. On 24th December 1940 she wrote: 'Our second war Christmas. From my window, which faces the Aryan side, I can see Christmas trees lit up. But little pine trees were also sold in the ghetto this morning at exorbitant prices. They were smuggled in yesterday. I saw shivering people hurrying home with the little trees pressed to their chests. These were converts or first-generation Christians whom the Nazis regard as Jews, and whom they have confined in the ghetto.'[26] The following year the situation had worsened. On 24th December 1941, Berg wrote: 'Today everyone on the Aryan side is wearing his Sunday best. I even fancy that I can smell the odor of good food. It is Christmas Eve. Only half a year ago there were rumors that by Christmas the war would be over and that on November 11 – Armistice Day – the Allied troops would march into Warsaw. True, there are foreign troops in Warsaw; whole battalions of them are marching the streets in green uniforms, but they are enemy troops who terrorize the population.'[27] The divide between those in the ghetto and those surrounding it had deepened, still able to celebrate their holiday and with 'good food' (at least in Berg's imagination), both Poles and Jews alike are under foreign occupation and deprived of the long-awaited Allied invasion which would thwart their common enemy. Worsening the plight of the Jews, Berg noted, was the directive, 'a New Year's gift!' ordering Jews to give their fur coats to the Nazi authorities. In response to this 'many Poles are using this opportunity to sneak into the ghetto to buy up expensive astrakhans, silver foxes, and mink at ridiculously low prices.'[28] Despite this exploitation, 'people prefer to sell their furs for a song rather than surrender them to the Germans. But some have made up their minds to hide them, and try to find various caches.'[29] Berg aptly summarises the difficult position Jewish people found themselves in: forced to sell their valuable goods to Polish neighbours for a pittance or surrender them for

[25] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 50.
[26] Ibid, p. 34.
[27] Ibid, p. 115.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

free to the hostile authorities. She also notes the presence of Poles who have been 'poisoned by anti-Semitism'. These Poles 'deny that their brothers of the Jewish faith are their co-citizens'. She added that these 'Polish anti-Semites say, "It's a good thing, let the Jews sit behind their walls. At last Poland will be Jewless."'[30] For Berg, despite the existence of such anti-Semitic people, who are happy to see Jews expelled from their city and hidden behind walls, she remains sure that the Jews view them as 'co-citizens.' Brzezińska, writing in 1943, criticised 'the reactionary part of Polish society which, as a result of years of racist agitation, approved of the tragedy taking place behind the ghetto walls.'[31] The walls divided Poles from Jews in more than a physical sense. The exploitation of Jews, the ability to continue celebrations, and the perceived approval of the ghetto left the Jews inmates isolated from their former neighbours.

In Łódź, the native Polish population was displaced from not only the ghetto boundaries but also the wider area of Bałuty. More than twenty thousand ethnic Germans arrived in Łódź from Volhynia and Galicia before the end of 1939. Some of these *Volksdeutsche* replaced the Polish population immediately surrounding the ghetto, who were moved mostly to the southern district of the city (they were also prohibited from living in the central area around Piotrkowska).[32] As a result the Łódź ghetto was surrounded by *Volksdeutsche*, a portion of the population with little to no previous direct contact with the ghetto population, and therefore not inclined to aid the ghetto. The creation of the ghetto in Warsaw meant the displacement of 113,000 Poles and 138,000 Jews[33] causing massive disruption in the city and creating a barrier between two populations between whom trade, and social contact flowed. Unlike in Łódź, the Polish population in Warsaw surrounded the ghetto boundaries in an area 'given to the Poles'[34] by the Germans, in the words of Witold Dobrzański. He helped the Warsaw ghetto to an extreme extent, risking his life to smuggle food across the wall. He wrote of the initial lack of concern over the Jews being separated from the Poles in the city because contact was not yet entirely closed off: 'Poles could even get a carriage to

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[30] Ibid, p. 139.
[31] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 18.
[32] Horowitz, *Ghettostadt,* pp. 31-36.
[33] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 40.
[34] ŻIH, 302/7, p. 6.

the ghetto and visit their friends.'[35] This remaining connection with the Polish population signified to Dobrzański and the Polish and Jewish populations that their separation was not complete. Dobrzański elaborated on the German intervention in this relationship and their attempt to influence the Polish perception of the Jewish population. He specifically attributed this to Gendarmes who reported that Jews were trading with Poles which continued even after the Germans forbade this trade. Anti-semitic propaganda was then released showing 'the Jews as fat and happy, laughing at the stupid, thin Poles who are carrying their food and calling them goy. Other posters showed the Jews as dirty, lice-ridden, telling them that they should be closed in the ghetto because they had lice and would contaminate the Poles and to stop the spread of dirt and disease. This scared people in all corners that those who could get into the ghetto could come out with disease.' Dobrzański added, however, that despite this attempt 'the anti-Jewish propaganda didn't stop the trade.'[36] The separation of Jews and Poles was not as simple as posters, declarations or even the ghetto wall made it appear.

Fogel wrote, on 26th January 1943, 'in the city, the deportation of Poles is taking place!'[37] The separation of the Poles from the Jewish population of Łódź is emphasized here in Fogel's distinction between where he lives in the ghetto with the city itself, where the Poles live. Despite their separation and different treatment, however, Poles also lived in an insecure environment and are not exempt from deportation. Other accounts from Łódź do not dwell on the Polish population and feature instead more of a focus on the outside world. In particular they focus on the Allies and their progress in the war. This represents a separation between those in the Łódź ghetto and the Polish state, instead they chose to focus on the Allies who could potentially save them from their situation. Their day to day lives did not include encounters with Poles. Their detachment from Polish society within the city served a wider, more symbolic severing with Polish society in general, with the inhabitants even adopting the German's new mantel for the city as described above.

[35] Ibid, p. 2.
[36] Ibid p. 3.
[37] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 152.

Germanisation of Spaces

Overlooked as a crucial aspect of Jewish experience, the use of spatial division was one of the earliest forms of persecution levied upon the Jews of Poland after the invasion. The initial justification for this was to prevent the spread of disease which the Jewish population were accused of spreading. Diaries offer perspectives on the world outside the ghetto, deepening our understanding of the tangible division created by ghettoization from the perspective of those inside. The Germanisation of over one hundred streets such as Piotrkowska was even applied to the city name itself, when Łódź was changed to Litzmannstadt. Named after German General Karl Litzmann, it commemorated his victory in the Battle of Łódź in the First World War and symbolically signalled the change in ownership from Polish to German rule. Despite the intended purpose of this name change, the majority of diarists adhere to the use of Litzmannstadt, instead of Łódź. Numerous diarists in the Łódź ghetto use the word 'Litzmannstadt' to refer to both the ghetto and the city itself. On 15th May 1942, Fogel wrote, beside the date, 'LITZMANNSTADT GHETTO'.[38] He also reported air raids in the city - outside of the ghetto - using the new mantel of Litzmannstadt for the entire city.[39] Lubiński also wrote, as early as February 1941, of Rumkowski trying to hide from the world 'how bad it is for the Jews in the ghetto in Litzmannstadt.'[40] Lipszyc, in her first diary entry, recorded 'Litzmannstadt Ghetto' beside the date of the entry, 3.X.1943r[41] and the author of diary 9 began with the date '1 July 1944' accompanied by 'Litzmannstadt Getto.'[42] Łaski on occasion, such as 11th July 1944, he wrote 'Litzmannstadt-Getto'[43] beside the date. He repeated this on 29th July 1944, writing 'Litzmannstadt Getto (once Łódź).'[44] As well as this geographical tag, he expanded on this in an entry about deportations of Jews from 'Łódź (pardon Litzmannstadt…).'[45] His faux forgetfulness of the actual name is a dark emphasis of the German takeover of the city. He

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[38] Ibid, p. 89.
[39] Ibid, 70.
[40] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 128.
[41] This is not listed in the published version of the diary but can be clearly seen in images of the original, handwritten diary featured on the Jewish Family and Children's Services Holocaust Centre website, where the diary is stored: https://holocaustcenter.jfcs.org/diary-rywka-lipszyc/ [last accessed 24.5.22].
[42] ŻIH, 302/9, p. 4.
[43] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 13.
[44] Ibid, p. 29.
[45] Ibid, p. 19.

does not express hope that one day it will return to Polish control, but instead emphasises that it was once theirs and was wrongfully invaded. Four of these diarists were lifelong residents of Łódź, the fifth (the author of diary 9) remains anonymous, but all spoke fluent Polish and were in their teens or early twenties at the time of the invasion. In most cases they would have known the city as Łódź from their birth and yet they all chose to record it by its new name, Litzmannstadt. Initially, this may seem an unusual response and rather rapid adaptation to the German annexation of their country and home city, which may have prompted a resistance from residents to adhere to the new name for their city, forced upon them by a foreign invader and thus regarded as illegitimate. An example of this behaviour was Sierakowiak, who consistently wrote Łódź beside the date in every entry.[46] However, for the majority the adherence to the new name under occupation highlights the transformation from the free, Polish city of their past and the new, Nazi-occupied ghetto within a Reich city. The residents of the Łódź ghetto began to adapt to the physical division of the ghetto with the rest of the city, with Fogel and Lubiński writing of the 'city' as a separate entity. Lubiński reported news of food supply outside of the ghetto: 'there are plenty of goods in the city.'[47] After getting a new job, he was 'more pleased with this job than the one I have locally.'[48] Though geographically located in the same place and once literally the same city, the division of the Jewish and non-Jewish portions of Łódź was intrinsically adopted for Lubiński and they became separate entities.

A similar phenomenon occurred in Warsaw with reference to the non-ghetto part of the city which many ghetto inhabitants referred to as the Aryan side. The usage of this term was widespread, signifying the split between the enforced Jewish quarter and the remainder of the city which was *Judenrein*[49] and therefore considered "Aryan". Several diarists wrote events on the "Aryan" side in a mocking tone, refusing to accept that this separation of two parts of the city was legitimate as the Germans portrayed it to be. Berg

[46] ŻIH, 302/132. This can be observed in the original two notebooks of Dawid's which are housed in the ŻIH as well as in the translated, published version of his diary edited by Alan Adelson.
[47] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 136.
[48] Ibid, p. 165.
[49] German: Free of Jews.

dubbed it ’the so-called Aryan side,’[50] Hasenfuss, “the other side”.’[51] Gombiński noted, with sarcasm, the “Jewish residential district of Warsaw”.[52] The resistance and lack of adherence to the new German vernacular shows their rejection of the German division between the Polish and Jewish parts of Warsaw, undermining Nazi policy. Berg also wrote of the Germans visiting her school in April 1941: ‘as soon as the grey car leaves, we sigh with relief and resume our work.’[53] This shows a sense of being able to continue with life as long as the Germans are not present, and the disruption caused when the Germans do enter Jewish space. Efforts to separate Warsaw were unsuccessful for Korczak who still declared passionately: ‘Warsaw is mine and I am Warsaw’s.’[54]

Hauser’s account begins with a request that, if found, the diary should be sent to her sister, Josephine Carlton in Hertfordshire, England. Irene provides Josephine’s former address in Vienna, where she lived until 1941 when she moved to England to be with her husband, though Irene adds that she has lost her English address. As well as this instruction, Irene lists a further thirty-one people and their (last known) addresses, including herself and her own former address in Vienna. Irene’s list provides a substantial list of potential recipients for the diary (should Josephine’s details be unobtainable). Furthermore, it offers a written synopsis of those within her immediate and extended network of family and friends, showing (to a postwar reader) the numbers which could be lost on an individual scale. In many families there was only one survivor, like Josephine, who lost tens or even hundreds of relatives, friends, and acquaintances from their extended network during the Holocaust. Irene’s diary connects each of these individuals to their last chosen residence, many of whom lived in Vienna. Before Irene wrote her list of family and friends, including her father, Leopold Hacker, she noted her mother, Friederike Hacker’s date of death and place of burial, even including the gate, section and plot number of the grave.[55] These details, featuring both living (as far as Irene was aware at the time of writing) and deceased

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[50] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 31.
[51] ŻIH, 302/157, p. 18.
[52] ŻIH, 302/38, pp. 5-6.
[53] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 50.
[54] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, pp. 102-3.
[55] Wiatr and Radziszewska, *Irene Hauser*, p. 39.

members of her family and friends, likely connected Irene with her home and gave her a sense of belonging which was absent from her daily life in the Łódź ghetto. The unfamiliar, Polish city was not a chosen destination for the Hausers and it separated them from the dozens of friends and other family members who were present in their life before they were deported.

Workshops

The physical space of the workshops, and other places of work such as offices, were infrequently described by diarists. Early in the ghetto period, Szac-Wajnkranc described how: 'Factories sprang up like mushrooms after the rain. Factories – if we can call small them that - basements, little rooms where the most beautiful garments, stockings, jumpers, socks were made. Workshops, where old sheets and pillowcases were dyed and printed in patterns and made into the most fashionable men's shirts, beautiful flowery head scarves, handkerchiefs.'[56] Sierakowiak described, at length, the changes occurring in the ghetto's landscape in August 1941. He wrote: 'the ghetto is developing more and more gloriously. A large number of new workshops and factories are being established. Together with those already existing, they form what's called in jest the "Jewish Industrial District." In addition to schools, camps, sanitariums, Marysin – now a separate quarter – has a whole lot of new factories and employment departments (for example, a plant producing carpets from rags, a preserves factory, a candy factory, shoe-makers, decorative workshops, and many others). Everything is the "state property" of "*Der Älteste der Juden*". Many new workshops have also been organized in the main area of the ghetto (for example, the saddlery shop where my father has a job, leather and embroidery shops, and even the one where army furs are cleaned). Furthermore, a metal workshop keeps receiving larger orders from the Germans. Hundreds of people are now finding employment, and everything appears to be going for the better, if it weren't for the high death rate and hunger, the never-ending hunger that will not abate at all. We are constantly short of money, and even if there are vegetable allocations, we are almost never able to buy them.'[57] Reality belies the logic of employment providing subsistence security. This, however, changed as a result of worsening conditions

[56] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 19.
[57] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, pp. 121-2.

in the ghetto, which he called 'our "ghetto/factory".'[58] As food became scarcer, people became more reliant on the meagre soup and bread rations provided in the workshops. In May 1942, Dawid described the 'quite courageous "operations" in the kitchen' where 'in effect we have an additional half or whole portion of soup.' He added that without this 'I am not sure if I could drag myself to the workshop.'[59] Dawid also noted on 2nd July 1942 that he 'went to the workshop only to pass along my ID card for bread.'[60] Rywka, too, gave her *Arbeitskarte* to her sister, Cipka 'just in case' she could obtain soup for her.[61] The workshops, for many, came to be associated with food; predominantly a destination for obtaining more food rations.

While working in the saddlery the workshops were a space of escape from his family home for Dawid: 'above all, I don't have too much time left to stay at home and think of food.'[62] He later compared the environment of the saddlery to his office job: 'I'm very satisfied because I finally have the peace I longed for. I don't have to care about anything, and the thoughtless rewriting of data in the files doesn't require any effort. There's also none of the prisonlike atmosphere in the workshop, no screaming, less dust, and no *Leder-und-Sattler* idiots.'[63] His work in an office, where 'educated and intelligent individuals are in demand,'[64] undoubtedly suited him better than the 'prisonlike atmosphere' of the workshop. His description of the workshop portrays it as oppressive, loud, and unclean. His colleagues, too, were not individuals Dawid wishes to spend time with. After starting work in the *Kleider-und-Wäsche-Abteilung*[65] Rywka reported that their induction had to be repeated due to a shortage of machines.[66] Despite the ghetto's productivity, shortages and lack of proper or adequate equipment impeded ghetto workers. In Warsaw, too, Brzezińska reported that during the 'feverish haste' of inmates to obtain work permits, people utilised

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[58] Ibid, p. 233.
[59] Ibid, p. 172.
[60] Ibid, page 193.
[61] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 75.
[62] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 210.
[63] Ibid, pp. 210-211.
[64] Ibid, p. 207.
[65] German: Clothing and Laundry Department.
[66] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 74.

their personal sewing machines in newly created factories and workshops.[67] The transition of private possessions into newly created workshop equipment highlights the reactive nature of the inmates in using the workshop as a place of security.

Rywka, on Saturday 15th January 1944, wrote: 'I really don't want to go to work on Monday… well… it's unbearable.'[68] Her reluctance to go to her workshop emphasises the mandatory nature of ghetto inmates' employment; it was borne of necessity rather than through choosing a desired path. In February 1944 she noted changes to the ghetto policy, meaning that; 'during the working hours between seven a.m. and five p.m. nobody will be allowed to walk in the streets. The ghetto is turning into an *Arbeits Lager*.'[69] She also wrote of those who 'work at the coal yards or vegetable yards from five p.m. until midnight… I can imagine people working at the yard in the middle of the night. Cold, dim light, a terribly long line, chaos, everybody is sleepy… Oh God! In the face of such forces, my life at home is diminished.'[70] Rywka displayed an awareness of the relative privilege of her own circumstances compared to those working overnight and outside, and the difficult, unpleasant nature of their work.

The *Umschlagplatz* and Deportation

Engelking notes that the *Umschlagplatz*[71] still 'stands as a symbol of the deportations and as a symbol of the Holocaust itself.'[72] The place of deportation featured heavily in those who witnessed the deportations. For the most part, those who could describe the events in the *Umschlagplatz* can no longer testify to this terror and were unable to record their

[67] Haska, *Zofia Brzezińska*, p. 45.
[68] Friedman, *Rywka's Diary*, p. 97.
[69] Ibid, p. 126.
[70] Ibid, p. 128.
[71] The area of the former ghetto, unlike other crucial aspects which affected daily life (such as those explored in this thesis) are visible and present today, in the same location. Though memorials are beyond the scope of this study, the buildings themselves attest to the trauma of the ghetto period, having borne witness to the tragic events which occurred. Warsaw was almost entirely destroyed as a result of the 1943 and 1944 Uprisings, however, some ghetto buildings survive, and spaces where buildings previously stood, such as the *Umschlagplatz*, are the site of memorials and plaques.
[72] Engelking, *„Czas przestał dla mnie istnieć…"*, p. 125.

experience.[73] However, an association was formed with the *Umschlagplatz* as the epicentre of the deportations as they continued. Though she was later able to escape, Szac-Wajnkranc's workshop was sent to the *Umschlagplatz* and experienced a selection at the hands of a 'drunk SS man' who 'stares at the candidates for death.' When he beat Szac-Wajnkranc for closing her eyes during the selection, she came to the realisation that 'death is not equal, I understand now that people prefer to poison themselves, or dream of being shot'[74] rather than endure the horror of the *Umschlagplatz*. Brzezińska recalled watching the deportations take place from her window. Though not in sight of the *Umschlagplatz* itself, the events of the deportation were chaotic and took place on the streets and in apartments, meaning they were visible to all facets of the ghetto population, even those who were exempt from deportations themselves. The deportations altered the already fragile perception of inmates' ability to find a safe space. Officers (both Jewish and later Nazi) stormed into apartments to check passes and send those without to the *Umschlagplatz*, leading some to hide and others to occupy what Engelking has dubbed the 'time of no-*aktion*, the time of life in between… this time between life and death, when everyday life continued.'[75] Szpigielman wrote of the announcement 'by megaphone on the corner of Gęsia and Zamenhof, something about Tunisia… fall… El-Alamein… shooting…' before questioning 'who actually cares <u>today</u>. <u>Here</u>. On Gęsia. On a beautiful autumn day in September.'[76] This suggests that the events of the deportations, which had occurred for the previous two months had overshadowed events for Stefan, who was primarily concerned with events happening in Warsaw. The turning point of the deportation was so significant that it shrank the inmates' perception literally down to the street they stood on, which offered either temporary refuge or danger.

Diarists in Warsaw described the 'cauldron,' the crowd of people trapped on Miła and Niska streets, though of the diarists within this study only Szac-Wajnkranc referred to it by this

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[73] There are several written accounts which were thrown from trains *en route* to extermination camps. Of the diaries included in this study, Rywka Lipszyc took her precious diary with her when she was deported, but she was unable to write any further entries after she was transported from Łódź.
[74] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 55-56.
[75] Engelking, *„Czas przestał dla mnie istnieć…"*, p. 136.
[76] ŻIH, 302/195, p. 215.

name. In a section entitled *Cauldron* she described her escape from the crowd to her parents' house, and from there the plans they implemented to flee the ghetto. The term has been utilised by survivors of the Warsaw ghetto in their accounts. Both the *Umschlagplatz* and the Cauldron were spaces of violence and persecution, where Jewish residents had very little control over their own fate. They were, as Engelking notes, the site of departure for many of Warsaw's Jews, as was Radegast in Łódź, but they were also controlled by Nazi officers, as well as Jewish policemen, who were guarding the ghetto and were enrolled to deliver thousands of Jewish people to the deportation points.

Jewish Space: Resisting Germanization

Living Spaces

In a telling silence, no diarists describe their apartment in any detail. They lived with their surviving family members, and were not gender-segregated, as in the camps. However, the apartment conditions were poor. Their lack of description is suggestive of both the insignificance of doing so given the wider environment in which they lived and of the enforced nature of where they lived. Diarists like Czerniaków and Berg lived in better conditions than most inmates, however, they were still forcibly relocated to the ghetto and all diarists lost their previous, chosen home. It is known that apartments were crowded, for example, Rywka lived with four relatives in one apartment, though the size of this apartment remains unknown. As a point of contrast, the 'living space' of the anonymous author trapped in the bunker was preserved in her diagram of the space on Miła Street. Her drawing makes abundantly clear how cramped, poorly ventilated, and yet (given the circumstances) well-prepared the bunker residents were.[77] Like many others, they installed a ventilation system, water supply, and cooking facilities in a testament to the agency of inmates and the attempt to outlast the Nazis, despite the odds.

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[77] The digitised image of the diary can be viewed on the GFHA online at: https://infocenters.co.il/gfh/pdf_viewer.asp?lang=ENG&dlang=ENG&module=search&page=pdf_viewer&rsvr=2@2¶m=%3Cpdf_path%3Emultimedia/Files/Idea/%D7%90%D7%95%D7%A1%20006045.pdf%3C/%3E%3Cbook_id%3E148509%3C/%3E¶m2=&site=gfh [last accessed 24.5.22].

As Berg demonstrates, there was an early envisaging of the ghetto as a Jewish space that was at least semi-autonomous (to the degree of co-operation with the Nazi occupiers) and offered inmates protection from that beyond the walls. Conceived as a confinement of an alleged typhus outbreak the Nazi narrative which portended the ghetto as a safety measure. In his study of Jewish vacations in Nazi Germany, Miron notes that Jews reclaimed a space which could be 'perceived as genuinely Jewish.'[78] The segregation, while not a choice of the Jewish population, was initially perceived (and hoped) as being the extent of Nazi persecution. It was therefore an unwanted but generally bearable means of survival of the longstanding community of Warsaw's Jewry, and for the newer though still well-established Jewish population of Łódź. Even for those local to each city, the environment had fundamentally altered as a result of the walls, barbed wire and gates which encircled the population. Ghettoization further deepened the problems of the two poorly equipped neighbourhoods designated as the 'Jewish district'. Inmates quickly came to realise they would not be left to live under their own auspices, and space became strictly controlled by Nazi authorities, and enforced by Jewish policemen guarding the gates between the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds. Strauss highlights the 'critical' nature of understanding the space of the Jewish community, and the role it played in their 'collective trauma.'[79] She emphasises the proximity of residents not only to their individual family members, but also to their neighbours, meaning they were 'unable to escape their neighbours' grief.'[80] Jacek Leociak, too, summarises the conditions experienced by ghetto inmates who lost their homes (regardless of where they originated from) and personal space: 'No one is at home any more, everyone is exiled – from larger and smaller towns to a life behind the walls, from flats to the street, from hiding places and bunkers to the *Umschlagplatz*. The individual has to live, suffer and die in throngs and crowds, or languish into hiding, every moment expecting death to come. There is no room here for the luxury of privacy, and the imitate sphere has been destroyed.'[81] Łaski conformed to this, writing of ghetto inhabitants in their 'ghetto "homes,"' mocking the notion of a home in the ghetto.[82]

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[78] Ashkenazi and Miron, Jewish Vacations in Nazi Germany, p. 552.
[79] Strauss, The Aged in the Łódź Ghetto, p. 203.
[80] Ibid, p. 204.
[81] Leociak, *Text in the Face of Destruction*, p. 111.
[82] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 52.

Nature and Nightclubs

Alan Helphand searched archives for 'any sign in the ghetto of nature or any sign of the natural world.'[83] He likens the gardens present in the Warsaw and Łódź ghettos (as well as in Kovno and Vilna) to other aspects of daily life, noting that they 'could be considered "normal"' but that they were present 'only through extraordinary effort.'[84] In tending to these gardens, ghetto inmates were 'attempting to create conditions for their survival' and simultaneously 'made for themselves work, relief, solace and food.'[85] The occupation of limited ghetto space for crops provided additional, much needed subsistence, but also provided an open space for inmates. Berg wrote of her father digging a 'little garden' in their courtyard into which they planted radishes, onions, carrots, turnips. The family 'even have some flowers.'[86] A month later 'everything is green' and 'the weather is magnificent. The greens and the sun remind us of the beauty of nature that we are forbidden to enjoy. A little garden like ours is therefore very dear to us. The spring this year is extraordinary. A little lilac bush under our window is in full bloom.'[87] Lubiński recorded sunbathing with his friends in the summer of 1941 in Marysin, the location of Łódź's ghetto garden. Marysin, in the eastern section of the ghetto, was home to the orphanage and villas for the rich of the ghetto, as well as the garden. Despite the area's somewhat mixed residents (orphans and the *Beirat*), Joanna Podolska summarises that 'for the ghetto inhabitants, Marysin was a symbol of well-being.'[88] The open space offered in Marysin meant a chance to escape the overcrowding that was ever-present in the majority of the ghetto. Helphand, utilising geographer Steve Pile's term, dubs the ghetto gardens as 'spaces of resistance.'[89] Similar to diary writing, the act of gardening and even sitting in one (as Lubiński did) can be categorised as a resistance of the crowded oppressive space of the ghetto street, apartment, or workshop.

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[83] Kenneth I. Helphand, *Defiant Gardens: Making Gardens in Wartime* (San Antonio, 2006), p. 60.
[84] Ibid, p. 61.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 131.
[87] Ibid, p. 138.
[88] Podolska, *Traces of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto*, p. 98.
[89] Helphand, *Defiant Gardens*, p. 100.

Visiting a night club, too, was an attempt to escape the reality of ghetto life and enjoy oneself. Szac-Wajnkranc described the ghetto club, *L'Ourse* and how 'it sparkles with mirrors and marble, with silver and crystal,'[90] compared to the 'grey walls of the ghetto.'[91] Ultimately, this was a place of such fantasy, it offered guests a chance to pretend 'as if there had never been a ghetto in the world, and as if you never knew what a German is.'[92] The club attempted to be a place of temporary escape from the ghetto streets. The reality of the ghetto, however, immediately returned: 'when you walk out of the beautiful, brightly lit hall into the dark street and the sound of "*hot rachmunes*"[93] reaches your ears and you see skinny bodies in rags, you regret that nice moment spent in the club, you call yourself cruel and heartless, and you remind yourself that although people can still listen to singing and music, they can enjoy the warmth and brightness, but they can't dance anymore. Yes, nobody danced in our clubs: evidently there must be a limit.'[94] Even morally dubious, exorbitantly priced fun was limited, and full enjoyment was prohibited by the inescapable reality of the ghetto.

By July 1944, though the Łódź ghetto had survived the longest period of any ghetto in Nazi-occupied Poland, the diarists questioned whether they could remain there. Łaski expressed his doubts: They are afraid now of the approaching of the Russian front and therefore they began to outsettle again' on 2nd July.[95] Despite the conditions of the ghetto, Łaski perceived the place they knew to be preferable to being deported to an uncertain destination. In another entry he writes that it is 'after all good news' that the deportations from Łódź had stopped.[96] In addition, he dubbed the remaining residents 'gettonians,'[97] suggesting a transformation into a man of the ghetto, an ownership and reclaiming of the Nazi-created space. The diaries present perspectives of these spaces when they were in operation as spaces of persecution, terror, and death, but also as place they lived with their families and

[90] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 20.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Yiddish: have pity/mercy.
[94] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 20.
[95] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 49.
[96] Ibid, p. 46.
[97] Ibid, p. 53.

tried to outlast the Nazis and Hitler himself. Those imprisoned in the ghettos comprise the only group to experience these spaces as such horrifically overcrowded and oppressive sites of trauma, and the diaries add to the existing knowledge of the ghetto and its spatial experience for the inmates.

Conclusion

The German control of space in Warsaw and Łódź, both in the cities and the ghettos, greatly restricted movement and life for Jews. They were forced to exist in constant overcrowding which enveloped their living and working environments. The space was wholly not theirs, created and controlled as it was by the Nazis. The epitome of this was the *Umschlagplatz* which few were able to experience first-hand and report on, but which symbolised the horror of deportation. There were some spaces of Jewish resistance in the form of quiet or extravagant enjoyment in gardens or nightclubs, though the agency to create and utilise such spaces was extremely limited in the ghetto.

Chapter Six: Perpetrators and Persecutors

Since the end of the Second World War a chasm has existed between the study of the Holocaust's perpetrators and its victims. The perpetrators, especially Adolf Hitler himself, were the focus of scholarly research in multiple languages in the aftermath of the war. Alan Bullock's 1952 *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* was the first comprehensive English-language biography of the dictator.[1] In 1961 Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews* brought information of the Holocaust into public awareness.[2] This work, however, has received criticism for its overreliance on German sources, at the expense of Jewish sources and perspectives. The general disregard for victim perspectives and experiences in the immediate post-war period was not, however, absolute. Mark L. Smith notes the exceptional group which he dubs the 'Yiddish historians of the Holocaust' comprised of survivors from the areas of interwar Poland, who became historians after the war and published in Yiddish.[3] It was not their exclusive language of publication, but they made a choice to produce works in Yiddish for their audience of the 'survivor public'[4] who understood what they had endured and displayed an inclination for 'their study of Jewish life, rather than death, under Nazi occupation.'[5] In addition to Smith's expansion of our knowledge on early research into Jewish lives during the Holocaust, several recent works aim not only to contribute to our knowledge of how the victims lived, but how they viewed those who committed the crimes of the Holocaust.

Christopher R. Browning analysed survivor testimonies from some inmates of Starachowice slave labour camp to elicit trends, shared responses, and perceptions of Jewish experiences during the Holocaust.[6] Though not the sole focus, the study included insights into survivors'

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[1] Subsequent key works include William Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of Adolf Hitler* (New York, 1961), Joachim Fest's *Hitler* (Orlando, FL, 1974), Ian Kershaw's *Hitler: 1889-1936 Hubris* (London, 1999) and *Hitler: 1936-1945* (London, 2000), and more recently Thomas Weber's *Becoming Hitler: The Making of a Nazi* (Oxford, 2017) and Peter Longerich's *Hitler: A Life* (Oxford, 2019).
[2] Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews, Volume 1* (New York, 1985).
[3] Mark L. Smith, *The Yiddish Historians and the Struggle for a Jewish History of the Holocaust* (Detroit, MI, 2019)., p. 21.
[4] Ibid, p. 115.
[5] Ibid, p. xvi.
[6] Christopher R. Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave Labor Camp* (New York, 2010).

perceptions of their perpetrators. Browning's micro study highlights the necessity of analysing the perspectives of those who were there to enhance our own understanding of one part of the wider Holocaust narrative. Hilberg created his trichotomy of Holocaust participants, as typified in his 1993 book *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: Jewish Catastrophe 1939-1945*. This foundational text outlined the three groups who 'experienced' the 'Jewish catastrophe': 'a variety of perpetrators, a multitude of victims, and a host of bystanders.'[7] Amy Simon's thesis on Yiddish diarists' perceptions of perpetrators in Warsaw, Łódź, and Vilna adds complexity to the group regarded as the 'victims': a fixed homogenous entity within Hilberg's framework. Simon does not reclassify Jewish individuals previously within the 'victim' category as 'perpetrators,' instead referring to them as 'Jewish persecutors.'[8] This chapter follows this category with regard to the 'Jewish persecutors' described in the diaries. Fiona Kaufman's thesis found that: 'interestingly, many diaries did not actually refer to Nazis, but rather, to the writer's own suffering. The writers of the diaries could only understand their own small piece of history.'[9] The diaries featured here somewhat contradict this but, as with Kaufman's findings, the Nazis were not the central focus for any diarists, and some rarely mention those who oppressed them. The diaries offer a varied response to those who persecuted them, both visibly and physically in and around the ghettos as well as those who set policies and decrees which affected them.

This chapter features sixteen of the twenty diaries included within this study. From the Łódź ghetto, Hersz Fogel, Dawid Sierakowiak, Abram Łaski, Irene Hauser, Lolek Lubiński and the anonymous authors of diaries 86 and 191 are featured. Of the Warsaw diarists, Zofia Brzezińska, Noemi Szac-Wajnkranc, Adam Czerniaków, Stanisław Gombiński, Stefan Szpigielman, Mary Berg, Janina Neuding, Dawid Fogelman, Janusz Korczak and the anonymous author of the bunker diary will be discussed. [10] In addition, the diary of Emmanuel Ringelblum and the writing of non-Jewish Pole, Witold Dobrzański, will be included.

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[7] Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945* (London, 1993), p. ix.
[8] Simon, Surrounded by the Hunter on All Sides, p. 44.
[9] Kaufman, By Chance I Found a Pencil, pp. 68-9.
[10] For full biographies (including gender, age, and status), please refer to 'the Diaries and the Diarists' section of Chapter One, pp. 21-26.

Perpetrators

The perpetrator category, for the purposes of this study, has been subdivided into the pertinent facets of the 'Germans' who were mentioned in the diaries. These were comments or accounts of Adolf Hitler himself, Nazi officials (the authorities who governed the ghetto), military personnel (diarists rarely distinguished between SS and Wehrmacht soldiers), and the wider German nation. The chapter also examines representations of Lithuanians, Latvians, and Ukrainians who were specifically mentioned by three diarists as participating in guard duties.

Adolf Hitler

Adolf Hitler should be regarded, in the words of Raul Hilberg, as 'the first and foremost perpetrator.'[11] Ringelblum dubbed Hitler 'the modern Haman'[12] in a comparison which, according to Simon, was 'both evil and knowable'[13] to the Jewish population. By May 1942 'Ringelblum's hope had been lost' when he proclaimed: 'Except for Pharaoh, who ordered the new-born Hebrew babes thrown into the river Nile, this is unprecedented in Jewish history.'[14] Berg and Szac-Wajnkranc both dubbed Hitler 'Haman' or 'Pharoah'. In contrast to the invocation of these familiar Jewish narratives by some diarists, the author of diary 86 did not mention Hitler in her entire diary. Her perspective focused on her immediate surroundings and those who were directly affecting her life, rather than any engagement with international politics. She did not invoke Jewish history nor curse the activities of Hitler. Similarly, Hauser did not reference Hitler, she focused almost exclusively on the difficulties of her daily life. Conversely, multiple diarists make repeated reference to Hitler throughout their diaries, basing their interpretation of the war on his actions and decisions.

Those who mention Hitler in their diaries linked him to the progress of the war, rather than condemning his anti-Semitic policies. Fogel repeatedly wrote of the various rumours and news circulating in the ghetto, beginning with an early entry in March 1942 when he

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[11] Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, p. ix.
[12] Amy Simon, 'Ghetto Diary Writers' Understanding of Holocaust Perpetrators', *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*, Vol. 17, No. 2-3 (2011), p. 138.
[13] Ibid, p. 137.
[14] Ibid, p. 138.

reported the 'excellent' political news that 'allegedly Hitler is dead and there's a change of government, the *Reichstag* has been moved from Berlin to Vienna… God help us and make everything that the Jews are saying come true!!!'[15] Fogel later stressed (in June 1942) that the Allied threat to inflict 'casualties amongst the German women and children is only talk,' adding that Hitler 'is suffering great defeats, Germany is under heavy bombardment! That's why they take their revenge on the poor innocent Jews.'[16] Fogel reported on the imminent end of the war in August 1942 when 'Hitler supposedly said that the war will be over in 40 days and that he will be the winner!'[17] He repeated this in September 1942 when he wrote, 'as far as politics goes, they say that it's the end of his days, but the important thing is that they do not turn it into the end of our days first!'[18] For Fogel, the symbolic relationship between Hitler and the war meant a race of endurance in which only Hitler or the Jews could survive.

Some diarists followed war news as avidly as was possible. Illegal radios existed in both ghettos and networks passed news across Poland. In May 1941 Sierakowiak excitedly reported the 'sensational news' of the landing of Rudolf Hess in Scotland,[19] believing this to herald the beginning of the end.[20] Reflecting the ever-changing war prognosis, he reported on 19th August 1941 that: 'the Germans move farther and farther into Russia: they have already captured Homel and Nikolayev and now threaten Leningrad. Damn it, the war will drag on for years!'[21] Fogel too reported on this: 'The Germans are pushing forward, as if out of spite!' The war was unjustifiable and not driven by legitimate aims. He continued: 'It is both strange and worthy of note that one army can be powerful enough to withstand all those other armies! It seems to me that America and England do not send any troops and that it's only the Soviets who are fighting. It's very nice of them to stop the march of the German army on their own soil! We don't know what further surprises await us in this

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[15] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 67. Underline in original.
[16] Ibid, p. 103.
[17] Ibid, p. 137.
[18] Ibid, p. 147.
[19] Dawid wrote that he landed in England.
[20] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 89.
[21] Ibid, p. 120.

war.'[22] Brzezińska criticised the lack of intervention from both the Allies and the Pope. She was outraged that 'no waves of indignant voices from London, Washington nor the Vatican penetrated the Warsaw ghetto.'[23] The diaries reported news which offered hope, such as German military defeats but also news which deepened their anxiety such as the Allies lack of intervention or the failed attempt to assassinate Hitler.

The author of diary 9 reported on Friday 21st July 1944 of an attack on Hitler. The complete entry reads: 'Assassination attempt on Hitler. They only wounded him.'[24] She did not elaborate on the attack any further in any subsequent entries. The bluntness of her entry, which is the shortest of her diary and with less detail and emotion than any other entry attests to her disappointment at the failure of the attempt on his life. Łaski also wrote on 21st July 1944 about the assassination attempt. The diaries, taken together, suggest that the news of the attack took one day to reach Łódź. Of the failure, Łaski felt 'regret that he did not lose his life'[25], he also perceived the event as evidence of a weariness spreading among the Germans and pondered whether the 'second "Führer" would be Göring or Himmler in the event of Hitler's death. 'It does not sound right! We have lived to see their downfall – now we must for us and the whole of humanity live to see the dawn!'[26] By 1944 the diarists believed that Hitler's demise would mean freedom and liberation for Poland and its Jews. It became a race to outlive Hitler and there was a continued belief in his death as the war's progress began to deteriorate for the Wehrmacht.

Szac-Wajnkranc overheard a mother explaining why a soldier shot at her four-year-old son: 'because Hitler is our enemy, and he really doesn't like children.' This was incomprehensible to the child, who replied that Hitler 'doesn't know me at all.'[27] The impossibility of explaining their situation to her son led to a simplified narrative, and accurately placed Hitler as the crux of their reality. All attempts to describe the ghetto situation could lead

[22] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 122.
[23] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 18.
[24] ŻIH, 302/9, p. 19.
[25] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 20.
[26] Ibid, p. 22.
[27] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 56.

back to Hitler, though only some diarists, such as Fogel, engaged with this explanation. Others, such as Hauser, were less focused on military news and politics. Her diary features one reference to any news from the front: 'There is fierce fighting in Russia, Egypt and on the western front.'[28] Her daily life primarily consisted of her husband, child, and obtaining food. It is evident that this left little space, certainly in her diary but also likely in her mind, for concerning herself with Germany's military progress or the Nazi leader. These abstract and far-removed spectres greatly affected the ghettos, though indirectly. The inmates' daily life functioned in conjunction with the Nazi officials, guards, and auxiliaries in Warsaw and Łódź.

Nazis

This section examines the visible representatives of the Nazi authorities in the ghetto. This ranged from high-level officials to soldiers who guarded the ghettos. In the case of the high-level officials, their names appeared on official ghetto announcements, representing policies affecting the ghettos. Adam Czerniaków engaged with such officials on a daily basis in his role as *Judenrat* Chairman. His diary contains many statistics and official information on plans and developments between the ghetto and Nazi authorities. Conspicuous in its absence, however, is any contempt for individual Nazis, the *Generalgouvernement*, Hitler, or Germany itself. Czerniaków could not risk discovery of the diary notebooks while he was alive due to the potential of reprisals from the Nazis. He does, however, record factual information about his encounters with them. On 5th November 1940, he was arrested alongside several *Judenrat* members and held overnight in Pawiak prison. When they were released, Czerniaków returned to his office: 'at 6 PM, after preparing a formal complaint about the beatings I returned home.'[29] He tried to uphold decency and fight for fair treatment from the Nazi authorities, even in the face of their physical intimidation and violence. Throughout his time as *Judenrat* leader, he reported incidents of disrespect by Nazi authorities such as on 3rd May 1941 when: 'Nossig sent me a message through an intermediary that I could not be received because of "lack of time." In the end they told me

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[28] Wiatr and Radziszewska, *Irene Hauser*, p. 44.

[29] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 213.

to report next week. I have a feeling that they will dismiss me.'[30] Czerniaków met with Heinz Auerswald, then Commissioner of the Warsaw District to discuss the matter of releasing Jewish prisoners from Nazi custody: 'At 4:30 I went to see the *Kommissar*[31] and talked with him until 7 P.M. I mentioned his historical role and responsibility. About Hudson Lowe. About the tragic mood of the population and about the rationality of the official measures. About the causes: small food rations and lack of work. About the lack of constructive work and about all the unproductive labor. In the end, I asked for an audience with the Governor. He replied that the governor would not receive me!'[32] Czerniaków's discussion with Auerswald suggests a semblance of a constructive working relationship in which the *Judenrat* leader was able to invoke Auerswald's future portrayal in the narrative of the ghetto. Despite his attempt to have a reasonable discussion, his appeal to speak with Governor Frank was eventually rejected, highlighting his ultimate powerlessness. He was further disrespected when, on 21st February 1942: 'Rodeck informed me that I misheard the words of the *Kommissar* on the business of the 410,000 zlotys for the lunch programme. They have authorized only 300,000 zlotys. I retorted that I clearly emphasised the sum of 410,000 zlotys and that the *Kommissar* accepted this information approvingly.'[33] Czerniaków was unable to challenge the trickery utilised to deprive them of additional funds, and once again emphasises his ultimate lack of recourse against Nazi mistreatment.

Arthur Greiser was the *Gauleiter*[34] of the Wartheland and visited the Łódź ghetto. Fogel recorded the preparations before Greiser's[35] visit in June 1942 when residents were warned to confine children and the unemployed indoors.[36] He added 'still, if push comes to shove, nothing can help us! After all, don't the lists show who works and who doesn't? Don't they show the number of children? Both in the ghetto and elsewhere!!! Graizer (sic) usually leaves a gift for the Jews after his visit!'[37] Sierakowiak, on 4th June, worried about this visit

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[30] Ibid, p. 229.
[31] This refers to Heinz Auerswald.
[32] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 301.
[33] Ibid, p. 329.
[34] Region leader.
[35] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 154. Fogel records his name as Graizer.
[36] Ibid, p. 102.
[37] Ibid, pp. 102-3.

but was relieved that 'fortunately, the Greiser 'cloud' has passed'.[38] Greiser's trip was evidently a source of anxiety for ghetto residents, who were made aware of the visit by the instructions and warnings meted out beforehand. However, both Fogel and Sierakowiak reported on 6th June 1942 that Greiser was said to be pleased by his inspection and thus food supplies were to improve.[39] Fogel added, however, that this extra food merely meant 'we don't have to starve so terribly!'[40]

The soldiers who guarded the ghetto gates and walls were visible perpetrators regularly interacting with ghetto inmates as part of their duties. They could also enter the ghetto any time – both for authorized activity such as round ups and to roam the ghetto, terrorising their victims. Gombiński factually noted that those guarding the ghetto were 'brutal' and 'torturers.'[41] Szac-Wajnkranc observed how two SS soldiers removed the 'beautiful black eyes' of a child named Zosia so that he 'could have two of them for myself and my wife.' As they attacked the child, Szac-Wajnkranc heard 'the shrill scream and guttural laugh of the soldiers. The scream pierces our brain and hearts as the blade of the knife is thrust into the body, the screams and the laughter intensify, and then rise to the heavens.'[42] After the attack, Szac-Wajnkranc saw Zosia and her mother. Zosia implored her: 'Don't cry, mama, maybe this is what was meant to happen. It's better that they took away my eyes, than murdering me.'[43] Despite Zosia's hope that her agony might spare her from deportation, Szac-Wajnkranc reported that in the next round up 'they took Zosia, it was necessary to annihilate the blind girl after all.'[44] Szac-Wajnkranc witnessed the shooting of a young boy for 'looking out into the street with peace.'[45] She was also disgusted by the soldiers' behaviour toward the elderly. She sarcastically remarked: 'Germans are humane – they kill the old because it saves them a journey.'[46] These tragic incidents recorded in her diary show the treatment of unarmed, vulnerable people by the Nazis and serve to portray them as

[38] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 181.
[39] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 105 and Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 181.
[40] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 105.
[41] ŻIH, 302/38, p. 13.
[42] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 45.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid, p. 57.
[46] Ibid, p. 37.

violent and cruel. It also aligns with her assessment of Hitler as fearful of a four-year-old child; the soldiers were dissatisfied with attacking and blinding innocent children and the elderly, leading them to destroy them completely. Despite their might and aggression, she portrayed them as weak in this fear and persecution of young and old Jewish people.

The anonymous diarist, hiding in the bunker during the Warsaw ghetto uprising, heard a conversation between the Germans… full of irony and sadism… The Germans think they are right. We are the murderers, [whereas] they want to be the model example of ethics and humaneness… This terrible hatred towards us – hunted and tortured – acted like salt poured on an open wound. Their discussion ended with a vile laughter: He who didn't hear it, spared himself a great deal of perturbation.'[47] The diarist was shaken by the depth of contempt toward the Jews, which still had the capacity to shock and hurt her, even after years of persecution in the ghetto. It shows their oppressors as sadistic, men who not only inflicted such violence as a perceived necessity but derived enjoyment from their actions.

Adapting to German Behaviour

In 1941 Lubiński faced aggression from Germans after arriving late with goods to Bałuty Market, dubbed by Oskar Singer the 'heart and brains of the ghetto' in Łódź.[48] Lubiński wrote that 'when we came to Bałucki Market with the merchandise, the Germans yelled at us for being so late. Seeing what was going on, I just put the goods down and went away.'[49] His only recourse against German aggression was to escape their presence. Fogel described a theft from his workplace (in food distribution) in May 1942. But he did not condemn the thieves: 'No wonder everyone's greedy these days, especially when they see that everyone takes everything without repercussions. It's a good thing they took those things, otherwise they'd fall into the hands of those really skilled thieves who hold high offices... or they'd go to the commune, the city, to the Germans.'[50] The ghetto inmates adapted to their surroundings and learned how best to survive in them, including stealing. With their

[47] Dreifuss (Ben-Sasson), "Hell Has Risen to the Surface of the Earth", p. 38.
[48] Oskar Singer, quoted in Podolska, *Traces of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto*, p. 24.
[49] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 167.
[50] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 93.

morality adapted, there was a clear benefit in the goods not falling into German hands, reflecting a trope of 'us' and 'them' which justified previously unacceptable behaviours under the new moral standard. Later, in July 1944, the author of diary 9 described an incident when a cart of rotten cabbages fell onto the square, and ghetto inhabitants 'swarming on it like locusts, pouncing on it like it was treasure…so the Germans taught us.'[51] Her sarcasm simultaneously acknowledges the Nazi treatment of the ghetto population and explains that this necessitated a decrease in pre-war standards of morality – a collective survival method necessitated by the German occupation.

Beasts and Devils

On 22nd July 1944, Łaski questioned how Hitler, 'the number 1 enemy of humanity' was still alive and attributed his survival to a 'devilish power' protecting him from death.[52] This comparison dehumanized the Nazi leader, suggesting that he was otherworldly in his actions and his apparent inability to die. Łaski was the only diary to suggest Hitler existed beyond the realms of human beings, though several made this connection with other Nazis, primarily those who directly inflicted violence upon the ghetto Jews. An infamous SS guard of the Warsaw ghetto (now known to be Josef Blösche) was dubbed 'Frankenstein' by inmates. In his account Gombiński listed 'Frankenstein'[53] as a Nazi guard. Brzezińska, too, knew of Blösche: 'the notorious murderer officer Frankenstein, who, with his own hands, committed the murder of 1,000 Jews.'[54] Szpigielman reported his violence, dubbing him a 'some kind of psychopath – that is beyond doubt.'[55] Berg reported: 'Apparently this soldier cannot go to sleep unless he has a few victims to his credit: he is a real sadist.' She added: 'when I see him from a distance I shudder.'[56] His reputation as a violent tormentor both at the gates and inside the ghetto itself gained him the epithet of Mary Shelley's monster. The use of this literary reference was part of ghetto vocabulary, which utilised animalistic language to describe Nazi behaviour. Berg described Blösche's appearance: 'He looks like

[51] ŻIH, 302/9, p. 2.
[52] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 21.
[53] ŻIH, 302/38, p. 12/6.
[54] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 8/6.
[55] ŻIH, 302/195, p. 101.
[56] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 130.

an ape: small and stocky, with a swarthy grimacing face.'[57] Neuding wrote that the Germans were planning 'bestial crimes.'[58] She later called them 'beasts in human form'[59] as well as 'torturers' who 'always shoot their target.'[60] Unbeknownst to the other diarists, Czerniaków knew of Blösche, and attempted to curtail his violence. On 10th June 1942 he visited the Gestapo and 'raised the question of the "Frankenstein" who keeps shooting people every day at one of the gates.'[61] He did not record any response to this question, further emphasising his powerlessness. Brzezińska described the 'monstrous atrocities' committed in the ghetto, and of thousands of Jews 'murdered in a bestial manner.'[62] Łaski believed Nazi soldiers to be a new kind of creature, the 'Germanohyena',[63] suggesting both aggressive and manic behaviour. Witold Dobrzański witnessed 'the German bestiality' of the guards.[64] Sierakowiak, on 20th July 1941 questioned how the Germans are winning the war: 'So far, the bloody beasts keep moving on. All of the Devil's power must be helping them.'[65] Szac-Wajnkranc promised her deported cousin: 'Not only your cousins will avenge you, but all free people, all people, who want to end the wicked and cruel creatures, who have taken leave of their senses, their heart, conscience and ceased to be human.'[66] Szpigielman described the 'disgusting, slimy, jelly octopus beasts still crawling around the European continent.'[67] Their detachment of the Nazis from humanity was rooted in the diarists difficulty to understand the atrocious acts they witnessed and experienced. The diarists also emphasised the bestial, animalistic nature of the Nazi perpetrators, the hunters who perceived the Jews to be their prey. These comparisons severed the Nazis from the human world and transferred them to the animal kingdom or within an incomprehensible, otherworldly universe. This served a two-fold purpose: it emphasised the abhorrent behaviour of the enemy and, by contrast, reaffirmed their own humanity.

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[57] Ibid.
[58] ŻIH, 302/159, p. 2.
[59] Ibid, p. 7.
[60] Ibid, p. 10.
[61] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 365.
[62] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 18.
[63] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 19.
[64] ŻIH, 302/7, pp. 6-7.
[65] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 113.
[66] Ibid.
[67] ŻIH, 302/195, p. 298.

On 1st May 1942, Czerniaków recorded: 'Before 8 in the morning, a call from the *Kommissar* ordering me to report at 8 A.M. at Brühl Palace. In view of yesterday's panic,[68] I thought some evil development was in store. It turns out that some Propaganda functionaries had arrived.'[69] Though he does not attribute this 'evil' to anyone in particular, it implicitly reveals his perception of Nazi treatment of the Jews and, specifically, of any deportation plans. Hannah Arendt posited the notion that 'the trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him' and, more worryingly, 'the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal.'[70] For researchers and scholars there is a risk that dubbing Nazis as 'evil' can create an unhelpful category which diminishes the idea that genocides can happen again and affect anyone. However, extreme language, using words like 'evil', was precisely the method used by contemporaneous Jews to describe their perpetrators. It was rooted in emotion: fear, pain, and anger were commonplace. To survive they were forced to view the Germans as their enemy, by the Germans. Nazi anti-Jewish rhetoric created the ghetto and was the direct reason for their presence there. Many responded by fervently declaring the Germans, and (less often) Hitler himself, as their enemy. This was the strongest written rhetoric they could employ to emphasise the realities of their experiences. It was in direct response to their perpetrators who believed, in the words of Joseph Goebbels, the Jews in the ghettos were 'no longer human beings, they are animals.'[71] The written experiences of ghetto diarists emphasized (to themselves and to any potential future readers) that the perpetrators had ceased to be human through their cruelty toward unarmed, civilian men, women, and children. Ultimately, the diarists believed that only those who had shed their humanity could perpetrate such acts and only within this framework could they even partially comprehend such crimes.

Revenge

Diarists expressed their desire for revenge in words in lieu of any other suitable recourse in their present. Fogelman, knowing the deportees had gone to their death, wished to 'avenge

[68] Rumours of deportations had begun to circulate in the ghetto.
[69] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 348.
[70] Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, p. 276.
[71] Goebbles in his diary, quoted in: Dan Michman, *The Emergence of Jewish Ghettos during the Holocaust* (New York, 2011), p. 70.

the innocent blood' of Warsaw's Jews.[72] Berg, singing with her school group invoked the story of the Exodus when she 'thundered out the ten plagues that every Jew in the ghetto wishes upon the Nazis.'[73] The experience of the Germans from the beginning of the war included physical violence toward women and children. Szac-Wajnkranc, in her 'Zosia' story, heard Zosia comfort her mother by saying: 'After the war I will go from town to town, from country to country and I will say to everyone how the Germans tortured us, and everyone will understand, and we will have revenge on the Hitlerites.'[74] When Szac-Wajnkranc witnessed a German officer cut a young boy's uvula out, she noted that the boy stuck his tongue out because he 'was too weak to throw himself at the enemy and in this way, he was able to express his hatred and contempt.'[75] Her writing expressed a proud defiance that the young Jewish child was rebelling against the German officer, and she concludes the account by adding: 'Look, German! Jewish children show you their tongue, hating your cruelty and your strength![76] These incidents, presented consecutively, are especially shocking due to the violence toward children. She also addressed her murdered cousin's uncle (living in Moscow): 'Alusia's Uncle! Avenge! Remember your murdered family in Poland, of your brothers, sisters, and their children.'[77] Szac-Wajnkranc appealed to family members outside of Poland to bring the Nazis to justice. During the deportations it became obvious that the Nazis had intensified their violent treatment of the ghetto populations, removing thousands to an unknown destination which many believed to be death. As more family members, friends, and acquaintances were murdered, the desire for revenge was reframed and the obligation was shared with the wider world, as well as the Jewish population.

On 27th May 1942 Fogel described the Germans who 'stand around us with whips, they rush us and give out lashes.'[78] Despite this pain and degradation he added 'we must survive this

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[72] ŻIH, 302/35, p. 8.
[73] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 110.
[74] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 48.
[75] Ibid, p. 26/49.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid, p. 28/51.
[78] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 99.

also. It can't be like this forever, the day of liberation and vengeance will come.'[79] As well as enduring the physical trauma of having to work under the threat of being beaten, Fogel reassured himself and any future reader that he retained hope that the Germans will lose and that 'we' will survive. He retained a belief in a collective Jewish survival in the face of the German attempt to destroy them which, in May 1942, was succeeding. In mourning her husband, Neuding described how her family 'will always remember how he never lost his belief in the defeat of the enemy.'[80] Fogel reported a rumour that the war would end in 1942, exclaiming: 'Still, may it be as the Jews are saying! Otherwise we won't last!'[81] Hope in the defeat of the Germans was rarely abandoned in the diaries, even when it coincided with the (tragically accurate) realisation that as the war continued, the majority of the Jewish population would not live to see it.

<u>Germans</u>

The Nazi soldiers who interacted with the Jewish ghetto inmates were perceived as cruel and devoid of humanity by several diarists. The further removed idea of the German nation was not subjected to as much scrutiny. The extent of the knowledge the German public possessed about the crimes of the Holocaust is a complicated avenue of research which is beyond the realms of this thesis, however, the diarists on occasion explored whether there were humane and just Germans. The diarists grappled with the idea of culpability of the Germans as a national group. For some diarists the German people were as culpable as Hitler and the Nazi Party. On 12th August 1941 Sierakowiak concluded: 'Germans are Germans!'[82] His experience of these soldiers and officials led him to conclude that the Germans were a homogenous nation of perpetrators and were equally culpable. Similarly in his last entry on 3rd August 1944 Łaski questioned: 'is it not better not to be in a world where there are 80 millions of Germans [sic]?'[83] Berg updated her diary with the Nazi progress in Operation Barbarossa in September 1941. She questioned: 'Why is Berlin still intact? Germany must be wiped off the face of the earth. Such a people should not be

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[79] Ibid.
[80] ŻIH, 302/159, p. 13.
[81] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 128.
[82] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 119.
[83] YVA, 0.33/1032, p. 33.

allowed to exist. Not only are the uniformed Nazis criminals, but all the Germans, the whole civilian population, which enjoys the fruits of the looting and murders committed by their husbands and fathers.'[84]

The group behaviour of Germans was contrasted with their individual activities. Ringelblum wrote 'it's characteristic that when alone individual Germans behave humane.'[85] A minority of the diarists included in this study agreed with Ringelblum that humanity was possible, including Korczak. In his last entry before deportation in August 1942 he observed a guard outside his window, who could shoot him if he wished. 'He has no orders to shot. And perhaps he was a village teacher in civilian life, or a notary or street sweeper in Leipzig, a waiter in Cologne? What would he do if I nodded to him? Waved my hand in a friendly gesture? Perhaps he doesn't even know that things are – as they are? He may have arrived only yesterday, from far away.'[86] Korczak, in this poignant entry, sought humanity in his perpetrator and imagined the possibility of a connection with someone he believed could be an ordinary man.

Brzezińska received a knock on the door from a 'young German in uniform'[87] who she was initially frightened of because he discovered her hiding place. He offered her son sweets and then asked her if she 'didn't think there were some among the Germans who didn't condemn what was happening in the ghetto.'[88] This rare incident of a German soldier who refrained from exposing a hiding Jewish woman and child, shared food and conversed with them is, as with Korczak, entirely contrary to what would be expected of such an exchange. Brzezińska noted 'During the time of our conversation words of assurance came from his mouth, that soon another time would come – a better time in which respect for all people would triumph.'[89] As with Korczak's 'village teacher' or 'waiter,' Brzezińska's experience suggests a rare instance of an ordinary German who not only regretted their role in the

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[84] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 86.
[85] Sloan, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 168.
[86] Zeitlin, *Janusz Korczak*, p. 115.
[87] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 29.
[88] Ibid, p. 30.
[89] Ibid

destruction of the Jewish people, but expressed this to a Jewish person, who was able to record it. The few instances of good or ordinary Germans stood in contrast to the numerous examples of violence and cruel Nazi soldiers which affected their view of the German nation, from whom the guilt of their 'husbands and fathers' could not be disconnected. The diarists' interpretation of German progress and experience with individual Germans led them to conclude that the German people and nation should be the eventual victim of the war.

Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian Guards

As well as German soldiers and Nazi officials, inmates were forced to engage with individuals from Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine who had joined the German armed forces. Individuals from Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Ukraine (among other places)[90] joined units of the Wehrmacht, Waffen SS, and the auxiliary police.[91] They were subordinate to Nazi authority, but they were in a position of power over inmates.

A guard being Jewish, or "Aryan" was the most significant categorization for the diarists and most did not use nationality to distinguish between their guards, referring to them as Nazis, Germans, or Hitlerites. However, three Warsaw diarists specifically reference some of their persecutors as being from Eastern European countries. Brzezińska reported that 'The Germans, Ukrainians and Lithuanians burst into people's homes and beat them there or took them out to the street and shot them there'[92] thus amalgamating them to one violent enemy working together against the Jews. Szac-Wajnkranc did not exclude these men from her acerbic commentary, instrumental as they were in her escape from the ghetto. When trying to leave, Lithuanian guards observed her ID document, 'of which they couldn't understand a word.' They demanded their watches as a bribe but warned the group if they were 'caught on the road out by anyone else, they will be shot and the Lithuanian '"guard" will not say that they let us pass. What can we do? Of course, we agree.'[93] Gombiński, too,

[90] Olesya Khromeychuk, 'Ukrainians in the German Armed Forces During the Second World War', *History: The Journal of the History Association*, Vol. 100, No. 5 (343) (December 2015), p. 705.
[91] Ibid.
[92] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 16.
[93] ŻIH, 302/133, pp. 62-63.

witnessed the participation of Lithuanians, Latvians, and Ukrainians, as well as 'Polish Germans' in the *Aktion*. They occupied the 'secondary, subordinate role, they are the "allies".'[94] Of the 'Polish Germans' in the SD who 'have not grown up with these tasks, they understand Polish language, they are too soft, dangerously open to requests, begging and bribes.'[95] By contrast, 'the others – the reliable Ukrainians, the Lithuanians in black uniforms, and the Latvians… The Ukrainians are the best among them. The Latvians and Lithuanians with their blank, wooden faces, you cannot see what they are thinking. They goad automatically, beat automatically, shoot automatically. They are not people, they are machines. The Ukrainians on the other hand are reliable, you can see their personal stake in the work, their panache, their imagination.'[96] This condemnation of all non-German participants criticises the Lithuanians and Latvians for simply carrying out German orders unthinkingly, without the heart to stop them hurting Jews, nor the zeal for the terror which Gombiński believed the Ukrainians had. The connectedness between the inmates and the 'Polish Germans' made the work more difficult for them than the other, more removed soldiers, both linguistically and geographically.

Persecutors

The narrative of assigning Jews during the Holocaust as victims and, at most, collaborators, stems from Raul Hilberg's model of 'Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders' as exemplified in his book of the same name, published in 1992. Amy Simon's work on Jewish perceptions of the perpetrators 'provides an alternative categorization of behaviour during the Holocaust' to the three groups identified by Hilberg.[97] This thesis adopts Simon's proposed alternate category of 'Jewish persecutor,'[98] emphasising that though Jews should not be categorised as perpetrators, there is nuance within the designation of 'victim'. This section analyses the diarists' response to the Jews perceived to be oppressing or harming the Jewish community or individuals in some way. This included the Jewish authorities, here a term used to refer to both the Jewish Order Service and the *Judenrat* itself, including the Council leaders:

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[94] ŻIH, 302/38, p. 55.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Simon, Surrounded by the Hunter on All Sides, pp. 3-4.
[98] Ibid, p. 36.

Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski in Łódź and Adam Czerniaków in Warsaw. Their personalities and behaviour led to a great distinction in the perception of ghetto inhabitants.

Czerniaków, Rumkowski, and the *Judenrat*

For Hannah Arendt the behaviour of the *Judenräte* was indefensible. 'To a Jew this role of the Jewish leaders in the destruction of their own people is undoubtedly the darkest chapter of the whole dark story…'[99] This argument, developed in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), stated that: 'if the Jewish people had really been unorganized and leaderless, there would have been chaos and plenty of misery, but the total number of victims would hardly have been between four and a half and six million people.'[100] Hilberg, however, came to adopt a more understanding view than Arendt, concluding that: 'The Jewish leaders were in the cauldron themselves. They too were victims. How, in these circumstances, did they judge their own positions? The fewest of them would speak of wielding power, although they were conscious of knowing more than the Jewish multitude and of making decisions for the whole community. They did not think that they enjoyed undeserved privileges, even though they were aware that they ate better and were housed more spaciously than most other Jews. They believed that their service was an obligation, and they were convinced with absolute certainty that they carried the entire burden of caring for the Jewish population.'[101]

This section argues that daily life provides an important counterpoint to Arendt's argument. The Jewish ghetto communities of Warsaw and Łódź (these are not the only ghettos examined by Arendt, but she does rely heavily on both to make her argument) reached a form of organised and somewhat productive daily functioning in support of the German war machine. The point of deportations would likely have come earlier had Jews not been confined to living in ghettos and producing goods of value to the German war effort. Lucy Dawidowicz ultimately concluded that 'their objectives were, so to speak, congruent with the temporary interests of the German army, which they were outfitting and supplying and

[99] Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, p. 117.
[100] Ibid, p. 125.
[101] Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, p. 116.

which, consequently, tried to prolong the existence of the ghettos. But if the Wehrmacht could not prevail against the Führer and the SS, how reasonable is the expectation that the *Judenrat* could have succeeded?'[102] Furthermore, Isiah Trunk, in his seminal work *Judenrat* (1972), surmised that 'Considering their tasks, cooperation with the authorities was unavoidable for the Councils. The very rationale for their existence would have vanished without it.'[103] The role of the *Judenräte* was essential for the Jewish community to continue, in the deformed everyday existence it came to have, for as long as possible. The Nazi decision, rooted as it was in ideology over logic, formalised at Wannsee would have been carried out regardless of a presence of Jewish councils.

Rumkowski ruled as an authoritarian figure and was portrayed in the diaries as an unpopular figure. His visibility in daily life was promoted through ghetto calendars, stamps, and currency which bore his likeness. Even diary entries from the first two years of the ghetto's existence (before the mass deportations) reveal inmates' negative opinion of him. In January 1941 Lubiński witnessed crowds during a demonstration[104] who wanted to break into Rumkowski's apartment, likely to express their demands or to physically assault him.[105] In the diaries he is often attributed responsibility for everyday events in the ghetto and for exercising control over the population and thus many inmates wanted to physically harm him and potentially to remove him as leader. Lubiński dubbed him 'Our King Chaim Rumkowski.'[106] He described how he was allocated 'a ration that Rumkowski gives for the week.'[107] Later, he called a food supply issue a 'great scandal that Rumkowski allowed,'[108] thus directly attributing these scenarios to Rumkowski. Fogel also described Rumkowski as directly responsible for ration levels and pricing: 'the chairman makes the rations smaller and the prices higher every time' and 'the chairman charges twice the price! It's an outrage to exploit the poor workers like that!'[109] Fogel's diary is littered with sarcastic comments

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[102] Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945* (London, 1990), p. 422.
[103] Trunk, *Judenrat,* p. 372.
[104] There were several demonstrations during the early years of the Łódź ghetto, usually by workers demanding more food, though the Jewish Police disbanded them with speed and violence.
[105] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 114.
[106] Ibid, p. 182.
[107] Ibid, p. 112.
[108] Ibid, p. 122.
[109] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, pp. 114-5.

about Rumkowski, who he views as actively collaborating with the Nazi authorities. At best Fogel questions Rumkowski's competency, accusing him of 'nonsense,' and dubbing him a liar 'whose lips never uttered a single word of truth.'[110] At worst, he accused 'our chairman' of giving the Germans 'a helping hand by starving us!!!'[111] During an incident, Rumkowski tried to 'handle' a situation where Germans were searching inside Jewish houses, resulting in Rumkowski being 'at odds with Biebow' however 'they came to terms with each other; no wonder since it's one and the same business.'[112] In Warsaw, Czerniaków was aware of Rumkowski and his style of leadership. In May 1941 he wrote: 'Last night I was reading Rumkowski's newspaper. My eye was caught by his pronunciamento to "My people". His main concern is that "his people" do not bother him in the streets by handing him propositions and petitions. Instead, he suggests a letter box citing the street and number of the building where it is located.'[113] Czerniaków interpreted Rumkowski as an authoritarian figure, evidenced by his use of '*pronunciamento*' – an authoritarian or rebel pronouncement.[114] Czerniaków also did not view Łódź ghetto inmates as Rumkowski's people (nor the Warsaw ghetto inmates as "his" own) and the suggestion that they not approach him on the streets contrasts directly with Czerniaków's behaviour. On 17th April 1942, he noted: 'In the afternoon panic erupted in the ghetto. Stores are being closed. People are crowding in the streets in front of their apartments. To calm the population, I took a stroll through several streets.'[115] Rumkowski's authoritarian style of rule was noticed by Sierakowiak, too, who reported on 30th August 1941: 'Rumkowski gave a truly "Führer-like" speech in the afternoon.'[116] Hauser recorded Rumkowski's speech on the deportation: 'Speech by Rumkowski at 4. They want to take 13,000 children from us in 6 days.'[117] Here, Hauser's sentence, one of only three mentions of him in her diary, directly amalgamates those responsible for the deportations, the Nazi authorities, with Rumkowski who has facilitated the deportations. His method of saving the majority of the working Jewish

[110] Ibid, p. 74.
[111] Ibid, p. 103.
[112] Ibid, p. 162.
[113] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 236.
[114] Collins Dictionary Definition. Especially used in Spanish speaking countries. https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/pronunciamento [last accessed 24.5.22].
[115] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 343.
[116] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 124.
[117] Wiatr and Radziszewska, *Irene Hauser*, p. 62.

population by sending the children and elderly for deportation condemned him in the eyes of his contemporaries and ensured his position as one of the most controversial Jewish figures of the Holocaust.

By contrast, Czerniaków was a figure of ambiguity in Warsaw who divided the ghetto population, partly because his identity was uncertain: 'the question of whether Czerniaków was assimilated or not is open to debate.'[118] Person ultimately concludes that he 'was closer to Polish than Jewish culture.'[119] He spoke Polish and indeed wrote his diary in Polish but had frequently represented and engaged with the Jewish community of Warsaw prior to the war. In an entry regarding the creation of the ghetto in November 1940, Czerniaków himself noted that 'malicious people are referring to the ghetto as 'the Garden City Czerniaków.''[120] Ringelblum also reported the use this epithet in the same month.[121] These nicknames continued in the ghetto period, though were rarely used by any of the diarists featured here, perhaps due to generally being more assimilated than those of *Oneg Shabbat* or other, Yiddish-aligned ghetto residents. Szac-Wajnkranc described the '*trojka*' of personalities which defined the ghetto: Adam Czerniaków, Pinkiert and Rubinsztajn.[122] Of Czerniaków she wrote: 'the president of the Jewish community, who, if he were missing, would rule themselves. To whom would the Germans give the orders, who would have been responsible for us?'[123] Her sarcasm highlights the idea that Czerniaków was a conduit through which the German orders passed, rather than an authoritarian ruler controlling all ghetto affairs. He tried, however, to behave morally and for the good of the population, rather than allowing the rampant inequality of those favoured by the *Judenrat* leader (as occurred in Łódź). On 24th May 1941 he recorded that: 'Auerswald proposes that the heads of the 6 or 7 departments and I should receive a salary. I replied that so long as there was no money for the staff, neither I nor the other councilors should accept pay.'[124] Czerniaków tried to ensure that the *Judenrat* stood in solidarity. By contrast, he noted that Rumkowski's

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[118] Person, *Assimilated Jews*, p. 69.
[119] Ibid, pp. 69-70.
[120] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 212.
[121] Engelking and Leociak, *Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 71.
[122] Pinkiert owned the funeral home in the ghetto and Rubenstein was the ghetto beggar/jester.
[123] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 17.
[124] Ibid, p. 242.

newspaper article also featured: 'a tale about his visit to a prison which is under his authority. The better part of those imprisoned are Community officials.'[125] When Warsaw *Judenrat* members were arrested on 21st July 1942 Czerniaków 'wanted to leave with those arrested but was instructed to stay in the office.'[126]

Berg noted early in the ghetto period, in April 1941, that 'biting satirical remarks' were being 'directed against the ghetto "government" and its "ministers"' in the performances and skits in the *Femina* Theatre on Leszno Street.[127] Though she admitted that there were 'many apt references to certain bureaucratic gentlemen' she felt their portrayal of Czerniaków specifically was 'exaggerated and perhaps even unfair' because his 'position is far from enviable.'[128] She conceded: 'True, Czerniaków often rides in a car to meet with Governor Frank, but each time, he returns a broken man,'[129] showing Berg's understanding that even privileges, such as a car, came at a great cost. She later wrote of the winter-relief collections on the streets in November 1941, seeing Czerniaków and 'all the members of the council, stood in the street with collection boxes and stuck paper flowers in the lapels of the givers.'[130] Her lack of resentment toward Czerniaków is clear here in her mention of his altruistic duties to raise funds for vulnerable Warsaw citizens. Berg knew that his job was 'to bear with the complaints and reproaches of a starving, embittered and distrustful population.'[131] Berg's compassionate assessment of Czerniaków was rooted in his care for the community, a reality which is evident from Czerniaków's own diary. On 18th September 1941, he tried to appeal to the Nazi authorities through a logical argument, to improve the situation for the inmates: 'there has been a growing anxiety among the population which has a depressing effect, disrupting and slowing economic activity and contributing to many cases of mental depression.'[132]

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125 Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 236.
126 Ibid, p. 384.
127 Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 48.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
130 Ibid, p. 107.
131 Ibid, p. 49.
132 Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 280.

Gombiński poignantly eulogised Czerniaków following his suicide. Noting that the president was visited by an SS officer shortly before his death he aptly summarised the questions of the ghetto population: 'What did you speak about? Why today? What does his suicide mean? Mr President – not even a word? You couldn't tell us, or you didn't want to tell? Thousands of people are left with nothing – no thoughts, no advice, only guesswork because you left. Mr President, Mr President – what should we do?'[133] In his final letter to the *Judenrat*, Czerniaków explained his action, believing it to elucidate what the ghetto inmates should do: 'I am powerless, my heart trembles in sorrow and compassion. I can no longer bear all this. My act will show everyone the right thing to do.'[134] Gombiński concluded his diary section with: 'There is no answer. Adam Czerniaków's calm, frozen face is peaceful.'[135] This entry preceded his detailed description of the chaos of the deportations after Czerniaków's suicide, aptly highlighting the perspective of the majority of the Warsaw Ghetto, who felt abandoned by their President. Czerniaków did not leave a letter to the wider ghetto population. His peace described by Gombiński is contrasted with the turmoil the rest of the population experienced in July 1942. This paragraph is then followed by a line separating it from the succeeding paragraph, symbolising the turning point of Czerniaków's suicide for the ghetto population. Czerniaków was a much less vilified figure than Rumkowski due to his approach to ruling and later his response to the Nazi mass deportations. Despite the issues elaborated on by Gombiński and Berg, his decision to commit suicide ensured that he was not connected to the mass deportations in the way Rumkowski is inextricably connected to the event in the Łódź diaries. Czerniaków did not utilise his personality to craft the image of a leader in Warsaw. By contrast the figure of Chaim Rumkowski was a significantly larger presence in the Łódź ghetto, affecting the daily lives of the diarists, who responded with an animosity which only intensified with his involvement in the deportations. His connection to the Nazi authorities was interpreted by the diarists as reciprocal, with Rumkowski obtaining additional benefits at the direct expense of the ghetto inhabitants – privileges which Czerniaków refused for himself and the *Judenrat*. Though they generally were aware that Rumkowski did not create any

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[133] ŻIH, 302/133, p. 40.
[134] Kermisz, 'Introduction,' in Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 23.
[135] Ibid.

deportation orders, his method of implementation in asking inhabitants to send their children to be deported left him susceptible to the contempt of the ghetto population. Though Rumkowski was unable to affect the deportations, his response to them condemned him in the diarists' view.

There was little nuance regarding Rumkowski, who was recorded as being worse than the Germans themselves, as well as being entirely intertwined with them. That he was Jewish and, in the eyes of the diarists, colluded with the Nazi authorities to simultaneously improve his own life and further persecution of the ghetto population was deemed unforgiveable. His pragmatic approach to the deportations was questionable and controversial and remains so to this day, however, for the diarists Rumkowski himself was the implementor of the Nazi policy. Few diarists show any understanding for Rumkowski and his position, influenced by his displays of authority, which he exercised frequently in the ghetto.

Jewish Order Service

The Jewish Order Service was an institution of the *Judenrat*, created by German order in both Warsaw and Łódź.[136] At its peak the Warsaw Jewish police had 2,000 members (making it the largest ghetto Jewish police) and the Łódź Jewish police had 600.[137] Members of the Jewish police received additional benefits such as larger rations and the Nazi authorities saved manpower and resources in controlling the ghetto, creating a mutually beneficial relationship. The Order Service lay between the Nazi authorities, the *Judenrat* and the Jewish ghetto population, occupying a position of limited but nonetheless significant authority which left them in a complex and troublesome position. The joy expressed by some ghetto inhabitants, including Berg, at their creation in December 1940 was rooted in their belief that the ghetto may function as an autonomous society, guarded by their own people rather than Nazis. She felt 'a strange and utterly illogical feeling of satisfaction when I see a Jewish policeman at a crossing - such policemen were completely unknown in pre-

[136] There is no known instance of a Jewish order leading to the creation of a Jewish Ghetto Police. From: Weiss, Aharon, Relations between the *Judenrat* and the Jewish Police, Yad Vashem Resource Centre.
[137] Corni, *Hitler's Ghettos*, p. 108.

war Poland.'[138] Berg described their duties: 'From time to time Gestapo cars rush by, paying no attention whatsoever to the Jewish policemen's directions, and perfectly indifferent as to whether they run people over or not.'[139] Gombiński, too, explained the ghetto's reaction to a Jewish police force, as well as their immediate awareness of the hierarchy under which they operated: 'On the streets of the ghetto, they welcomed these representatives of the native authorities with a smile that was a mixture of kindness and irony. They knew, they guessed, that they would have little effect, they could do little.'[140] This aptly summarises the inherent constraint the Jewish police had in their authority - they were subordinate to the Germans in every respect from the moment of their creation. Despite initial gratification at the sight of a Jewish police force, unthinkable in pre-war Poland, the Jewish police forces in both ghettos were sources of contention for the wider populations. The first commander of the Jewish police in Warsaw, Józef Szeryński, was wounded when he was shot by the Jewish resistance in August 1942. He survived but later committed suicide.[141] His replacement, Jakub Lejkin was assassinated by a member of the resistance two months later.[142] Both were viewed as traitorous collaborators of the Nazi occupiers. The inmates' judgement of these individuals, and the ghetto police in general, was confirmed in Israel after its establishment. The Nazis and Nazi Collaborators (Punishment) Law 5710/1950 attempted to identify and bring to justice ghetto policemen and other collaborators who entered Israel after the war.[143]

Katarzyna Person explains that Szeryński was hated as the head of 'a collection of smugglers, Gestapo informers, war profiteers, assimilated young attorneys, and converts.'[144] The most significant mention in the diaries of the Jewish police prior to the deportations concerned smuggling or violence. Person notes that *Oneg Shabbat* documented the Order Service as 'an essential element of this bitter reality… the existence of the Jewish Order Service – which was seen as a collaborationist organization and one that

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[138] Shneiderman and Pentlin, *The Diary of Mary Berg*, p. 34.
[139] Ibid.
[140] ŻIH, 302/38, p. 2.
[141] Person, *Warsaw Ghetto Police*, p. 191.
[142] Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: A Jewish Tragedy* (London, 1987), p. 485.
[143] Trunk, *Judenrat*, pp. 561-2.
[144] Person, *Warsaw Ghetto Police*, p. 107.

betrayed its own community.'[145] She emphasises that the actions of the Jewish police were: 'above all else the result of the German policy aimed at the demoralization of the Jewish Order Service but also of the wartime reality: the brutality of everyday life in the ghetto and the shifting of acceptable behavioural boundaries.'[146] This was rarely recognised by the individual diarists, who came to categorise the police officers as a crucial component of the 'brutality of everyday life' Person describes. An exception to this near universal dislike was Szpigielman. He reported the 'hatred and contempt' of the ghetto population from the Order Service, partly due to its corruption.[147] He did add, however, that he 'tried to be objective in presenting the facts [of their corruption], the root of all evil, lies in the occupants, in creating these demoralising conditions for the Jews.'[148] In a similar vein, on 12th August 1941, Sierakowiak explained a 'devilish German idea: the ghetto Jews will sentence and hang other Jews!'[149] Sierakowiak generally regarded ghetto authorities with contempt but his knowledge of the true culprit, as well as Szpigielman's attempt at objectivity highlights the crucial point for modern day readers: that 'the service became a tool, and finally, with the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto, a victim itself of the Holocaust.'[150]

The diarists here, with the exception of those associated with the *Judenrat* institutions, agree with this sentiment, and used some of their diary space to record what they perceived as crimes and injustices against their own people. It was well known that some guards would accept bribes and look the other way when smugglers were attempting to exit or enter the ghetto. Lubiński described workers who left the ghetto to perform manual labour: 'before leaving they are searched by a Jewish policeman.'[151] He added that: 'the search is so that nobody appropriates gold, silver or diamonds, which might be hidden within the walls by the Jews before they had left the city to go to the ghetto.'[152] The use of Jewish

[145] Ibid, p. 108.
[146] Person, *Warsaw Ghetto Police*, p. 210.
[147] ŻIH, 302/195, p. 40.
[148] Ibid, p. 50.
[149] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 119.
[150] Ibid, pp. 210-211.
[151] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 130.
[152] Ibid, pp. 130-1.

policeman to enforce rules on what goods entered and exited the ghetto was a tactic utilised by the Germans to save their own resources, but it also meant that much of the hostility was directed at the Jewish police officers who manned the gates and streets. Fogel's friend Majłech took some confiscated items left behind when the German Jews were deported from the ghetto in May 1942 and was caught by a Jewish police officer who took him to the police station. 'They had no problems stealing themselves, but he was handed over to the police, because it was a good occasion to use him as a cover for their own deeds.'[153] He threatened to expose them as thieves as well, but he was imprisoned for several weeks for this transgression.

In an early account featuring the Jewish police, the author of diary 191 was arrested and briefly imprisoned in the first two months of the Łódź ghetto's existence. His arrest was made by a Jewish policeman and, though he tried to plead with the officer for his freedom, he was taken to the ghetto prison. The policeman also beat him prior to his arrest.[154] During his experience, he observed the corruption in the Central Prison, whereby those with privilege were able to obtain extra comforts to make their stay more bearable, none of which the author was able to receive. Two of his cellmates 'did not look unwell from the lack of food' despite the fact that 'they did not have food from home, but from the policemen they have bribed.'[155] His wife attempted to visit him and bring food, but was informed that he was not allowed visitors.[156] They later allowed her to do so for two days, before stopping this.[157] When he remarked that he could live on the portions the smugglers live on in the prison he was ordered to stand and beaten by a police officer. The smuggler in the cell received better portions because 'the police get something from it.'[158] So traumatic was his sojourn in prison that the author concluded his account in December 1940 by emphasising that he was 'grateful for his freedom to people who are hardworking and honest, and whose names I will remember for the rest of my life.'[159] His experience was

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[153] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, pp. 93-4
[154] ŻIH, 302/191, p. 2.
[155] Ibid, p. 8.
[156] Ibid, p. 7.
[157] Ibid, p. 9.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid, p. 10.

entirely within the ghetto and caused by Jewish police officers, which left him with the view that they were corrupt and violent. Lubiński also noted of the use of the Jewish police in suppressing a worker's demonstration[160] and in moving demonstrators from Rumkowski's apartments.[161] His family also experienced a more direct encounter with the Jewish police. In April 1941 'We wanted to make *cholent* for Saturday. As it turned out, you have to first get permission from the rabbi and then you can go to the baker. As I was told, the queue to the rabbi was huge (several hundred people), chaos beyond, people pulling one another hair and fighting for real. And when the policeman came, he just started beating people on the heads with a baton. In the end, Nysek[162] did not get a number. In a word, in order to be able to put on the cholent for Saturday, you have to have support from the rabbi and the baker.'[163] The violence of the police was used to enforce the inequality of the ghetto, and was often experienced by those without connections, such as Lubiński and the author of diary 191.

Neuding harboured contempt for the behaviour of the Jewish police during and after her husband's execution. In an encounter with a Jewish officer when she asked for help in moving her husband's body she described the unwilling officer as 'later one of the most zealous co-killers of his own brothers.'[164] With the use of 'co-killer' she situated this particular officer as being as guilty as the Nazis for the destruction of the Jewish community, and unlike the Nazis as a murderer of his own people, his 'brothers,' suggesting the abnormality of his behaviour in murdering fellow Jews. Of the incident she summarised: 'the behaviour of this policeman was a clear indication of the level of our "security guards."'[165] Her sarcastic, mocking comment questions the level of competence of the Jewish police and reduces them to security staff doing the Germans' bidding. She later decried how 'the worst of the worst' 'grabbed their victims to deliver a fixed "quota" to the enemy to save their heads?'[166] Many were outraged that the Jewish police were willing to

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[160] Łagodzińska, *The Diary of Lolek Lubiński*, p. 122.
[161] Ibid, p. 114.
[162] His uncle.
[163] Ibid, p. 168.
[164] ŻIH, 302/159, p. 8.
[165] Ibid, p. 9.
[166] Ibid.

sacrifice the majority of the ghetto population in order to save themselves and their dependents. The contempt for the police was rooted in the fact that they, by nature of their role, ultimately worked for the Germans. Few appeared to help their own people, instead carrying out orders (and indeed acting for their own benefit) with apparent ardour. Person notes that 'their power was more limited than generally thought' but generally 'the policemen were strangers because the community declared their behaviour offensive and unfit for someone who claimed to be part of it.' Fogel's mother had an encounter with the Jewish police in June 1942: 'Mother was scared out of her wits today. The Jewish police, the so-called *Zonder-Komando*, came out of the blue to do a search, they went to the neighbors as well and found something there, but they couldn't find anything at our place, because we have nothing. They turned everything upside down, so Mother had a lot of cleaning to do and was afraid. It's a good thing that things ended like that!'[167]

Czerniaków made several comments about Jewish individuals and organisations, namely 'the Thirteen,' commonly perceived as a Gestapo agency by ghetto inmates and functioned independently of the *Judenrat*. Czerniaków frequently attempted to curtail their powers in meetings with Auerswald by having them incorporated into the Jewish Order Service. In December 1940, he tried to emphasise that the Thirteen were in no way associated with the *Judenrat*: 'Gancwajch and Sternfeld[168] paid us a visit. I asked them not to use the name of the *Judenrat* in their announcements.'[169] In addition, Gancwajch attempted to have Czerniaków removed from his position. He noted: 'Gancwajch had a meeting with his cabal and is mouthing his threats again.'[170] By designating the Thirteen as a 'cabal,' Czerniaków stressed the covert and underhanded operations of the Thirteen, in comparison with the legal *Judenrat*. After the Thirteen had been officially disbanded in August 1941, Gancwajch visited Czerniaków, in February 1942: 'I had a visit in my office from Gancwajch with pleas of a personal nature. What a despicable, ugly creature.'[171] He is much more critical, descriptive, and honest in his assessment of Gancwajch than any Nazi officials, because

[167] Sinnreich, *Hersz Fogel*, p. 104.
[168] Members of the Thirteen.
[169] Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, p. 222.
[170] Ibid, p. 248.
[171] Ibid, p. 330.

there would be no consequences if his diary were to be discovered and his feelings for the Thirteen leader revealed. This would not be the case if he described Nazi officials in the same manner. By contrast, Czerniaków praised the Jewish Order Service: 'Beggars are the plague of the street. Among them are many professionals and children who keep on moaning monotonously, making it difficult for anybody to work. To curb this the Order Service posted sentries. Yesterday in the afternoon I observed how a patrolman resolved the problem. In a matter-of-fact fashion he wards them off, away from my window, with handouts. No policeman of any other nationality would act this way.'[172] This incident counterbalances most accounts featuring the Warsaw ghetto police. It reveals a helpful, even kind, act by a Jewish police officer, however that this occurred under Czerniaków's window emphasises the motivation for the officer to perform his duty. It is also obvious that Czerniaków would not view the police with contempt, having never been the recipient of their violence as other residents were. Lastly, he could not have felt betrayed by their actions as the wider population did because he was part of the same organisation which attempted to co-operate with the Nazi authorities to allow life to function. Their participation in the deportations cemented their betrayal in the eyes of the population, a reputation which Czerniaków absolved himself of through his suicide.

The animosity toward the Jewish police was intensified with the mass deportations in both ghettos. Their role in removing Jews from their homes and transporting them to the deportation point, the *Umschlagplatz*, cemented their role as corrupt officials who aided in the destruction of their own people. Diarists in both ghettos noted the presence and participation of the Jewish police in the initial round ups, though German participation increased when the deportations were not being executed efficiently enough. This did not absolve them in the eyes of the diarists, who respond with greater contempt at the behaviour of the Jewish police than that of the Nazi authorities. As the *Szpera* occurred, Fogel noted: 'Of course, the trucks were guarded by the police, firemen, etc.'[173] The participation of their own forces was, by the time of the deportations, a foregone conclusion. Their association with the Germans during the deportations was the final,

[172] Ibid, p. 262.
[173] Ibid, p. 149.

irrevocable blow for the reputation of the Order Service, conjoining them with the violent oppressor and finally severing them from the Jewish community. Fogelman observed how the Jewish police were essential components in the enactment of the *Aktion*. Of the first days of the deportation he wrote: 'The Jewish police were doing this, with help from the Germans.'[174] In his attempt to join his wife and children at the *Umschlagplatz*, he 'got a few kicks from the policeman and had to turn away.'[175] Here the 'few kicks' seem rather insignificant in light of the fact that Dawid had just lost his family, but they serve to show the frequent and needless violence from Jewish police officers toward Jewish civilians. Dawid was not a threat to the officers and was in fact attempting to join the crowds of Jews at the *Umschlagplatz* earmarked for deportation, thus inflating their 'quota' number for the day. Instead, the officer reacted with physical violence, turning a distraught husband and father away. Gombiński was critical of the behaviour of Jewish policemen who separated families. He witnessed how the men left behind tried to join their loved ones: 'So, they ask, so they beg, if they can go today, go as quickly as possible! Their requests meet a willing ear; there is understanding, there is kindness and a desire to help their fellow man! They go as quickly as possible, sure they will catch up with their wife and children, they will catch up with them.'[176] His acerbic description simultaneously shows the desperation of these men and the cruel exploitation by the policemen to fulfil their quota. It also highlights how ad-hoc and chaotic the deportation progress became, as Fogelman was refused the chance to follow his family.

Brzezińska's entry on the small girl's conversation with a Jewish police officer, previously analysed through the lens of family, also offers an insight into the behaviour expected of the Jewish police. Despite the child's pleas 'the police officer's heart could not be moved by this lament, he carried out his duties in cold blood'[177] and transported her to the *Umschlagplatz* for deportation. Two hours later she saw the girl's mother 'senseless' looking for her daughter.[178] Her judgement of the Jewish police officer is evident, and his

[174] ŻIH, 302/35, p. 3.
[175] Ibid, p. 4.
[176] ŻIH, 302/38, pp. 47-48.
[177] ŻIH, 302/21, p. 17.
[178] Ibid.

completion of his task 'in cold blood' portrays him as cruel and devoid of emotion, focused on his task. At the beginning of the deportations she noted, as others did with the Germans discussed above, that the Jewish police were ignoring the *legitimacja* cards that some women and children had through their working husbands and fathers.[179] They became so desperate 'to fill the quota the Jewish police officers were grabbing small children off the streets.' She believed: 'they didn't give a thought to the despairing parents, whose children never returned.'[180] As the deportations continued, she witnessed 'police officers in rickshaws transporting the elderly and children.'[181] For Brzezińska the Jewish Police's true failure and betrayal of the community of Warsaw lay in their role in destroying the children and the elderly – the most vulnerable in their society. They targeted those who were easier to transport (relative to able bodied young/middle aged adults) in order to save themselves and their own loved ones, without any compassion shown for the children of thousands of other Jewish residents. Any popularity the Jewish Order Service possessed in the early ghetto days experienced a gradual decline, before plummeting during the deportations. Their role in violently aiding the deportations sealed their place in the diaries as collaborators and murderers of their own people and were ultimately viewed with more contempt than the Germans were.

Conclusion

The diarists partially utilised their diaries as a space within which to make sense of their perpetrators and persecutors. These groups, especially the Nazi (or Nazi-affiliated) actors, were not the focus of the diaries, but they became more prominent during turbulent times such as the deportation or particularly violent episodes. Animalistic rhetoric was employed in order to better process what they witnessed and experienced. The crimes they witnessed and experienced were heinous and comprehensible only by asserting the monstrous nature of these acts, rendering those committing them as inhuman. By casting the perpetrators as devoid of human attributes, the Jewish diarists were able to distance themselves from this

[179] Ibid, p. 16.
[180] Ibid, p. 10.
[181] Ibid, p. 17.

behaviour and thought, and thus reaffirm their own humanity. Few shed their belief in eventual Nazi defeat, though hope faded that a majority of Jews would live to see this.

Regarding the persecutors, there is evidently a divergence in who Łódź diarists perceived as their 'enemy' and who was viewed as such in Warsaw. *Judenrat* leadership played a key role here where Rumkowski emerged contemporaneously to be the most hated figure in the Łódź ghetto, and this helped cement his controversial reputation which exists to this day. Czerniaków did not loom as large as Rumkowski and instead Warsaw diarists focused on the Order Service – both the organisation and individual members - who were seen as betrayers of their people. In Łódź, too, the police were figures of contempt. The intermediary position occupied by the Jewish institutions was initially a controversial one which prompted questions of loyalty and allegiance to the Germans which had, by the summer of 1942, intensified into a sense of betrayal and thus exclusion from the Jewish community. The focus on the Jewish police aligns the ghetto diarists with Browning's conclusions from Starachowice, whereby the victim group focused inward on their own community.[182] Revenge was sought by some diarists for both the perpetrators and the persecutors because they realised there was little retaliation available in the present.

[182] Browning, *Remembering Survival*, p. 293.

Conclusion

> 'In the afternoon an announcement was posted about the voluntary registration of men between the ages if eighteen and fifty for work in Poznań…I, too, considered the possibility of leaving, but because of my weakness and lethargy caused by hunger, I don't think I have enough strength to go. Besides, I would miss my books and "letters," notes and copybooks. Especially this diary.'
>
> – Dawid Sierakowiak, 27th May 1942.[1]

> 'The fight for personal rescue is becoming hopeless… But it doesn't matter. Because I can bring my account to an end and trust that it will see the light of day at the right time… and people will know what it was like…'
>
> – Stefan Szpigielman, May 1943.[2]

Not every diarist provides unequivocal justification for their diary or written account, but Sierakowiak and Szpigielman's dramatically different connections to their writing personifies the myriad of reasons for keeping a diary in the ghettos. For Sierakowiak, the horrible conditions of the Łódź ghetto were well known, in contrast to the Poznań labour camp. In the ghetto, he could compose letters and read his diary. The process of writing in his diary was so important to the teenager it provided him a reason to remain in the ghetto. He drew comfort from committing his thoughts and experiences to paper, and he was evidently a skilled writer. Writing during and after the Ghetto Uprising, Szpigielman, bore witness for a future audience and stressed that his writing was based upon personal memory, rather than institutional documentation.[3] These diaries, in contrast to the 'hope

[1] Adelson, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, p. 174.
[2] Janczewska, *Stefan Szpigielman*, p. 24.
[3] ŻIH, 302/195, p. 6.

for humanity'[4] message which has been applied to Anne Frank's diary, offer little by way of redemption.

The diaries, with their broad spectrum of styles, opinions, justifications, offer a complex mass of information on daily life in Nazi ghettos. Not created to be solely evidence of the perpetrator's crimes, these texts, as has been shown, focused more on the author's personal circumstances – especially the fate of themselves and their family. Diaries constitute one of the most personal insights into life during the Holocaust and thus are indispensable for the study of daily life during this catastrophic event. This thesis contributes to our understanding of everyday life and how this functions, adapts, and falters under the pressures of war and genocide. The inmates of the ghettos were without exception (though to varying degrees) forced to participate in daily life. Beggars or the homeless lying on the streets were unregistered and unemployed, and thus the least engaged with society (in a formal sense), resulting in their early deportation and severance from ghetto life. These individuals, and most other ghetto inmates, became part of the silent majority who did not record their account, or whose account was lost or destroyed. The existing diaries cannot speak for them, nor do they attempt to. This was part of the task set by the formal archival groups who admirably and explicitly aimed to document as much of ghetto society as possible. This thesis is partly based upon the need to expand our view beyond those who could express themselves at length and within a small, clearly defined context such as the *Oneg Shabbat* group or the Łódź archivists. By adopting a diarist-led approach, this thesis highlights how diaries – miraculous in their mere existence – are the foundation of an in-depth knowledge of daily life in the Holocaust. The 'victims' were complex individuals who cannot be explained by generalisations. Their insights are irreplaceable and have not been utilised deeply enough through the lens of daily life in individual diarists. The study contributes to our understanding of the Jewish people who experienced Holocaust, specifically Polish (and one Austrian) victims and their understanding of the catastrophic events. While they were victims of the Nazi genocide, the study shows with stark clarity their humanity, their complexity, and – through their writing

[4] Zapruder, *Salvaged Pages*, p. 7.

of a diary - their constant refusal (implicitly or explicitly) to be reduced to a nameless 'victim' by their perpetrators. Some turned to diary writing as a result of the extremity of their circumstances, others were evidently well suited to writing. The blending of more erudite or descriptive texts with fragmentary, and less expressive texts results in a comprehensive portrayal of responses to everyday life within the ghetto context. Factual descriptions or reproductions of ghetto life were not the aim of this thesis, rather the attitudes of those who lived in the closed environments and how it led them to adjust and adapt (or at least attempt to) in every aspect of their existence.

Motivation for beginning diaries was often not discussed explicitly. Some, such as Berg and Czerniaków, planned or at least envisaged the potential for publication, whereas others were unsure whether they or the pages they wrote would exist after the war given neither were guaranteed survival. The opinions, thoughts, and experiences depicted within these diaries make them indispensable sources of daily life in the ghettos, both through the specific details, and the fact that they were created within this environment. The individual diarists, in contrast to archival groups, did not endeavour to document their society as a whole through collection of multiple source materials. Instead, they described their own lives and, in doing so, provided a myriad of perspectives on detailed aspects of daily live within the ghetto society. The thesis shows that the diarists were wholly human and posits that this was a key motivation for diary writing: to reassert their humanity in response to witnessing violence every day. The diarists here conform to Bethke's suggestion that while ideas of resisting cannot be dismissed outright: 'the sense of performing an act of "resistance" against the German plans was seldom uppermost in people's minds at the time.'[5] Their focus is bound in the personal aspects of their lives. With the exception of the *Judenrat* workers, their outlook was almost entirely focused on those they knew and what events occurred around them, and at times about the wider situation of the war. Those who were involved in the *Judenrat* offer an institutional, but no less instructive view of daily life. By heeding the repetition of themes present across the case study of diaries, it was possible to structure the thesis around these topics. The theories of everyday life and microhistory

[5] Bethke, *Dance on the Razor's* Edge, p. 160.

provide the foundation upon which these diarist-led themes were discussed, with 'granular details' being valuable and instructive as showing the contours of daily life as it occurred in the ghetto. As is evident from each chapter, the notion of any 'normal' life in the ghettos is an inappropriate one. However, to categorise all life within the ghetto as heroic (in the context of armed resistance) or to assert that inmates were awaiting death for the entire ghetto period belies the evidence provided in diaries about everyday life. The trajectory of the ghetto had periods of relative stability between deportations. This was a ghetto-specific, perverse form of stability, marred by small and constant adaptations to previously 'normal' facets of daily life such as food, family, time, and space. This was the direct result of the perpetrators and persecutors of ghetto inmates, who implemented policy changes, inflicted violence, and guarded the ghetto on a daily basis.

Several aspects of daily life in the ghetto are compared with the camps and (in Chapter Four on Time) the execution site. This is to emphasise the difference between these locations in the overall trajectory of the Holocaust, and to highlight the specificity of the ghetto and what daily life was like there, it was not a mere 'step' or 'stage' of the Holocaust but where hundreds of thousands of people lived and ultimately died. Others experienced camps after their time in the ghetto, but none (in this study) were able to record such experiences, so their reality is frozen in the ghetto. Analysis of the diarists' experience time helps to redress this longstanding notion. Instead, the diarists' experiences show that the past, present, and future were affected by the ghetto. Their present was wholly subjugated to Nazi demands, which they could scarcely control, and which impacted core functions such as sleep and the ability to respond to seasons, heretofore underexplored areas of research within the ghettos. These demands placed burdens on inmates and effected their health. Forages into the Jewish past were limited but designed to provide comfort in the threats which they had survived until the Nazi invasion. The future was grievously threatened, and many doubted theirs and their family's survival, but a consistent belief in an eventual Nazi defeat existed even for those, like Łaski, who navigated between believing they would be murdered, and the Nazis would be defeated. They understood, and feared, it would be witnessed by an ever-dwindling Jewish population, but nonetheless right would prevail and the diarists never abandoned the belief that this meant Nazi defeat and Hitler's death (especially for

Łaski and Fogel). As well as the ways in which inmates viewed their time living, the thesis provides balance to the notion that ghetto life was primarily about death, that inmates were awaiting death and therefore not living life. Death was indeed an unavoidable component of the ghettos, but there was great effort to live and, unquestionably, to outlast the Germans on a collective (if not individual) scale. Using the lens of time to read ghetto diaries highlights the prevalence of hope and perseverance, beyond what is generally expected from those with the vantage of hindsight who can generalise Jews in the ghetto as experiencing a 'living death'. Their attempt at living a daily life, even when severely restricted by a myriad of policies and realities designed to hasten their demise, counters this view. It does not lionize those who lived a daily life, but recognises their hope, a universal human trait, which many continued to have to some degree, even in the face of worsening conditions and tampered with their best judgment in the face of the evidence before them.

The Germanisation of space greatly affected the diarists, who experienced their exclusion from their own cities (or other locations), as well as their incarceration behind ghetto walls. The threat of violence prevented many (though not all, especially in Warsaw) from exiting the ghetto and engendered fear of the guards who manned the perimeter. The perpetrators and persecutors were predominantly associated with the physical control they enforced and the deportations. The Nazi perpetrators and the conditions their policies engendered were the main cause of the indescribability noted by most diarists. They precipitated the horrors of the deportation with starvation level rations, inadequate facilities, and constant threat of violence. The deportations then proved a critical juncture in daily life, shattering the notion that the German-endorsed workshops could save the population. The indecipherability of their oppressors is evidenced by language which separated them from humanity. They emphasised their animalistic nature, their otherworldliness, and thus providing, if not an explanation, then at least a framework through which to describe their experience. The participation of the Jewish Police in the wider Nazi operations was a source of pain for many diarists, who mistrusted them by dint of their association with the enemy. This evolved into contempt and a sense of betrayal during the deportations. While a daily life returned after the deportations it was characterised by deeper uncertainty over the

future, a sense that the only way to survive was to outlast the Nazis – both groups could not see the end of the war. One diary was written during the Ghetto Uprising, several more in hiding afterwards by those who witnessed it or were aware of its occurrence. This furthered the certainty that it was a race against time until Nazi defeat.

Food was a universally recognised catastrophe which was witnessed by all and experienced by the vast majority. The use of it as a tool of murder was suspected by many inmates. The effects of this policy were evident at the sight of starvation victims dead on ghetto streets, as reported by several diarists. They adapted to the ever-changing food situation (including decreasing rations, deteriorating quality, and resulting inequality) as best they could – by working at hard labour, sharing resources with family units, and envisaging a future which was embodied by food. Smuggling was widely recognised as a life-saving practice in Warsaw and was contrasted by the inability to smuggle in Łódź – and the resentment of the *Beirat* who did enjoy higher rations. Food engendered strong emotions in the diarists, prompting memories of Jewish celebrations and commemorations which were previously defined or marked by specific foods, and led to the modification of consumption practices. Diaries became part of the practice of consumption for the authors. They used their pages to account for their rations, evidencing their inadequate amount, potentially for posterity and certainly to reiterate to themselves what food they did possess as this was their barrier to starvation. They were also a space to describe the quality of the food, which was consistently lacking, thus reminding themselves of their humanity through the culture of food beyond its calorific value (or lack thereof).

Familial roles underwent significant transformation which led to the constant practice of 'role shifting', much of which was prompted by food (the procurement of rations or working to obtain food). The thesis provided the novel insight of children on their parents' behaviour and, thus, the nuance of this role shifting, where children matured earlier in the face of their parents' inability to change their environment. This was namely in their contribution to the family economy, in the form of work or obtaining rations, and in their emotional maturity in sharing the burden of this, bearing responsibility for other family members. The role of fathers was less clear cut as their role of breadwinner was threatened in the ghetto's

workshop economy, though several showed they too were willing to consume less for their children. The diaries, broadly speaking, conform to the gender roles of the traditional family by showing women who were willing to sacrifice themselves for their children, and frequently did so. The family shifts which occurred, rather than permanent role changes, suggests that once again lack of stability was the norm. Extended networks are underexplored as a familial unit in the ghettos, an environment where few families remained untouched by death, and provide yet another example of the lack of stability being the constant feature of ghetto life. The extended units formed and reformed as deportations and death dictated, in a survival tactic designed to pool resources and preserve what was left of wider families.

The discussion of space and place shows that diarists often did not dwell on their ghetto apartment or living area. The confines of the ghetto physically prevented inmates from leaving the tiny, poorly facilitated, overcrowded space allocated to them. The lack of agency in selecting a place to life is likely the reason for their lack of detail. Several diarists report on the limited spaces of luxury available inside the ghetto. The Warsaw diarists were more exposed to this environment than those in Łódź, reflecting their more assimilated status and emphasising the lack of privilege of the Łódź diarists, only one of whom was in the privileged *Beirat*. The spaces of privilege were often defined through the food which was available there.

Though food was the subject of Chapter Two, it is unequivocally present in each subsequent chapter, its omnipresence in the thesis reflecting the ghetto itself. The diarists focused on other events and aspects of their lives, but the evidence of starvation (or at the very least deprivation) on themselves, their family units, and the wider ghetto population was unmistakeable. Though the deportations presented the single biggest challenge to notions of the future, food also presented a consistent threat to their future. This summary of daily life and the constancy of food in the diaries highlights the complex fusion of the pertinent aspects which affected the authors. The themes of daily life discussed above are inextricably linked; members of family units worked to obtain rations which they shared together; their need to work was demanded by their perpetrators who had forced them into the ill-

prepared districts and prohibited their leaving; their present was made violent and incomprehensible leading diarists to dehumanise those who oppressed them (and even then barely so); starvation levels of food meant that a crucial component of future was abundance of food with family members and loved ones as the antithesis of what their present contained; perpetrator-led and persecutor-participated deportations shattered daily life before a new version was rebuilt. Choices in each of these areas was either wholly or mostly wrenched from the diarists, but they expressed their agency in a mosaic of small ways every day in the sharing of food with a family member, in reading a novel, or indeed in writing their diary. The extremity of their circumstance understandably led to focus on ghetto residents as heroes, both militarily and culturally, but this led to the overshadowing of their daily existence which, though not heroic, took great effort to endure.

This thesis is situated within the historiography of ghettos, diaries, and daily life. It contributes to our understanding of the intersection of these three important aspects of the Holocaust and goes some way to individualising Jewish people who experienced the horror of the war years under Nazi occupation. In agreement with Hájková's detachment from Holocaust exceptionalism, the thesis demonstrates the ordinary nature of those who lived in the ghettos – their writing personifies them as human; complex, contradictory, and attempting to live a daily life despite the circumstances.

The areas of daily life raised within this thesis are by no means exhaustive and while diaries constitute a solid foundation, our knowledge of daily life in the ghettos could be further expanded through the inclusion of other source types. As described in Chapter One, there are areas of ghetto life which cannot be gleaned through diaries, and others which are hinted at which can be combined with other methods and approaches. The visual history of the ghettos is suggested by some diarists, who remarked upon their own or a family member's appearance, or upon the clothes worn. Further research on this would offer deeper knowledge on sensory aspects of the ghetto, providing outcomes which could have benefits for museum exhibition display as well as within the historiography.

Over the course of the war, the Nazis and their allies established approximately 1,100 ghettos across Europe.[6] Many of these entities existed for mere weeks or months as 'destruction ghettos'[7] though others lasted for more than a year. Joanna Sliwa has noted that Kraków Jews have been relatively under researched.[8] A comparison with the Warsaw ghetto would elicit similarities and differences within daily life in the area of the *Generalgouvernement*. Kraków was established in March 1941 and existed for two years. This would provide insights into universally experienced aspects of the genocide – perpetrators and the weaponization of food – as well as context-specific aspects in order to further uncover the experience of Kraków's Jews. In addition to relatively large ghettos such as Kraków, daily life could be employed as a collectivising method for smaller ghettos with few extant sources. Though geographical conditions would have to be taken into account, the foundation of daily life would allow for diaries from a myriad of ghettos to be utilised. This would likely provide additional conclusions on life in these ghettos and offer insights on how place affected perceptions of the future.

Archival collections besides Collection 302 of the Jewish Historical Institute can also be further utilised within English-language studies. The predecessor to this institution, the CŻKH, established in 1944, collected 7,200 testimonies from survivors between 1944 and 1948.[9] Similar to possibilities of comparison with written postwar accounts, the testimonies collection could be utilised to expand understanding of daily life during the Holocaust, and would offer a point of comparison between written contemporary texts with the recollections of survivors in the immediate aftermath. This would offer a detailed insight into the parts of testimony which survivors chose to recount and what they dismissed as unimportant. Aspects of daily life such as food, while an important topic to discuss, is often not described in such detail as repeated ration lists, for example. The survivor testimony

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[6] Paul A. Shapiro, Alvin H. Rosenfeld, Sara J. Bloomfield, 'Preface' in Megargee, Dean, Hacker, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, p. xv.
[7] Martin Dean, 'Editor's Introduction', in ibid, p. xliv.
[8] Sliwa in Michlic, *Jewish Families in Europe*, p. 29.
[9] EHRI Archival Descriptions, Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors collected by the Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland, 1944-1947, https://portal.ehri-project.eu/units/il-002798-m_49_e [last accessed 24.5.22].

would provide an indication of what was viewed as important in the postwar world and would emphasise what can only be gleaned from contemporaneous texts.

Eventually, daily life was all that remained: the past, which had once promised the triumph of the Jewish people over all previous enemies could no longer be relied upon to defeat their newest and most dangerous enemy; the choices for the future which people possess in peacetime were wrenched from them; leaving the diarists with only their oppressive present. The diaries unequivocally show that *a* daily life was lived for as long as possible by ghetto inmates. It was not akin to the daily life they lived before and with great difficulty, but also ingenuity and tenacity, the diarists and their families expressed what agency they could in continuing for as long as possible. The hardship of ghetto life was defined by its instability and violence. Ultimately all that was left was daily life – the seemingly small moments and activities – (almost) everything else was stripped away. Their struggle to live – as personified in the diaries – proved their humanity and ultimately defied the Nazi attempts to strip them of this.

The unavoidable impression one is left with after reading these diaries is the myriad of opinions, personalities, and lives led by the authors (and thus, the myriad more which can be unearthed through reading more diaries from the Nazi ghettos). It reinforces both the humanity of the Jewish Holocaust victims, as well as reminding us of what was lost in the millions of victims who left no trace behind them. A reality which no amount of research can achieve, though reading the words of some victims written *in situ*, can bring us slightly closer to understanding what was lost. The act of living (and here there is a distinction between surviving and living) under the oppressive, violent, and fatal rule of the Nazis constituted a form of resistance. A quieter form than armed resistance, or even intellectual resistance such as the Ringelblum archive, the diaries written beyond the boundaries of organisations nonetheless show the attempt to live life in circumstances designed to negate that very fact. They are not heroes for this attempt, but their attempt to live in an environment which was designed to diminish and eventually negate this fact can be called a quotidian form of heroism.

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